

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Thursday July 18, 2019

Derek Mason

Vanderbilt Commodores

COMMISSIONER SANKEY: Good morning. Derek Mason enters his sixth season as the head coach of Vanderbilt University. He is the second coach in history to guide the program to multiple bowl games, leading the Commodores to the Texas Bowl in Houston, Texas, at the end of last season. He, during his college days at Northern Arizona, used to spin R&B records, hosted a midnight radio show. And if you listen to his radio interview, has a place at home with a couple of turntables.

Most importantly, last year Vanderbilt University lost a member of their football team, Turner Cockrell, and Derek and members of his team and Turner's parents are involved in a foundation called Turner's Heroes to help cancer research and help people experiencing that fight as well.

Vanderbilt University head football coach, Derek Mason.

DEREK MASON: So good to be here. First of all, I'd like to thank Commissioner Sankey. He's been there every step of the way in good and bad, and that's when you know you have a friend. That's when you know that you have great leadership, and I definitely appreciate it.

And in terms of the remarks about being a deejay and spinning records, you know, it's nice to have some tangible skills or transferrable skills when you're out of work, you know? That's sort of what happens every once in a while in our business.

But I'm just happy to be here today. I want to say hello. I'm happy to be in front of you talking all things Commodore football. I want you to know this is a different-looking Vanderbilt football team with maturity, depth, athleticism, leadership. It's all in place for us.

This year we look to honor the legacies of both the late David Williams and Turner Cockrell for the daily impact they had, not just on this program but on our lives.

We're excited for the opportunities this season brings. The Commodores will have its hands full with the challenging home opener against the Georgia Bulldogs. Nashville's a hot city right now. Vanderbilt



football, much like the city, is constantly evolving to be better. We are focused on all of our areas and all of the areas in our program for success for 2019.

In 2018, we were able to start fast and be competitive early. After a tough mid season stretch, we finished strong, hitting our stride offensively, and making timely defensive stops down the stretch and give us an opportunity for-post season play.

Because of that, we earned the opportunity to play in the 2018 Texas Bowl, which was a great reward for our football team. What my program knows is it's critical to finish the year with a bowl victory. Vanderbilt football is poised for strong improvements in 2019 with the momentum of spring ball, the NFL draft, and the Vandy boys success in the College World Series, there's a different buzz in Nashville this summer about the University and our program.

Our goals are clear, and the work is getting down. Fall camp and the season will be here soon and the relentless, tough and intelligent marathon continues. Personally I'm looking forward to the start of preseason camp because this is the deepest squad I've had in my six years at Vanderbilt. I expect to see competition across the board as we start fall camp.

Gerry Gdowski will be our new offensive coordinator, and Gerry has a great understanding of our system, our talent, and my expectations. I think he's an ideal fit to move this offense forward.

Our offense will feature the dynamic trio of running back of Ke'Shawn Vaughn, tight end Jared Pinkney, and wide receiver Kalija Lipscomb. These three are proven in this conference and deserve your All SEC vote. Collectively all three men came back for the final season to finish their degrees, improve their craft, and lead this team.

Individually, I'd like to take a second to talk about these guys, starting with Nashville homegrown product Ke'Shawn Vaughn. You know, Ke'Shawn and I have a great relationship. Obviously, when I started my program, Ke'Shawn saw us go through a rough first year and decided to go away. We always stayed in contact in terms of me cheering him on when he was at the University of Illinois. When the change occurred

and he decided to come back home, Ke'Shawn and I sort of rekindled our relationship. But I've had a chance to see this young man grow up. He did a terrific job of coming in. It's not easy to do when you're a Big Ten Newcomer of the Year, okay, and now you're forced to sit out, okay, and be a scout team running back. And I'll tell you, in my time, he may have been the best scout team running back I've ever coached.

But with that being said, Ke'Shawn proved, when he stepped on the field a year ago, that he's one of the best backs in the country. He's a three-dimensional running back who can run, block, and catch. I mean, he can do it all.

