

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Wednesday July 17, 2019

Will Muschamp South Carolina Gamecocks

COMMISSIONER SANKEY: University of South Carolina head football coach Will Muschamp will be entering his fourth season leading the Gamecocks in his eighth overall as a head coach in the Southeastern Conference. He's won more games in his first three seasons at South Carolina as head coach than any coach in school history and was also the first to guide the program to bowl games in each of his first three seasons at South Carolina. Those of you who know our guests yesterday now will understand that Steve Spurrier will be calling me next just to make sure those stats are right.

Will and his wife have two sons, both quarterbacks, Jackson and Whit, learning reads from the former defensive back. He also fashions himself as a bit of an expert on all things related to The Big Green Egg.

University of South Carolina head football Coach, Will Muschamp.

WILL MUSCHAMP: Thank you, Commissioner. I appreciate that introduction. You're exactly right on the Green Egg, there's nobody better in our league, I can assure you of that.

Our leadership in our league is outstanding. I appreciate Commissioner Sankey and his group that do a fantastic job, and this league is in great hands as far as that's concerned.

Great to be back in Hoover. Looking forward to year four at the University of South Carolina. In January we moved into the Ken and Cyndi Long Family Operations Center. It's made a huge difference. I want to thank Ken and Cyndi again but also anyone who contributed to this project. It's made a huge difference in our program. From a recruiting standpoint, when a young man and his family come to campus and they see the investment that we're making to have a championship atmosphere at our place, they see it. It has the wow factor and what every recruit looks for.

And what I've also seen is how it changes the culture on our campus with our players. In January, when you walk in the weight room and you have official visits in our town and you have 25, 30 kids walking around the weight room on their own working out, that says a lot



about the culture of your football team.

This facility and this investment made a huge difference. After our season is over, we're embarking on a \$22 million enhancement to Williams-Brice Stadium. I appreciate Coach Tanner and our board and the forward thinking that we have in continuing to press the needle to improve our situation at the University of South Carolina.

Academically, for the first time in my coaching career and the first time in University of South Carolina history, fall semester our cumulative GPA on our football team was above a 3.0. That's pretty impressive. Very proud of our team. And then we doubled it up in spring and had another cumulative 3.0 again in spring semester.

So very proud of our team. Proud of the academic staff we have at the Dodie Anderson Academic Enrichment Center and the job they do at South Carolina, because those are first for me and the university.

This offseason, I really challenged our players in terms of leave no doubt about the things that take no talent, effort, toughness, discipline, competitive edge to earn what you get every single day and have a team-first mentality, which are basically the core values in our program. And this senior class, which is a really special senior class to me, we're going into our fourth season. A lot of these guys have about four-year starters, three-year starters, two-year starters, a bunch of quality people, number one, but really good football players that came to South Carolina in a coaching transition, taking over a team that won three games.

They took a leap of faith, so to speak with us, and we appreciate them, but their leadership has been outstanding in holding our team to an accountable standard that we need to have in our organization, which we have and we reset a little bit after the bowl game after we went into our offseason program.

Three seniors with me today, Jake Bentley, who left high school early at Opelika High School to come to South Carolina. He did 2-4 his freshman year. We inserted him in the lineup. We finished bowl eligible at the end of the season. There's no question in my

opinion his spark helped us get to those height. I really appreciate Jake and his contributions at South Carolina. I'm looking forward to his senior year.

T.J. Brunson, a guy that was committed to another school. When he got to South Carolina, we convinced him to come on an official visit. He has been a really good football player for us, makes all the calls. And our elected as team captain last year by his teammates. Is a really football player and excited about him playing his senior year.

And Bryan Edwards from Conway High School probably should leave every receiving record there is at the University of South Carolina after his senior season. You think about some of the elite players that have played the receiver position at South Carolina, that's pretty high company.

Interesting story on both T.J. and Bryan. I finished my first press conference, opening press conference at South Carolina, and the first person I visited was T.J. Brunson from Richland Northeast High School. Jay Frye was the head coach, was a former Gamecock then. And Gore and then Thomas's parents came down, and I realized right then we had Gore, we just had to convince T.J. to come to South Carolina. I flew to Conway that night and met with Bryan, John and Michelle, his parents. I thought the meeting was going pretty well. Bryan had been committed to South Carolina. He backed off of it when coach stepped down. And through the middle of the meeting, I felt pretty good about things until his grand dad walked in and had a Clemson jacket on. He played at Clemson in the '80s. We had to weather the storm on that one, but Bryan came to South Carolina and has had a really wonderful career.

