

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Florida Gators

Ricky Pearsall

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Ricky.

RICKY PEARSALL: Thank you for having me.

THE MODERATOR: Available for questions.

Q. Coach Napier is in his second year. How does year two under him feel different?

RICKY PEARSALL: All the guys are just buying into the program he has set for us. Coach Napier is just a really respectable guy. Just having another year under him, he's learning us as much as we're still learning him.

Just making sure that we trust everything he's got for us, going out there and execute.

Q. You said there were some more building blocks in place than a year ago?

RICKY PEARSALL: Absolutely. Having another year of him learning about us, he's going to change up his regimens just based on how the guys respond to certain things.

Obviously he's amped more and more going on to year two, but all the guys are bought in.

Q. Hugh Freeze returning to the SEC. Coach Napier came to the SEC from the Group of 5. Anything you've noticed difference-wise, anything in his demeanor? Is he more comfortable in his second year?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I mean, I think he's just a really consistent human in general. I think there hasn't been like too much change with comfortability.

He has a different level of motivation, for sure, going on to his second year. As much as we're hungry to go into our second year, I think he is, as well.

Q. You guys play Arkansas the first week of November. It's also in the middle of Georgia and LSU. Talk about welcoming a talented team from the SEC West to the Swamp around that time.

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, for sure. That's going to be my first time ever playing Arkansas, so I'm extremely excited for that.

What I'm actually even more excited about playing them is that's our blackout game, so I'm excited to put on black uni's. Obviously you can see I'm wearing all black (smiling).

Q. What can you tell us about the quarterback that transferred from Wisconsin? How about the difference in playing in the Pac-12 versus the SEC?

RICKY PEARSALL: So Graham Mertz, he's a tremendous human. I think first and foremost I want to address that. He has a really good head on his shoulders. A super intelligent human. His football IQ stands out to me the most, the way he sees coverages. I think that's from his experience.

Then getting to develop a relationship with him has been extremely important for us. As you know, a quarterback and receiver duo. He's also my friend outside the field, too. We actually just went to the beach this last weekend, St. Augustine, to throw on the beach. Just doing things like that with him.

Q. Anthony leaving for the NFL Draft, a couple transfer quarterbacks, Graham Mertz, Jack Miller. Getting to work with both of them, what can you tell fans in general, what should they expect from Mertz or Miller come fall?

RICKY PEARSALL: I feel like they're both really talented humans. They're both really good people. They both see the field very well. Both have really good arms.

I mean, obviously Graham has his experience back behind him. Jack had that one game last year obviously. But just creating that level of competitiveness between the two is

going to really benefit them. Then at the end of the day we're going to see who rises to the top.

We're just putting our trust into Coach Napier to make the right decision, so I don't think we can really go wrong.

Q. What would you tell a transfer coming into the SEC from another conference?

RICKY PEARSALL: Just to get ready to play the best of the best. I mean, that's the reason why I came here. I wanted to play against the best of the best every single snap. The SEC is that conference to do that.

I think that's the one thing I would tell them.

Also to get ready for the traditions and histories that lie in the SEC, as well. I think that was a big thing that stood out to me and I was excited for.

Obviously the fans behind it.

Q. Your teammates mentioned buy-in as something that feels a little bit different. Is that something that comes through in the offense? What does that mean really?

RICKY PEARSALL: I mean, buying in just to the program, into the regimen that Coach Napier has set for us.

Honestly, buying into your teammates, as well. Being able to trust each other. When we're out there on that field, adversity hits, we only going to look at each other in the eyes. There's no coaches out there that are going to help us, nobody else. We just have each other.

Being able to buy into each other, continuing to develop those relationships with one another. You should know every person in the locker room when you go out there and play your game. Just coming together stronger and playing as a unit is going to be very important for us moving forward.

Q. Both of your teammates mentioned how awesome your fan base is. How does being at home affect your game play? How does seeing your fans at your visitor games affect you?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I think the University of Florida has the best fans in the nation. Seeing everybody pop out to the games, it's super important for us. It obviously creates advantages for us when we're at home with the noise and stuff, making it hard on the other team.

Also seeing them in away games, too, knowing we got that

support system. I'm actually from Arizona. I think there's a Gator Club in Arizona, which is crazy to me, because everybody asks me how did I come from Arizona to Florida because it's so far?

They got actually a Gator Club out there. I think we just have the best fans in the nation.

Q. If you have friends back in Arizona, what questions about the SEC do you get from them?

RICKY PEARSALL: Like just skill level-wise, like what's the skill factor, as well as how loud the stadiums are is like a question that comes up a lot. I answer that question to my best ability and tell them everything that's true, which is you got the best talent and the best fans.

Q. Sometimes coaches have a message to their players for the season. Is there a message the players are having internally among themselves?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I mean, just to prove everybody wrong. I feel we do a good job of not really listening to everything. I think we want it for ourselves. I think being self-motivated for us is really important as a team. We want this more than anybody else wants us for it. That's something we have to keep reminding each other and keeping a good mindset and perspective on things.

Q. What can you tell us about the rest of the wide receiver room this year?

RICKY PEARSALL: Yeah, I mean, I think we have a really dangerous group. All these young guys that came in, they're extremely talented. We already had a talented room even without them.

Now it just adds onto our talent and makes us even more stronger in there. I think all the young guys are going to come in and make impacts going on to this season. You got guys like Andy, Trey, Aidan, they're all extremely talented in their own ways. Being a leader of the group, take them under my wing, make sure they're handling everything like a pro every single day.

Q. What is your relationship like with Jayden?

RICKY PEARSALL: We have actually a really good relationship. That's still my dog for life. We randomly FaceTime each other, talk a little smack about the game. I think he's got us circled as much as we got him circled.

On a personal level, too, knowing we're going to play against each other. I can't wait to go over there and see him in his house now, so we're really excited for that game.

I'm excited to see him. It's really good to see him doing well, as well. I wish him all the luck.

THE MODERATOR: Ricky, thank you very much.

RICKY PEARSALL: Thank you. Appreciate y'all.

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