Tight end, Jared Pinkney, came from LaCrosse High School, Atlanta, Georgia, this young man played for me as a true freshman. Unfortunately in his first game, he had a shoulder injury and ended his first season as a Commodore, but now he's a fifth year senior, and let me tell you every time he stepped on the field, he's done nothing, but get better. You're going to see the best of Jared Pinkney. He may be the best inline blocking tight end and pass catching tight end in the country, and I make no bones about that.

And last, but not least, wide receiver, Kalija Lipscomb, extremely talented. He's in his fourth year. He started as a true freshman. He played a lot of football, and I remember standing on this stage a year ago talking about this young man and the possibilities of the season he could have.

We look forward to seeing exactly what these three guys will do in 2019 as they lead our football team, but we also have talent behind our top play makers including running back, Jamauri Wakefield, and wide receivers, C.J. Bolar, Chris Pierce and Amir Rahman. I know everybody wants to talk about the quarterback position, so let's dive in.

With the departure of Kyle Shurmur to the NFL, Deuce Wallace and Riley Neal are competing for the starting job. They have similar skill sets and different strengths. Deuce is a skilled athlete. He is very familiar with our offense. Riley comes in having starting 32 games at Ball State where he completed 60 percent of his throws for 7400 yards.

The fact is with Mo Hasan and Allan Walters, there's more talent in the quarterback room today than at any other time in my tenure as head coach.

Defensively, we're bigger, longer, deeper, faster, smarter. I expect this year to improve in Jason Tarver's second year as coordinator. We have numerous returning players who saw significant playing time last season. We expect all of them to make great strides

this fall. Since the bowl game, we've emphasized tackling, stopping and run, third down efficiency and red-zone efficiency. These areas continue to be a point of emphasis for this defensive unit.

We've also added veterans to our roster including wide receiver, returner, Justin Shelton-Mosley, offensive lineman Rowan Godwin, quarterback Riley Neal, quarterbacks Donte Williams and Cam Watkins, defensive lineman Eddie Zinn-Turner, Brandon Maddox and Malik Langham, outside linebacker, Lashawn Paulino-Bell, and Scott Meyer.

These additions make this team deeper and provide much needed maturity in game experience in key spots. Our conditioning staff lead by James Dobson has done a fantastic job this offseason. We have seen unbelievable gains in strength, size and speed. James and his staff continue to create greater intensity, consistency and culture within our program.

In conclusion, our team success will be determined by the performance of our offensive and defensive fronts. I believe we're better on both sides of the ball, but it's time for the offensive line, defensive line and linebacking corps to help carry this ball club in 2019.

Thank you for listening. With that being said, I'll turn it over for questions.

Q. Derek, what does it mean to your program that you've beaten Tennessee three years in a row?

DEREK MASON: For us, man, it simply means that we're relevant, okay, in the SEC East conversation. I think for us, time and time again, it's been about trying to make sure that we could keep up with that program, you know, up the road, but there's a big -- there's a big, you know, combat zone going on on the SEC East side of the conference, and right now, you know, looking at Tennessee, where they're at, Jeremy Pruitt's done a good job, but for us, we've got to continue to make sure that we just don't focus on Tennessee, we focus on winning games in our conference.

I believe right now this is the best football team that I've had. I believe Tennessee is making a move, going to make their program better. But the reality is, for us, it will be about what happens in 2019, not what happened in '16, '17, and '18.

Q. As good as Ke'Shawn was at Illinois, has he been even better than you thought? What makes him so good? I think a lot of coaches, if a local high school guy didn't give them strong consideration, they maybe wouldn't keep a good relationship. What was the key to that? And also Tim Horton, your running backs coach, Arkansas

guy, wonder what led to bringing him in, how Tim is fitting in for you.

DEREK MASON: You asked a lot in that question. Let's go ahead and break this question down.

