

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Arkansas Razorbacks

Raheim Sanders

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Raheim is ready to go.

We'll start with questions.

Q. Talk about the rivalry with Missouri and what that has been like.

RAHEIM SANDERS: It's great. Just learning about what it is, first of all, then just having guys that I know that play over there, as well.

Q. I know it wasn't your position coach, but Coach Loggains, what were your interactions with him? What was he like as a coach? Trey Knox as well, what does he bring as a player?

RAHEIM SANDERS: I'll start with the coach first.

He was a great guy. He knew offense well. Teach me some things, as well, just blocking-wise.

Trey Knox, I feel like he was a physical guy, very physical guy. Just not scared to do blocking things. He knew the plays. Great guy that can catch. Would love to play any position. I feel like he was a great guy.

Q. There's been a lot of talk at the NFL level about running backs. As a running back, among other running backs, is there concern with the position and being able to get second contracts? Do you feel running backs are undervalued in today's game?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Yeah, I definitely do. I definitely do. But that's not something I'm worrying about right now. I'm worrying about me, my team as well, just finishing college first.

Q. KJ and Coach Pittman talked about getting a win over Auburn after some close, controversial losses earlier. What was it like being part of that win last season?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Yeah, it was definitely good. Actually I think I reached my thousand mark that game. That was a blessing.

I came out there a little slow, got to it. It was a blessing to get that dub.

Q. Back to the NFL. Who were some NFL running backs currently that you model your game after, inspire you?

RAHEIM SANDERS: I'd probably say Leonard Fournette definitely. Just watching his college film, the way he catch the ball, the way he run.

Q. Sticking with the NFL, all the running backs are talking about how the running back position is being undervalued. I just wanted to get your thoughts on that, them not getting the contracts they think they deserve and how you feel the running back position shouldn't be undervalued?

RAHEIM SANDERS: I feel like, yeah, it's definitely underrated when it come down to that. I feel like definitely they should be getting paid more.

Like I said to him, I'm worrying about what I got in front of me, and that's college.

Q. I'd love to know your goals for this season, things that you've been working on.

RAHEIM SANDERS: Yeah, actually I started working on my balance, just starting to be even more perfect than what I am, letting everything develop. Just being a leader, being a big leader. Being able to talk to the offensive line so I can get the protection down so I can get out for a pass, whatnot.

Q. Being from Florida, what appealed to you from Arkansas?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Actually wanted to be far from family so I could come home and they give me the compliments



(smiling).

Just being far is a great thing just because I'm on my own, just adapting to new things, meeting new people.

Q. You mentioned taking on more of a leadership role this season. What has that been like? Has the dynamic changed between you and the offensive line? Do you feel more confident speaking up and telling them where they need to be?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Yeah, very comfortable. I feel like the strength staff got us like that, just by worrying about the little things.

Q. Sam talked about you bulking up a bit. Landon Jackson walked in here, he's gained 50 pounds of weight. What has been different for you guys this off-season?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Different was just the little things, like touching the line, just giving us things that if we late, you know what I mean, preparing us to become men. I feel like that's helped me as well as a leader.

Q. You mentioned looking forward to this upcoming season. You have a new offensive coordinator in Dan Enos. KJ said you're running a more pro-style offense. How do you think your role in this offense will differ than last year?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Probably going out for routes more. Like I said, that's coming with me learning the pass pro and the running backs that's in my room. Just learning the pass pro I feel like is going to help me out because he's the type of guy, offensive coordinator, that want the running backs to get out, and he's the type of guy that want KJ to hit the checkdowns, as well.

Q. Last year after one of your games that you did really well in, Coach Pittman was like, That's why his mama named him Rocket. Where did the nickname come from?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Actually from Little League. I started playing football around six, seven. It came from me running past someone a couple times. My coach named me after that. The team was called Rockets, as well (smiling).

Q. Earlier today Sam Pittman talked about the small things, finishing off the games. What are some of the ways you've been looking to improve your game in the off-season to focus on the small parts of the game?

RAHEIM SANDERS: Just finishing the rep. You know what I mean? Just finishing the rep like it's my last rep. Having to pour that into the guys as well. The new guys, it's all about communication. You know what I mean? For myself, like I said, it's pouring in, always look back to what I ain't had before.

Q. What is Coach Pittman's style on the practice field?

RAHEIM SANDERS: As in like dressing or...

Q. How does he handle himself? He has a great personality.

RAHEIM SANDERS: I want to say he not a yelling guy. He actually funny. But it's crazy because I will go crazy for a period, full speed, he'll come and whisper in my ear and say something funny about something I never heard before, something back in the day, about how he played different positions.

And I was like, Can I see some film?

No, I ain't got any film, but just know I was him (laughter).

Q. Coach Williams, new defensive coordinator, he was at Auburn previously, was known for his deejaying, rap skills. Have you gotten to see any of that?

RAHEIM SANDERS: No. But what's real crazy is he recruited me at Auburn, right? I didn't know he was a defensive coordinator, so the whole time I was talking to him, he was recruiting me for defense, and I didn't even know it (smiling).

Q. (No microphone.)

RAHEIM SANDERS: Yeah, but he know Coach Smith not having that.

Q. You left the Liberty Bowl early in the game with an injury against Kansas. 55 to 53, three overtimes. Had you played the rest of the way, you might still be tired from that game. What was it like watching the rest of your teammates go through that?

RAHEIM SANDERS: It's definitely a blessing. They can show their talent. I feel like the bowl game is to see what we got, 'cause that's still going on to the next season. I feel like a lot of guys show their talent, definitely at the running back position.

Q. The new defensive coordinator, what's going to be different about that? Trying to get in the upper echelon of the SEC Western Division. What is going to

be different about your defense?

RAHEIM SANDERS: I feel like just bringing energy up front, the defensive line, the back end of it, as well, too.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. Good job.

RAHEIM SANDERS: Yep. Thank y'all.

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