I'm really proud of the senior class and what they've done as far as the change of our program and where we're headed. Offensively I thought we really improved from 2017 to 2018 in some areas. We averaged a touchdown more in our game, close to a hundred yards a game. We averaged more snaps, I think about 8 more in each game.

The tempo really helped us. Bryan and the staff did a good job implementing when we felt we needed to and felt like we could take advantage in the defense, but inconsistencies and turnovers in the red zone were really what hurt us offensively and continued to take the next step. We had 56 trips in the red zone. We had 13 times and come away with no points and get eight turnovers. That's gut wrenching. That's psychological. That affects your football team, not just our offense, but your entire team to come away with no points. We had 21 turnovers overall in the year. We have to do a better job of making decisions with the

ball and taking care of the football.

We had 20 drops on the season. And if you followed our season, some of those were game changing moments. In order to win football games down the field and change the momentum of the game, we got to be able to finish on those plays. Some of the inconsistencies we've had offensively, I felt were self-inflicted. If we can eliminate those things, I think we can continue to take the next step offensively. If you look back at the turnover margin, which is the number one stat in football, we were 6 and 0 when we were even on the plus side, 1-6 on the negative side of that. We weren't good enough to overcome those things.

We have to continue to recruit and be able to not let them happen, number two, be able to overcome those situations. Defensively, we flat-out struggled. We weren't very good. Call it like it is. We went into the season right at 40 percent of our snaps returning from 2017. It was Dennis Wonnum in the first game to a cut, block and that now goes to about 30 percent of his snaps returning, and we had some injuries, and we struggled throughout the year, but I'm going to really challenge five guys that are seniors upfront for us, Javon Kinlaw, Keir Thomas, Kobe Smith, and Danny Fennell, and Dennis Wonnum, those are five guys that are good football players that have played quality for us. We need to have those type of seniors in order for us to have the defense we need to have. We need to improve tremendously.

Some of the growing pains that we went through this past year I think will be positives for us with some of the game experience the guys probably got too soon will certainly be positives for us, but we must improve. Special teams wise, Parker White has been very dependable, a guy that had a tough first year, but came out, worked on fundamentals in the offseason. He had an outstanding year this past year. He had two game winners for us, a guy that I got tremendous confidence in.

Joe Charlton I feel is as good of punter as there is in the country. We finished 12th in the country. And other than the shank against Georgia, I felt really punted well for the season. We improved our team speed, which obviously helps you in the space play on special teams. You never are going to be able to replace a guy like Deebo Samuel as far as the return game is concerned, but we do feel like we have capable guys, A.J. Turner, Shi Smith, Rico Dowdle. Somebody will win that kickoff return job in fall camp, but again, we can make some more improvements specialty wise.

I know people are going to ask me about the schedule. Hell, schedule's hard every year. That is the way I look

at it. We have a great opportunity to step forward as a program to be in the limelight on both Saturdays in the Southeastern Conference and take advantage of the opportunities we have in front of us. In my opinion, we have our best team coming back in South Carolina since I have been there, and we're looking forward to that opportunity.

Just as far as the roster updates, Max Iyama has been medically disqualified. Extremely disappointed for Max. Was going to be a really good football player for us, but I don't want to get into any specifics here, but a guy that's going to be very successful without football as well because he's extremely bright, extremely intelligent, motivated, got a great personality, and he's going to be fine.

Jaylin Dickerson is out for the year with a hip labrum. He had an extra bone growth that was on his femur that caused this. I've been coaching over 20 years, and Jaylin has two of the most unusual injuries that I've been a part of: this issue in the shoulder, as far as the nerve was concerned, and now this situation with the extra bone growth. So, we're going to support Jaylin. He'll be fine. He had surgery last week. He'll be cleared for spring ball as we move forward in the spring.

Tyquan Johnson has qualified. He'll be able to report August 1st. And Jaquaze Sorrells is a guy we feel really good about being able to report August 1st as well.

With that I'll open it up for any questions.

Q. I actually have a two-part question. Kevin can help you if you forget the second part. But --
WILL MUSCHAMP: You've talked to me before. Huh?