Ke'Shawn Vaughn, let's start there. Ke'Shawn was Gatorade Player of the Year in the state of Tennessee. When you look at who he was, he went to Pearl-Cohn High School. Right down the road. We developed a strong relationship. That's one thing about me, I try to be very, very intentional about relationships. We don't take a lot of guys; and the guys we take, I need to make sure they fit who we are.

Ke'Shawn was a young man who was very proud, okay, being from Nashville, okay. And for me, to keep that relationship, you know, with Ke'Shawn and Cam, okay, and players that are in the city, okay, have always been important to me. But Ke'Shawn just continued to believe and watch from afar, okay, what he saw in terms of us getting a little better. Because that first year, in 2014, was a rough year, and that was the year he was coming out. So, when he left, I know he had a mindset of "Maybe I need to go; but, Coach, I appreciate who you are." And in coming back, okay, when he decided to come back, you know, there was no animosity. Okay. I thought he was the same guy. I knew he was a talented running back, and for him to know that he was going to have to sit a year, that's not easy.

But I think that speaks to the essence of Ke'Shawn Vaughn and who he is. Ke'Shawn Vaughn is a young man who is prideful about his city. He's prideful about being a competitor. He wants to be the best at what he does. And that's been spectacular to see. We've become close, extremely close, and I'm thankful for that relationship and time spent.

Now, as for Tim Horton, you talk about acquiring Tim from Auburn as our running backs coach, let me tell you, there's nobody more excited about Tim Horton than Ke'Shawn Vaughn. He knows who he's coached. He's know who's been around. And I thought it was special, magical, to see those two work together as we went through spring.

You could tell, it was teacher to student. You could tell that Ke'Shawn was invested and bought into everything Coach Horton had to say.

That's what I'm looking to do. I'm looking to get great teachers, great guys that can build relationships. That's what Coach Horton brings to the table. He's been around. He's got lots of experience, but more than that, he loves teaching and he loves building young men. And that's what our program is about.

Q. Talk about how aggressive you guys have been in the transfer portal, fortifying your roster. And then from our community, Malik Langham, you mentioned him, bringing him in from Florida. And one other young player on your team from my area, Daevion Davis, and what kind of player can he be for you in the future.

DEREK MASON: The transfer portal, for us, it's difficult at Vanderbilt University with the academic standards, being the way they are, to look at a ton of transfer students, it really is.

But, you know, what we found is that when you look at the graduate transfer opportunity, that's been spectacular for us. And that's really what I'm looking for at different times, just to fortify a roster with guys who have played ball games. And I need that. You know, when you can bring in guys who have had close to 150-plus cumulative starts wherever they've been, that's experience that you can't buy.

So, for me, being aggressive and having something to offer at Vanderbilt in terms of a graduate degree I think is something that's attractive to an undergraduate student who's exhausted some of his eligibility. With that being said, that's where I see that.

Now, when you talk about Huntsville, the talent in Huntsville, it's been good to us. It's right down the road. I look at Daevion Davis. My man is a big-time player. He's going to play in 2019, you know? 300 pounds. You know, a little over six foot, 305, 300 pounds, fast, quick, aggressive.

We need him to fortify this roster. We have more depth up front, but having talented young players like him and Malik Langham, who we actually recruited the year before and it came down to us, Alabama, and Florida, and in the end he chose to go to another school, but the reality is now having him in our program, these two young men from Huntsville, will really give us a chance to be really good up front in the future.

But these guys are good players now, and hopefully they can fortify the roster for 2019 as we get ready to tackle a pretty good schedule.

Q. Coach, you've got LSU the third game of the year. I've been asked by several people down there, does the Vandy whistler come to football games?

DEREK MASON: The Vandy whistler is everywhere. Sometimes I think I hear him outside my window. I mean, that's -- that's one thing about the Vandy whistler, you can count on him being consistent. So expect to see him at bowl games, expect to hear him. I know he's annoying to y'all, but to us, in Vanderbilt

there on West End, he's the man.

