

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Thursday, July 20, 2023

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

South Carolina Gamecocks Spencer Rattler

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Spencer, and he is ready for your questions.

Q. You and Coach Beamer talked about limiting turnovers. When you look back at the film, what are things that stood out about why those happened and how do you correct those?

SPENCER RATTLER: Yeah, good question. That's definitely a main emphasis for this year is limiting turnovers. You can't win games with turnovers. I take total accountability for that.

What I see on film is just sometimes me trying to do too much, trusting my arm too much. Just trust the play, trust the offense, just protect the ball. That's what it comes down to.

Q. Shane talked about he wants to see you play loose, wants that confidence. I don't think you've lacked confidence, so how do you go about this, honing into that freedom?

SPENCER RATTLER: I think it's just within the offense. I feel like in the beginning to the middle of the year, we might have been doing a little too much that we didn't need to be doing. Towards the end, we limited some stuff down, like I said earlier, some personnel groupings. We had a lot of personnel groupings that limited us a lot.

But there's no excuses for that. We tighten down the playbook to plays that play to our strengths, to my strengths, our receivers' strengths, O-line strengths, all of that.

Nothing really changed too much like people think. The changes definitely helped towards the end of the season.

Q. South Carolina is one of many teams with a new offensive coordinator. Working with him so far, what has been different with the offense? What should

Carolina fans expect?

SPENCER RATTLER: Good question. Obviously he's come in with his new offense. He's been coaching quarterbacks for years in the NFL, has a lot of experience. The offense is very quarterback friendly.

Plays to our strengths. He knows what our strengths are, which is good. He loves our offense, loves our group, keeps teaching us every single day. We're still putting together with camp here in two weeks. We're excited to get in there and keep improving.

Q. Who is a couple of young players that might emerge on the scene? Who are veterans taking the next step?

SPENCER RATTLER: It's always hard to tell with the young guys because we haven't seen them in action yet. Off my eye, you know about Nyck Harbor, big, tall, fast, can do it all. Just working on the fundamentals with him. I think Elijah Caldwell, another young receiver that will help us a lot this year. There's a handful of a lot of younger guys that will help.

Vet-wise, I feel like Xavier Legette is going to have a standout year, has had a great off-season. Ahmearn Brown, another guy that might have a breakout year. I'm hoping DK has a breakout year at running back, whatever we need him to do.

Q. You won't be doing it, but your team is making the trip to Norman in 2024. What would you tell your guys to expect?

SPENCER RATTLER: It's been a while. Just expect a lot of loud stadium, big stadium. A lot of crimson and cream. It will be a good time. I'll be excited to watch.

Q. Being in the SEC, you face a lot of good defenses. Mizzou, a low-scoring game. Going up against that defense, what challenges did they provide in the game last year?

SPENCER RATTLER: Missouri brought a lot of different



stunts, a lot of different blitzes. I feel like we picked some of it up, but a lot of it I wasn't seeing fully. Maybe all of us weren't seeing fully. We didn't execute at a high level that game. We try to say don't let anybody beat us. We beat ourselves that game.

Credit to their defense, they did a good job that week.

Q. I think it's natural when you have a new offensive coordinator to talk about the growing pains. You go up against a Power Five team week one. As a quarterback, what can you do to help ease some of those growing pains, especially knowing there's going to be a lot of question marks on the offensive line?

SPENCER RATTLER: I would say number one is protect the ball. That's a big emphasis for me this off-season. Obviously during the season, protecting the ball. Creating explosive plays. Understanding what you got to do. Helping others understand what they got to do as well. Just coming closer as a team during off-season and camp here in two weeks.

I think those few things will help us down the road.

Q. What are your thoughts on the program not playing Georgia, Florida, or Tennessee in 2024?

SPENCER RATTLER: I didn't even know that until you said that.

I mean, I guess it's just a conference decision or a school decision. I don't know why. That's interesting, for sure.

Q. Big ballgame against North Carolina. Have you met Drake Maye? What can you tell us about that game against North Carolina?

SPENCER RATTLER: Yeah, I'm excited for the game. I haven't met Drake yet. He kind of blew up on the scene last year, had a great season. Credit to him. I'm excited to get to compete versus them. It will be a fun game. Hopefully we'll put on a show.

Q. When you look back at your time at Oklahoma, all the ups and downs, how do you feel it helped you grow as a quarterback or a person?

SPENCER RATTLER: Good question. Being a quarterback, you're distinguishing to go through the success, the adversity. You got to take it all. I think it was great learning experience for me. Coming here to South Carolina, it helped me a lot to be in this position. I'm just grateful to be here.

Q. With your experience under your belt at South Carolina, what do you take away from the first year from Gamecocks fans? How excited are you? Is it even more exciting knowing how they support you?

SPENCER RATTLER: Yeah, like you said, having that year under your belt, getting to experience the fan base, it's different. I mean, the passion they have, the loyalty they have. You run into everybody in public. Just the city of Columbia, everywhere in South Carolina has excitement right now.

Obviously we have appreciation and gratitude towards that. That's why we work hard every day.

Q. You've been in the media eye for a long time going back to your high school days. You've been in the middle of the NIL stuff. As you prepare to leave college after this season for the NFL, do you think it's time that the colleges adopt an NFL-type model, making the players employees with contracts? Congress is getting involved. As you've gone through this process, how would you like to see it worked out knowing pay-to-play is here to stay?

SPENCER RATTLER: That's a good question. I'm sure everybody has different opinions on that matter. I've been lucky enough to be in the NIL world, get to see how it's transforming. I think it's good for all players across the country to benefit from their name, image and likeness.

That's a good question, but I truly don't know how it should go.

Q. You've had that rare inside view of Shane Beamer going from an assistant coach to a head coach. How have you seen him move into that role?

SPENCER RATTLER: I feel like it's natural. It's in his blood, right? His dad is an all-time legend. Frank Beamer still comes around, which is awesome to see. I feel like he's a natural. He's a natural leader, great person, great coach. Everything he says and does motivates us as a group. He has this program headed in the right direction.

Q. Shane joked last year when he was here he would bring you next year. I don't know how many people thought you would be back for a second year. As you wrestled with the decision, what led you to realize that coming back for a second year in South Carolina was the right thing to do?

SPENCER RATTLER: Good question. We weighed all the options, my family and I. Talking to certain people. Obviously that next level had a real, you know, choice to

pick. I just weighed it out. I thought there were more pros coming back. I graduate in September, get my degree. That's important to my family and I. I just feel like we left a little on the table. That's why Juice and I decided to come back one more time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. Great job.

SPENCER RATTLER: Thank you, guys.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