Q. Yeah. No, I didn't mean that like that.
WILL MUSCHAMP: I mean, come on, man!

Q. Hey, Nick Saban needed some help from K.T. this morning. So that's good company.
WILL MUSCHAMP: Nine years he's been doing this. I asked him is this a short straw draw or what? How do you get this job? That's a pretty good job.

Q. Speaking of Nick, I think his assistants are 0-16 --
WILL MUSCHAMP: He give you that stat?

Q. No, it's out there on the Internet. You get to play him again this year. You guys are all good coaches, too, obviously. Do you think any of you guys are ever going to beat him? What's that going to take? That's part one. How do you feel

about playing him? And part two, you've got more SEC wins in the first three seasons than any South Carolina coach. You had one more than Spurrier had even. What do you think about that? You just said you had your best team coming back. How many do you feel about the program you built going into season four?

WILL MUSCHAMP: As far as beating Alabama, you got to go beat Alabama. They are not going to beat themselves. They are very well coached. They have really good players. They're going to attack you in all three phases. That's how you got to approach that game as far as beating that football team.

Nick's doing a fantastic job. He's the best football coach in college football history. The consistency that he has maintained at Alabama is pretty phenomenal. In this league, it's very difficult. But you got to go beat Alabama. You can't hope and wish something's going to happen. You got to go beat them.

As far as where our program is, it's not where we want to be. I can assure you of that. Our goal every year is win the East which gives you an opportunity to play in Atlanta; and if you win in Atlanta, it gives you an opportunity to play in the College Football Playoff, in my opinion, and to win our state. And we haven't done either one in three years.

And so that's something we've got to be able to accomplish. And that's goal is not going to change, regardless of the situation or the circumstances at our school. We're striving to win a championship at South Carolina. So we haven't done that yet.

But I am proud of some of the accomplishments especially both on and off the field, some things we're doing academically, the things we're doing from a facility standpoint. They're enabling to have a championship program, because they work hand in hand. When you invest, kids see that, parents see that, and it excites them to be a part of something like that, and it's changed the landscape for us from a recruiting standpoint.

But we've got to continue to work and push the needle forward. I love the things we're going to do for the stadium, and obviously I'm excited about this team and where we are right now. As Coach Spurrier would say, it's talking season right now, and we got to go play and play that way. We need to have a good training camp leading into the season.

I feel good about the things that we've accomplished, but certainly nowhere where we want to be.

Q. Coach, I know you weren't around in 2010, but

what do you know about the Alabama win, the win you guys had over Alabama in 2010?

WILL MUSCHAMP: I've seen it on the SEC Network several times, but obviously South Carolina played extremely well that day. You know, Alabama had a really good football team, and it was a big win for South Carolina. Other than that, I don't know a lot about it.

Q. Just going back to your quarterback, Jake Bentley. He's an Alabama native. What are you looking forward to seeing from him this season and having that senior year to -- he can prepare the guys around him to have a big-time matchup at home against Alabama, continuing that on Jake Bentley?

WILL MUSCHAMP: I'm excited about Jake going into his senior year. He's played good quality football for us. He's the second leading returning passer in the Southeastern Conference. Played extremely well at times last season for us. We need to finish more balls down the field for him, and he needs to do a good job taking care of the football in situations.

But I think we've recruited well through receiver position. Bryan Edwards is a really good football player. Shi Smith has played extremely well for us. We're going to get Ortre Smith back off where he missed all of last season with a knee injury. Josh Vann is a guy that's come on. Randrecous Davis is healthy for the first time in two years. Chad Terrell, Chavis Dawkins, a senior, has been a very dependable guy.

We've improved up front offensively. I think we have some good weapons around Jake to help him be the best quarterback he can be.

Q. You've talked a lot about the quarterback position. Is this the deepest group you've had in your time here at South Carolina? And I guess having guys like Dakereon and Ryan, how is that going to help Jake mature and grow his senior year?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Again, I think Jake's got great competition behind him in Dakereon and Ryan, two very talented guys that have extremely bright futures at University of South Carolina. They'll continue to battle through camp, and we'll see what happens.

Every decision we make in our program, as far as football is concerned, is about winning. Whether it's quarterback, defensive end, receiver, it really doesn't matter. We'll put the guys out there that help us win football games in our opinion as coaches. We spend a lot of time talking about it and what we need to do to put ourselves in the best position to win football games, and those are the decisions we'll make on that.