Q. You obviously brought three proven play makers with you today, but you're going to have a new quarterback, you're going to have new starters on the offensive line. How dependent are these three guys on the quarterback play and on the offensive line play to make sure you get the best out of those guys?

DEREK MASON: Yeah. You know, the quarterback, we just talked about it as I went through my opening statement about what the quarterback situation is. We got talent at quarterback. But the starting quarterback's going to be the guy who can win over this team. The reality is, okay, he's got enough play makers around him, okay, we got enough depth offensively in the skill positions where this guy has to be a great skill quarterback but he's got to be a game manager who guys believe in. He's got to have those leadership qualities that can take us down the field and put us in the end zone when needed and necessary.

That's what I'm looking for. That's why this battle is going to go probably midway through camp. When you talk about the offensive line, it's not like our offensive line is depleted, when you look at Cole Clemens, when you look at Devin Cochran, okay, and then you come back with Saige Young, and then you add a Rowan Godwin to that, you really are only talking about replacing your offensive center.

For me, as I look at it, to have that battle going on with Grant Miller, Dan Dawkins, Sean McMoore, I don't know how many programs have three centers, but that just really speaks to the depth up front that we have, we finally have.

Every year I think I've come up here and said, okay, we're better and got more depth. This is the first year, besides losing three key offensive players, where I think our offensive depth is going to carry this team. We're deep in all positions, but we've got depth across the board. Now this is about figuring this quarterback situation and getting this offensive line to gel.

But I think when you have three anchors up front with a guy and another guy who started 30-plus games in his career, it's a pretty good bet we'll start the season fast and try to get off to a good start.

Q. My question is, you're entering your sixth season at head coach at Vanderbilt. How much do you think this long tenure is an advantage to you both with your team and recruiting battle?

DEREK MASON: Say that one more time.

Q. You're entering the sixth season as head coach

at Vanderbilt. How much do you think your long tenure is an advantage both with your team and in the recruiting race?

DEREK MASON: When you talk about my team, here is what I tell you, I always said this to my team, every day is a job interview and everything you're running out of is time.

When you're looking at the sixth season or heading into the sixth season, it really speaks to the idea that my mission statement is in line with the University's. Okay? They're seeing the growth. They're seeing the maturity, both on and off the field with our student-athletes. Okay, and how they show themselves, how they prove themselves and really, you know, what the investment has been all of the way around, not just about the ball, but everything in between. You know, Vanderbilt's a four-year decision. That's what I am talking about when I'm talk to young men.

Again, they've seen me out there on the front line. I'm talking about not just recruits, but my administration has had a chance to see me. Okay? I'm a blue collar guy. You look at the suit and maybe the shoes and something else and say, coach got swagger, I do. I truly believe that. I truly believe that. But I also know and understand that a place like Vanderbilt is special, and you got to be a grassroots guy. We've been growing this thing organically.

It's taking some time. I believe recruits are starting to pay attention to what's happening at schools like this because you can get more than a football experience. You get a chance to get a degree, a chance to build a brand in a network that's second to none in this conference.

Q. I got another two-part question. You handled the first one so well. I guess we don't know who's going to win your quarterback job, but you guys could possibly be one of five SEC schools to have a grad transfer start at quarterback. How do you feel about that trend? And also you guys got to play Georgia, Purdue and LSU to open the season. That's a pretty tough way to start. How do you feel about that?

DEREK MASON: Okay. Well, talking about a possibility of grad transfer quarterback, you know, starting. I truly believe nowadays that's really what the portal has done, and that's what college football is. I know it seems to be prevalent in the SEC, but I think it's prevalent across college football. Every team's trying to get better. And in this day and age, you see a lot of programs stack up the quarterback position and guys look up and they say, well, maybe I need to look at a different opportunity, but you see young men who want bigger opportunities when they came out of high

school, okay, but decided to go to these schools, and they spent four years, they got their undergraduate degree and now they feel like they want to take their talents elsewhere. I'm not against that.

