

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Nashville, Tennessee, USA

## Alabama Crimson Tide Kool-Aid McKinstry

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Kool-Aid ready and available for questions.

**Q. How are you enjoying the day? You excited?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yes, I'm very excited to be here with you guys. I know it's an honor for me to be here, so I'm very excited to be here.

**Q. What are some of the younger players that have impressed you in the defensive backfield?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: We have a lot of young players this year, young secondary. I feel like Caleb Downs has stand out, Dezz Ricks, Jahlil Hurley. Even the newcomers that we have, the transfers, are standing out, learning the defense, looking good for the coaches.

**Q. With Kevin Steele, did he recruit you at Auburn? What is your relationship going back to that and now as your defensive coordinator?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yes, sir. When Coach Steele was at Auburn, he recruited me very hard. Going back to the relationship we had, we had a great relationship when he was recruiting me at Auburn. For us to run cross paths here at 'Bama was very exciting.

**Q. Talk about some of the new guys, what is your message with the first impression of Coach Saban, what you expect out of them? What do you tell the guys? Do they think he's intimidating at first?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, of course, when I first came in, I was a little shaky about being around Coach Saban. I'm pretty sure those guys have the same mindset about that.

I just tell them, like, Coach Saban is a guy that you have to be able to trust. If he don't trust you, it's going to be hard for you. Just go out there, showing Coach you know what

you're doing, looking like you know what you're doing even if you don't know what you're doing, just playing hard at all times, flying around. That's what I tell the guys.

**Q. You guys brought in Caleb Downs, a top-ranked safety from this past class. He's expected to have a big impact. With all your defensive players, what do you see from him and what really makes him a player that, even as a true freshman, is really good enough to be able to contribute on a loaded defense?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like a guy like Caleb, he's very dedicated. Every time I pop up at the facility, he's already been there for maybe an hour or two getting extra work in with the coaches, learning the defense, doing small things like that that's very important to learn the defense.

I feel like I see him doing a lot of small things in the weight room. Even when we get done working out, working on his abs one day, might be stretches one day. I feel like he doing a lot of little things right.

**Q. Obviously you're having a new defensive coordinator coming in. Talk about the transition with Kevin Steele coming in, how smooth it's been for you guys.**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, I feel like at 'Bama we already know as players that coaches are going to be there and coaches might not be there.

I feel like us knowing that is a big deal with us, changing coaches, just learning new coaches, seeing their way of things, seeing how they're going to be different into the program.

**Q. You were a two-way sports star in high school. Do you still have that itch to play basketball? Do you still play and hoop a little bit?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yeah, I go to the rec and play. I kind of gave up on the college thing. Me playing basketball, I had to sit down with my family, be real with myself, focus on what's important to me.



**Q. The jewelry, how does that allow you to express yourself in a way that allows people to get to know your personality a little bit better?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, a lot of people that know me know this is kind of me. I love being me no matter where I'm at, so it's just a part of me.

**Q. What do you take away from the last two LSU games that went down to the wire?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: SEC in general is always tough, hard games. My freshman year, went down to the wire in Tuscaloosa. Last year went to the wire in Baton Rouge. Games like that is why I come to 'Bama and why you stay in the SEC. They're important to me.

**Q. Getting a chance to go against the wide receivers all the time, you get a grasp of their strengths and weaknesses. Which receiver gives you the most trouble?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, all those guys are very different in things they do. Some of them are better route runners, some of them are better catchers, some release at the line of scrimmage.

I love going against all of them. They are all different. By all them being different, it's better than me working on this because this guy might be better at this, that guy might be better at that. I think every play is helping my game get better. I'm very thankful for those guys.

**Q. Who are the best receivers you've faced so far at Alabama, either teammates or opponents?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, I could say I faced a lot of guys that were pretty good that wasn't on my team. But I feel like I face some of the best guys playing around on my team like Jay-Mo, guys like Metchie because those guys are just different. I was so young. Me having an opportunity to check Jay-Mo as a freshman and Metchie as a freshman, it was very big to me.

**Q. What is it about your guys' matchup with Texas A&M the past couple years, what do you expect going back to College Station this year?**

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Like I said, I know College Station is a very tough place to play. Like I said, the SEC is going to be hard-fought games. That's why you play here at 'Bama and that's why you play in the SEC.

THE MODERATOR: Kool-Aid, thank you.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Thank you, guys.

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