Q. What aspect of your team did you think came the furthest in spring practice that excited you as far as improvement? And the second part of the question, I know you're trying to build a great culture at South Carolina. What you are your thoughts on how to manage the transfer portal?
WILL MUSCHAMP: As far as the position that I thought came the furthest probably would be up front defensively. Young players like Ricky Sandidge, J.J. Enagbare, Jabari Ellis, those guys made tremendous improvements. We're going to get guys named Tyreek Johnson, who missed last year with a knee, back in the fall. I thought we made some good strides up front defensively.

I would say probably the same thing for the offensive line, Jovaughn Gwyn, Jordan Rhodes, Hank Manos, Chandler Farrell. Some young players on the offensive line. Jaylen Nichols was a guy that came in mid-year that I thought showed some good flashes. So I thought both lines of scrimmage improved a lot.

As far as transfer portal, it really doesn't matter what I think because the rules aren't going to change. So I think you just have to do a good job as a head coach of managing your roster. If somebody wants to be at South Carolina, great; if they don't, go somewhere else.

Q. Coach, last year I believe at Media Days you talked about that you liked your starters up front on offense and defense but you didn't really like the depth you had. Where do you think that depth is at now, and how important is it to be able to win in this league?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Other than having a quarterback, to me it's the most important thing, you know. You got to have a quarterback first, and you got to have depth on both lines of scrimmage, and quality depth. Not just depth. Not just numbers. You have to have guys that can play and be productive.

We've improved ourselves defensively. I talked about the five seniors, but you talk about Aaron Sterling has been a productive guy for us, Ricky Sandidge, J.J. Enagbare, Jabari Ellis, Devontae Davis, Tyreek Johnson. Brad Johnson is an outside guy.

So we've really come a long way. Zacch Pickens and Joe Anderson are two young players that I thought did a really nice job in spring. On the offensive line, I mentioned those guys earlier.

So we're much improved on both lines of scrimmage with better girth, better size and against some of the offensive lines, from a defensive perspective, that we've got to block, and I think we're more athletic on

the offensive line than we've been as far as blocking some of the athletic defensive lines that we face.

Q. You get another look at Kelly Bryant this year. Do you recall him much from when you played him a couple years ago when he was at Clemson?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Really good football player. I got a lot of respect for Kelly and the job he's done at Clemson and then moving forward to Missouri. Really good football player. Accurate with the football. Dual-threat guy that can hurt you with his legs as well.

But I probably think his best attributes as a player is his intangible qualities. The guy is an outstanding leader. He positively affects people around him. He gets guys going and believing in what you need to do to be successful.

It will be a very smooth transition for him, in my opinion, as far as that's concerned. Just an outsider looking in, you can see the positive impact he's already had on that program.

Q. Going back to Danny Fennell, where is he in his recovery process, and is he going to be full speed when you guys get going?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Yeah. We'll have everybody full speed August 1st. Danny will be probably on a pitch count early on just to make sure we don't overdo it on the knee. But he's been cleared for everything.

Q. Following up on the transfer portal. Beforehand, when people transferred out, I assume it was kind of more like who you knew in the coaching field and whoever -- when you hear about players. How much different is it now that you can just look it up and go find it if you're looking for talent to add to your roster?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Again, we have people that kind of monitor different names that come in. But it's not different, in my opinion, as it used to be. Normally a parent or a high school coach will reach out and see if you have interest in a player in those situations. It hasn't changed a lot as far as those things are concerned.

Q. I had a follow-up on Nick Saban because I know you probably don't get asked about him enough. Do you -- he sounded like he's going to coach a few more years. How much longer can you see him coaching? He doesn't seem like he ever ages. And do you think at some point, just given the opportunity, one of you guys is bound to beat him, whether it's you or Jimbo or whoever?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Well, it doesn't look like he's slowing down very much. The hip injury didn't put him out. He wasn't on the disabled list very long. He was

out there, based on what he said, on the golf course pretty quickly.

He looks good. Obviously it hadn't affected their wins and losses. They continue to be successful, and I don't -- I wouldn't put a timetable on him on anything.