You know, when you look at free agency, that wasn't a part of college football, you know, two years ago. Now it is. So with that being said, you know, the platform to give the student-athlete an opportunity to find a best fit, I'm all for it.

Okay. When you talk about the schedule, and where we're at, I love the schedule. I really do. It gives this team a chance to test itself early. You know, you want to -- if you think you have a good football team, what you want to do is be tested early. And so I think, as I was talking with Commissioner Sankey, you know, we had a chance to have a conversation about what the season, you know, could be after we ended last season. I knew -- I knew the schedule may be tough. I didn't realize after I got the conference schedule games to come out how tough it would be, and that's a good thing. We get a chance to test ourselves early, these games with Georgia, Purdue, okay, LSU, two of those at home I think would do this football team some good and give us a chance to see what the Commodores have in 2019.

Q. You mentioned the transfer portal earlier, so you kind of look more for graduate transfers and things like that. Whenever you're looking through there, how much of a factor is it whether you can get a guy a waiver for the year and what's the new waiver rules for this upcoming season? Just what are your kind of thoughts on that?

DEREK MASON: You know, waivers, I don't have a ton of guys that have waivers. They're a graduate transfer. They have graduated, and there's an opportunity for them to move forward. With that being said, like I said, the platform, okay, is now open. Okay. I -- I can tell you, just like I just said, the reality for us is, now, you know, with young men looking to leave, we don't have a lot of attrition at Vanderbilt, but this year, I had two guys that decided to leave. They have not played a lot. They wanted opportunities to go elsewhere. They felt like depth on the roster at their position, okay, didn't necessarily, you know, give them an opportunity to step on the field, okay, and compete in 2019. And so they decided to go elsewhere, but they had degrees doing so, and I'm for that.

Mr. David Williams, my late mentor, you know, was all about, you know, social justice and the idea of making sure that we get it right for athletes, and I think this is one of those things, you know, without having to go through a ton of waivers and do a bunch of jumping through hoops, you know, having this, you know,

platform to be able to move as a graduate student to a place where you can continue to get a graduate education, and not be penalized is where we need to be in 2019.

Q. Coach, you opened with Georgia at 7:30 at a home night game to open the season. Kind of a two-part question. One, what do you think that game environment is going to be like? I know a lot of Georgia fans are going to try to travel up and take over Nashville. We will see how that goes. And two, you mentioned a conversation yesterday you had an opportunity to spend some time with Kirby Smart, and I'm wondering if you could share what some of those conversations and fun times were like?

DEREK MASON: I know that Georgia bunch travels like, but this ball game is going to have a pretty well attended crowd by Vanderbilt University. I mean, that's what we're looking for. Our athletic director, Malcolm Turner, has done a really good job in the first six months fortifying what our marketing plan will be exactly, what we're looking to do in terms of enhancing the experience and understanding that people -- people want to see good SEC football. Georgia's a big game, and I think we're going to turn out in spades, so I look forward to that.

With Kirby, I love Kirby, Kirby and I, you know, have a -- have, you know, a lot of defensive background, a lot of defensive history, a lot of things that we like that are very similar. So for us, we had a chance to spend some quality time with the Nike trip down to Mexico. And, to me, he's like a brother. I mean, you meet people sometimes and you realize, man, that you got a lot in common, some of the goals. You see football the same way. You see life the same way. And all you're trying to do is move young men from where they are to where they need to be. And that's what our conversations were about. Our wives got a chance to spend time with one another. I truly believe that was an enjoyable time for me because in this profession, rarely do you get a chance, especially with guys in your conference, to spend that type of time away from everybody where you can talk about ball, but really all things life, all things children, all things opportunities to gain, philosophical wisdom and understand people better.

Q. When you have expertise on one side of the ball, and you're not the coordinator on that side of the ball, how much of the play calling is handled during the week preparing for situations versus game day when the action is live?

