

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Florida Gators

Kingsley Eguakun

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Kingsley from the University of Florida.

Opening marks for us?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: Thanks for having me here. I'm excited to answer these questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What is your favorite thing about Florida? Do you like the culture there?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: My favorite thing about Florida is being close to home, being close to my family. Yeah, I love the culture there. I'm a Florida boy, so it's kind of the same thing I've been kind of acclimated to my whole life. Being around those guys, everybody is kind of from around the same place, so it's cool.

Q. Were you a Florida fan before you actually played at Florida?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: Yeah, so growing up, I was actually born here in Nashville. I was actually kind of a Tennessee fan a little bit. But a lot of my family went to the University of Florida, so I've always kind of had a little bit of Gator blood in me. I've always kind of noticed them, watched their games, kind of kept up with the team.

So yeah, I've been pretty much a Florida fan my whole life.

Q. Coach Smart was asked about the game between you guys and Georgia, you played in Jacksonville. How would you feel if it was played at your stadium or at Georgia's stadium versus a neutral site?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: I mean, I think that would be cool. I like playing in Jacksonville because that's where I reside.

I think away games are fun for everybody. It's kind of a

different experience. Backs against the wall. A new opportunity to show everybody what you've been working on.

But personally, for me, it doesn't matter, like just put the ball down on the line. We can go play in the parking lot, so...

Q. It seemed like much of the offense last year was dictated around Anthony. Now the team moves on without him. What do you think the identity of the Florida offense will be in 2023?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: I think Coach Napier has a great plan in place for the team, what he wants us to be. I think whatever he asks us to do, we're able to do. I think we have the firepower to do that.

It's just going to be ultimately about guys buying in and knowing who we are and why we're here.

Q. How is year two different so far from Coach Napier than the first year?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: I think everybody kind of has an idea of what the plan is for our team and what Coach Napier, the look he wants for our team. Everybody kind of just knows what it's going to take, already has an idea of what the program is.

Q. What personal goals do you have set for yourself this season?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: I got a lot of personal goals. But let me start with we want to win the SEC East. Obviously I want to win the Rimington award. I want to get drafted high, all that good stuff.

But my main personal goal is I want to win games. That's bottom line. I don't like losing. I really hate losing more than I like winning, to be honest with you. I just want to win games.

If none of that other stuff comes, but we win all our games, I'm a happy camper.



Q. You were at Florida under Dan Mullen. Even after the change from Mullen to Napier, you chose to stay with the Gators. With the opportunity in the transfer portal, the coaching change, what ultimately made your decision to remain and play for Billy Napier?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: So, like I said, my family kind of being Gators forever. I mean, I committed to the university, and I love the University of Florida. I've been there my whole time, like you said. I built some great relationships, been kind of able to experience some great things out there.

It never really crossed my mind to leave. I ain't really seen no reason to leave because I built something here already, I'm the leader of the team. I think that I have a good kind of say in, like, how the team kind of approaches things, yeah.

Q. What are some things you tell your team when y'all are down in a game?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: I just make sure guys are still competing 'cause when you get down, it's kind of easy to get down on yourself as well, kind of let things get out of hand.

Whenever things aren't going our way, I kind of just tell guys to continue to compete and just keep that edge and make sure that we're attacking it the right way. At the end of the day, we haven't worked this long and this hard for no reason. We can't just give up just because things aren't going our way at that moment.

Q. You mentioned you were as a kid a Tennessee fan. What have those Tennessee-Florida battles been like for you so far?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: Tennessee is always a good one. I really approach every game the same way. I want to go out there and dominate every opportunity that I'm blessed to have.

But Tennessee, especially this past season, in Tennessee, it hits a little different. My big brother is out there and I'm staying with a couple of my little cousins and nephews out there. You know what I'm saying? It's kind of representing myself and my family the right way, going out there and dominating, like I said.

Q. Friends or relationships with anyone on that Tennessee team this year?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: No, I don't.

Q. What are your favorite things about playing home games in the Swamp? Is there anything from your first time in that stadium that stands out?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: I think just the atmosphere of game day in Gainesville and the 90,000 people out there screaming at the top of their lungs, it's different for sure.

But you kind of just feel the love from all the fans, from Gator Walk, leaving the hotel. Everybody is standing, lined up, wanting the autograph, wanting to shake your hand, say hi.

I mean, the Swamp is a different type of place to play. But the love from the fans is probably the biggest thing about the Swamp that I love playing at home.

Q. Do you think the SEC East gets the amount of attention that the West does?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: I would say so. I think the East competes with the West pretty religiously. I would say that the attention is there on the whole league, for real.

Q. What have you recalled about the games against LSU? What kind matchup do you think it's going to be this year?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: LSU, they always have a good squad. They've got a well-coached team typically.

I don't expect anything less than a battle when we go play LSU, especially being at their field. It's just an opportunity to kind of just go and wake everybody up. You know what I'm saying? Go handle business.

Q. Coach Napier's second year at Florida. Have you noticed any changes in him? Does he seem more comfortable as far as getting into his second year?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: Yeah, Coach Napier, I mean, I think he was pretty comfortable last year.

I think the main difference is everybody's bought in. There's no wavering minds, no guys thinking what about this, what about that, trying to see if the grass is greener on the other side. I think everybody has completely bought in and trusts what Coach Napier has in place for us. Everybody wants to win and even wants to do things the right way.

Q. Who do you think will be your most challenging opponent, and which game are you looking forward to the most?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: Most challenging opponent. I don't really know who the most challenging opponent would be, to be honest. I know everybody works pretty hard. But I can tell you who I'm most excited to play is FSU. I don't like those guys at all. I'm excited to go after them, for sure.

Q. One of the guys that Coach Napier brought along with him on the staff is Louisiana native Jabbar Juluke. What kind of impact has he made for you on the offensive side?

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: Juluke is cool people, man. He's just somebody you can relate to, somebody you can talk to. I think his football sense is actually really great, too.

Y'all see what he's done with our running backs. He's done a great job coaching those guys up, putting them in position to be successful behind this offensive line.

Juluke, he's a great personality, I would say, to have in the building, a coach you can go talk to with problems and stuff, and he's going to help you solve those problems.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

KINGSLEY EGUAKUN: Appreciate you.

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