Q. They keep flashing your schedule up here. Who did you anger to get this slate of teams on the same season?

WILL MUSCHAMP: I'm not worried about the schedule. I'm worried about the Gamecocks. That's all. I'm worried about the things that we can control. Again, I think that's why you come to a place like South Carolina or you come to the Southeastern Conference, to play against the best and be in the limelight every week and have great opportunities every single Saturday.

Q. You mentioned The Big Green Egg. What's your go-to recipe or meal when using it?

WILL MUSCHAMP: It's anything you want, Ben, I can do it. Take all comers. Commissioner Sankey made a mistake, and one of the very few he's made, he talked about Barry Odum being the best griller in Columbia. And I'm assuming he's talking about Columbia, Missouri, not Columbia, South Carolina.

Q. Not a food question, another transfer portal one. Has the portal changed at all how you evaluate high school players, maybe those who have moved around in high school?

WILL MUSCHAMP: No, not at all. At the end of the day, you can't predict the portal. You recruit the high school players normally, junior college players exactly what you need. We look at numbers at each position that we feel like we have to have to have the kind of depth you've got to have on your football team so you don't get overloaded in different areas.

So that hasn't changed anything as far as approach of how we recruit. Unless you possibly pick up a transfer or something, that may change a number of a position that you may not take a high school player, but it doesn't -- it doesn't change anything as far as the evaluation process and the selection process of the high school player.

Q. With Jay and move to receiver when that conversation began, how was it initiated? Who was a part of it? Do you bring the family in? Do you guys get together, you and Coach McClendon and whoever else and say, hey, Jay --

WILL MUSCHAMP: No, I brought Jay in. We had a talk about it and his role on the football team. I didn't

think it was very smart to have a guy that's big, smart, really good athlete that runs extremely well that possibly could be standing on the sidelines. He helped us on special teams in the latter part of last season in a guy that, again, athletically needs to be on the field somewhere, and Jay was all for it.

Jay, he's a team guy, and there's nobody going to work or attack the offseason harder than he is to do the things he got to do to improve himself to put himself in position to help our football team, and that's what he's done.

Q. Coach, two-part question about recruiting. First off, if I would ask you what is the recruiting blueprint right now for your program at South Carolina, what would that be? And part b, has that evolved any since the time that you first got there?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Well, the recruiting blueprint hasn't changed at all as far as signing the best players that fit what we want at the University of South Carolina by position. We have critical factors at each position, whether it be size, speed, the things that we're looking for on tape, flexibility, combine numbers as far as shuttle, vertical broad 40 time that we want at each position. And then based on the evaluation from the film, from the transcript, from the character, from the high school coach, from the area coaches, we have a pretty vast, you know, process that we have that we go through in evaluating and evaluating to sign the best players possible.

I do think that the Long facility has helped us tremendously from the standpoint of the investment we've made from the football program that's helped us on the recruiting trail to be able to attract some different guys. But our plan and our process has not changed at all from the standpoint of the kind of men we're looking for to help us win an eastern division championship and win our state and win in the SEC.

Q. Will, you talked about the multi-year starters that came out of your first class in Columbia. What has been it been like to catch Kiel Pollard's journey and where he's come and how he's gotten there?

WILL MUSCHAMP: Kiel is a guy that came in and helped us as true freshman from Moultrie, Georgia in Colquitt County, helped us as a true freshman, played mostly special teams. His role has continued to increase as he's moved into his sophomore and junior year. I'm expecting him to have a great year. He's been a guy that has worked extremely hard to be able to block at the point of attack to do some of the things we're going to ask him to do in the run game and in protection. And he's always been an elite route runner from the tight end position and a guy that can create mismatches for us in the middle of the field. He's a

great competitor. He works really hard. He comes from a winning program over there at Moultrie, and he has a great work ethic and a guy that we're excited about going into his senior year.

Q. Will, you've mentioned the operations facility a couple of times and next year's renovation to the stadium. Are there any other things that you need from the facility standpoint or administrative support standpoint that can help you advance the program further?

WILL MUSCHAMP: No. I compliment -- Coach Tanner and I met yesterday. His support and our board's support has been outstanding to continue to further our program along where it needs to be, but it doesn't stop. You got to continue to invest, and we have different things, more things in my opinion, we can do with our stadium moving forward.

As far as our developmental part of our program, the practice facilities, the weight room, all of those things are top notch right now, but everybody else is trying to catch up, so you got to continue to press the needle.