DEREK MASON: You know, here's what I'll say: For me, Vanderbilt didn't hire Derek Mason to be a defensive coordinator. They hired Derek Mason to be

a head coach. Early in my tenure, I had to make those decisions. I made the decisions. I went in different directions. I took over the defense, and I have had moved -- I have since had the opportunity hire Jason Tarver as a coordinator.

With that being said, we both understand each other. I walk into the offensive room and the defensive room. I walk into the special teams room. I walk into every room. Everybody gets my fair share of attention. It's not just the defensive side of the ball. I think that's important.

I think that is how our team has grown. It's hard to grow when all you do is stay on one side of the ball. When you look at most coaches that have gone that way in the conference, eventually they move out and get back to be the head coach because they realize everybody needs their attention. That's really what I've done with that.

What was the second part of that question? Is that good? Okay.

Q. You talked a bit about Ke'Shawn Vaughn, specifically what would you say is his greatest strength and asset as a back and everything you saw last year? Thank you.

DEREK MASON: Well, the biggest thing that you see about Ke'Shawn is that when he touches the ball, he's hard to tackle. I mean, the young man's dynamic. If you ask me how fast he runs, I don't know. 4.36? 4.39? At 220 pounds, I mean, he's fast, I mean, faster than any running back that I've seen since I've been there. I think we've added -- Ralph Webb is pretty fast, but this young man can go.

When you look at his ability to go zero to 60, I've seen him reverse field. I've seen him cut back across the grain and outrun angles. How often do you see that? He can make a guy missing the hole. He can run over you. He can run around you. He's got really good hands. He's patient, and I think he's gotten even better under Tim Horton and understanding how to play without the football. And I think that's the best of what we are going to see from Ke'Shawn Vaughn in 2019. So, I'm excited, and you should be too because you're going to get a chance real soon to see a really good running back.

Q. Of those three seniors, was Jared the most surprising to you in terms of returning this year? What were those discussions like, and what can he be as a senior this season?

DEREK MASON: Well, Jared was surprising. I think they all were surprising. Jared was probably the most surprising in the simple fact that we -- we always had a

good relationship, and Jared's never really said a lot. Okay? He's always been about his business.

But he finally came to me, you know, afterwards, and he just wanted to sit down and have a conversation, just me and him, and he asked me my thoughts. And I'm sure between family and other people there were, you know, probably a lot of people in his ear about what he needed to do. He just wanted my honest opinion.

And I told him. I said, I think you're a first or second round draft pick. I do. But, listen, you do what you got to do. I get it. Everybody's got different situations.

Then I think he spent some time with his players, and I think there's guys on the defensive side of the ball that came to him, guys like Dimitri Moore and Dayo, Frank Coppet, Tae Daley. Those guys wanted these guys to stay. They loved who Jared was as a leader.

Jared has always been willing to call out mediocrity in the locker room. Always. And I think sometimes when you look at players, it's very easy for a guy to say, man, you know what, it's time for me to move on, it's time for me to go, I've done my part.

But I think Jared realized that it was unfinished business for him. I think he realized that he wanted to leave this place better than the way he found it and leave a bigger mark, not just going to two bowl games, not having won one get. That's unfinished business for that guy. He's a good football player. He's a good leader. He knows exactly what we need. More than that, he really just surprised me with his words of wisdom and the things that happened in that conversation.

I'm so proud of that young man for giving this program a chance to move hopefully his career forward, but more than that, hopefully giving me a chance to spend six more months with a really good young man.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Mason, thank you for your time this morning.

DEREK MASON: Thank you.



2019 SEC Football Media Days Vanderbilt Player Quotes Thursday, July 18

Senior Wide Receiver Kalija Lipscomb

On playing against Georgia at the start of the season and his expectations....

