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**2016 SEC Football Media Days
South Carolina Player Quotes
Thursday, July 14, 2016**

Senior Defensive End Marquavius Lewis

On USC defensive line

"I would think we are better for it [struggle on defensive last season] because we have new coaches. With the new coaches they change the way we think and scheme things to become a better defense."

On Coach Muschamp's intensity

"We had some strict ordeals, he's straight forward. He wants it done his way and for the most part he's going to get it that way."

On USC sense of urgency this upcoming season

"I wouldn't say it's a sense of urgency. We all have the mindset to go out there and change this program around and get them [the team] on the right path."

On his leadership role this upcoming season

"Definitely. We talk about it but I'm not a big talker. Coach knows he doesn't want to change that about me. He lets me lead by example."

On USC first three SEC games are on the road

"I've seen it, it's a great schedule. SEC is the best football so we are going to take it on with a full head of steam."

On the changes he has seen with Coach Muschamp

"It's been more technical than anything. Knowing your keys, knowing your assignments, doing the little things. The linebacker is supposed to be in this area at the same time as the defensive line, knowing where he's going on the same play."

On the transition from high school, to junior college, to the SEC

"It was a leap for sure but I always knew I had it in me to play in the SEC. If you can play in the SEC, you can play anywhere."

On the difference of intensity between Coach Spurrier and Coach Muschamp

"Coach Spurrier is quite a guy. I don't know if there is a distinct difference because they both have a passion to win and they let you know that. Whether that's at practice or special teams, they always let you know that."

On Coach Muschamp being the right guy for USC

"I almost look at it as it was destined. When I was in junior college I was in Florida and he was in Florida. I didn't go to Florida but he's here now at South Carolina so I see it as a destined thing."



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Sophomore Wide Receiver Deebo Samuel

On Muschamp's belief that Deebo is the key to the offense

"Out of the receiver group I am the oldest one with the most experience so I would expect Coach Muschamp to say that. We have brought in five new freshman receivers, and they are going to be able to help as well. My job is to push them to make them better and myself better."

On last years season

"Three and nine is the past. We have a new coach, new strength coaches that Coach brought in and he is probably one of the best strength coaches in the nation. He does a great job of pushing us and trying to make us forget last season and move on."

On sitting his first year as a redshirt and playing with a hamstring issue last year

"Coming in I was thinking I was going to play and then coach redshirted me. So as time went on as a redshirt I was trying to become better. I was becoming bigger, faster and stronger, and I worked on everything possible to get better for the next season. The next season came around and I pulled my hamstring. It was not expected."

On Muschamp's intensity

"I see it at practice. Even if you mess up he will get on you. If you do something good he will still push you to get better. We have a receiver group message and we post pictures in it and they were posting picture of Muschamp going off on somebody and I thought he was crazy."

On being on of the players brought to SEC Media Days

"It means a lot. I showed what I was capable of in the last game against Clemson. So coming in, the new staff was telling me what to do to get better and then make others better to at that position."

On the Clemson game last season

"Coming into that game I was anxious to play the number one team in the country and Clemson is also an in-state rivalry. I was trying to make a name for myself in that game so after that game I thought that happened. As time went on I was just considering what could make me better."



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Senior Offensive Tackle Mason Zandi

On going against Marquavius Lewis in practice:

“Marquavius (Lewis) is a great athlete, and ultimately athletes are a dime a dozen, but he’s also a great competitor. Going against that quality of SEC talent everyday in practice is really helping me sharpen my tools and perfect my craft.”

On learning from last season:

“In terms of learning things from last season, it’s just tough to just say that you only learn from your losses and not your successes. But at the same time it instills a fire in all of us and a disgust for losing. We let our fans, friends and family, and ourselves down. Learning from that experience is really going to help us coming into this season.”

On the journey from high school to being at SEC Media Days:

“For me this is a dream come true. I dreamed of sitting here one day. I dreamed of playing for South Carolina, growing up and every day I’m literally living out my dream.”

On the coaching change, and keeping Shawn Elliot:

“I really appreciate Coach Will (Muschamp) and everything that he has done for our organization. He came in in a first class manner and has done so much for us as a team, and for me as an individual. I enjoy going to his office and picking his brain. He’s seen a lot of the country, and he was at Auburn and Florida also. Being able to have him and his experience has made this transition easier. Also having Coach Shawn (Elliot), because he was on our staff last season, has made things easier.”

On the leader of the defense:

“We have a few leaders on defense, but Marquavius (Lewis) is one of them. He’s a senior and not a very vocal leader, but he leads silently and that is something that I admire. He leads by his work ethic, and purely example and that is something that I admire.”

On the job of the offensive line to protect the quarterback:

“Coach Kurt (Roper) prepares all of the guys as if they’re the starting quarterback. Our job as the offensive line is purely to block for them. We have to give the quarterback time, and open up holes for the running back. At the end of the days that’s it. I can’t go out and read reads for the quarterback or anything else, but I can certainly block for them.”

On preparing in the off-season for your senior season:

“They always say ‘The last one, best one’, but for me personally I’ve prepared the same way. My work ethic has been the same since I stepped on campus in 2012.”