Q. Hey, Will, you all are playing more neutral site games, and you all are playing Carolina and Carolina to start the season in Charlotte. You've been on both sides of Georgia/Florida. They're kicking around going away from a neutral site game for good. Did you ever imagine that would be the case when you were in Gainesville or Athens?

WILL MUSCHAMP: No, I did not. From that standpoint, I think that game is a special game. I would love to see it stay in Jacksonville. I've been on both sides of it obviously, and I think obviously from a revenue standpoint, based on my understanding when I was in Florida, that was a better revenue situation for both schools to have it there. And I just think that that is taken away from what's really good about college football and uniqueness of college football, and that game's part of it. I was a part of the Texas/Oklahoma game there at the fairgrounds, same situation. That's one of the special, special games in college football, and I hope they don't go to home and home, personally.

Q. Will, you have several prospects from Hammond, right in Columbia this year, including one of the top overall prospects in the country. How important is it to you to open up a pipeline to a school like that?

WILL MUSCHAMP: They got a pretty good quarterback, too. You all going to recruit him? Again, I can't comment specifically, but they do have an outstanding program. Erik Kimrey is a really good football coach. It's an outstanding school, and any school that has a bunch of really good players, we like

to open up a pipeline to all of them in those situations,
but they certainly do a good job there at Hammond.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Muschamp, thank you for
your time.

WILL MUSCHAMP: All right. Go 'cocks!



2019 SEC Football Media Days South Carolina Player Quotes Wednesday, July 17

Senior Quarterback Jake Bentley

On if this year's team is Head Coach Will Muschamp's best team at South Carolina ...

"I think it is the first class where it is all Coach Muschamp and our coaching staff's recruited guys. It is guys who have bought in to what we want to do. A lot of seniors have played for two or three years now, so a lot of guys with a lot of experience and a lot of confidence."

On his growth in football since his senior year of high school ...

"I think just maturity. I remember back in my freshman year when we were down 20-7 to Florida, and I was on the bench just moping, not playing good. Now in my senior year, it is my job to get us back, and I have got to go down the line to get the guys fired up."

On the level of quarterback play in the SEC ...

"I don't know many times before where it has been at this level. That's what makes our league so special. It is really special to be part of this fraternity of brothers that are SEC quarterbacks that are really good dudes."

On approaching big games this year ...

"You should show up for North Carolina and Charleston Southern, just like we'll show up at the Bama game and the rest of the season. It shouldn't change."



2019 SEC Football Media Days South Carolina Player Quotes

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Senior Wide Receiver Bryan Edwards

On what he is looking forward to heading into his senior season...

"I am just looking forward to going out there and playing. We have done all this weightlifting, and we have been running in the sun and all of that good stuff. I am looking forward to getting back to playing football."

On his role of being a leader for his team...

"Being a leader is very important with me, being a senior and with all the experience that I have. I have to control my room and the guys that I am leading. I have to make sure that they know that their role is important on the team and make sure that we are ready to play every week."

On using dropped passes from last season as motivation for this upcoming year...

"It motivates us by making sure we are doing what we need to do to be the best that we can be, come that first game. Those dropped passes make you work harder, and they make you re-evaluate what you are doing. We have to go out there and focus."

On the potential for the South Carolina wide receiving group ...

"We can be whatever we want to be this year. I feel like we have the talent to do whatever we want to do. We have bigger guys like Ortre Smith. We have smaller, stockier guys like Shi Smith. Josh Vann is a guy that is coming along very well. We have all the tools to be whatever we want to be this year."



2019 SEC Football Media Days South Carolina Player Quotes Wednesday, July 17

Senior Linebacker T.J. Brunson

On playing a tough schedule ...

"Definitely. Just knowing that you are going to play against the best of the best, it is always exciting. I think guys are looking forward to it."

On being treated like a star at SEC Media Days...

"It is something new. Not something that I am used to. It is really cool to see the ins and outs. It is nice to see the things that go on besides just playing the game."

On how healthy he feels ...

"I feel really good. I feel like this offseason has been a key offseason for me. I feel the best I have in years. This year, you will see a lot more speed, explosiveness and execution when it comes to finishing plays."

On his expectations for the linebacker corps...

"I feel like last year, we weren't as consistent and confident at making and finishing plays. Going into this season, there will be a huge improvement to that with the way that we prepared and what we have experienced."