“First and foremost, it is a big opportunity. We are looking forward to it. We are going to take it one game at a time. Georgia is game one, and we realize they are a talented team. But we also believe in our talent and our skills, so we are going to step on the field and play it out.”

On his main goal and focus for his senior season.....

“My main goal is to help my team be as good as we can be. I also have some personal goals, but those are secondary to any team goals that we have.”

On what it is going to take to get to a bowl game this year....

“Yes, I think as a team, our big focus is to get to a bowl game. But not only to get to a bowl game, to win it. We feel like we have the talent to do so. It is going to be a one-week-at-a-time kind of thing. We gotta take it one game at a time, one step at a time, and at the end of the season, we will see where we are going from there.”

On Ke'Shawn Vaughn potentially being the best running back in the SEC.....

“Ke'Shawn Vaughn is the best running back in the SEC, point blank period. He may not say it, but I will tell you guys - I see how he works every day. I see the attention he pays to detail. I see his intentions on how he wants to grow and how good he wants to be. If you saw us play Baylor, you can see that when he's hot, he can do whatever he wants on the football field. It is really just getting him the ball and watching him go. I am looking forward to seeing that guy grow and be even better than he was last year this upcoming fall.

On the rigor of Vanderbilt academics....

“It can be tough, but just like anywhere else, any other school in the nation, it is about time management. As long as you take care of what you are supposed to take care of before you do what you want to do, you will be alright.”



2019 SEC Football Media Days Vanderbilt Player Quotes Thursday, July 18

Redshirt Senior Running Back Ke'Shawn Vaughn

On Kalija Lipscomb calling him the best running back in the SEC...

"He is the best receiver in the SEC, so we balance out."

On playing Georgia in week one...

"I think playing Georgia the first week is a good thing. Both teams are coming in trying to warm up. We will be able to capitalize on this game with them still trying to warm up and get a feel for the season."

On playing in his hometown...

"I take what I could have been, and I put that on the field. I could have been a troublemaker, but I unleash that on the field. That is what helps me contain a lot of my anger. That's my personality. I can't go around the city without someone knowing me. It's even worse when my teammates come up to me and say 'I saw your auntie' or 'I saw your cousin,' because I don't even know if they really are my auntie or cousin. It's a fun thing."

On Assistant Coach Tim Horton...

"Coach Horton is a great coach. He makes everybody in the room feel included, from the starters to the last string. The last string is going to know the plays as well as the starter does. You don't see many coaches doing that and keeping everybody involved. He is very active and a family man, so he likes to have that family bond with his players. When someone has that much experience, you want to take in everything that he is talking about."

On the reason their offense isn't being talked about...

"It's because we're Vanderbilt. Nowadays, people get lost in who is getting the most hype. We like it, because we want people to sleep on us. You are going to sleep on us, and we are going to run the score up on you. We love it. People don't think Vanderbilt is good, and they don't think we're in the SEC. It's like 'you have these players leading in these stats, but whatever, because they're at Vanderbilt.' We want you to keep sleeping on us. We will wake you up on gameday."



2019 SEC Football Media Days Vanderbilt Player Quotes Thursday, July 18

Redshirt Senior Tight End Jared Pinkney

On if he is the best tight end in the SEC...

"Comparison is the thief of all joy. In all seriousness, I do not need the hyperbole. I just want to be known as a really good player."

On Scott Meyer and the impact he has had on the team...

"I have actually been golfing with Scott and a couple other people, and we went out afterwards. I got to spend the afternoon with him, and he is a really good guy."

On Ke'Shawn Vaughn's style...

"Efficient. I think it goes without saying that when you average eight yards a carry, but he is getting the most out of every run that he can. There is no false movement and no bad reads. If he sees a hole, he is going to find it."

On opening the season with Georgia at home...

"For me personally, the preparation never changes. The opponents change and the level of talent. But for me, when I am preparing for an SEC opponent, I am preparing for a nationally-ranked team. It never changes. I am just as thorough for them as anyone else."