

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Texas A&M Aggies

DeMarvin Leal

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Texas A&M junior defensive lineman DeMarvin Leal. We'll ask DeMarvin to make an opening comment about the season. DeMarvin, as you head into the 2021 season, talk about your excitement for getting back out and continuing after a fantastic season last year.

DeMARVIN LEAL: I'm very excited to be able to get after it this season. It's going to be an amazing season, especially with 100 percent capacity. Being back in Kyle Field with everybody there is going to be amazing, and definitely looking forward to the blessings this year.

Q. Just talk about the mood of the program right now after the success last year, how you guys are feeling and vibing heading into this fall camp.

DeMARVIN LEAL: Heading into fall camp, with just being able to get back together as a whole and getting after it is something I've been waiting for for a long time. We're looking forward to setting our standard and showing our standard and just showing how the culture has changed.

Q. How good do you think this defense can be, and can it be as good as last year without Bobby Brown and Buddy Johnson, what they meant?

DeMARVIN LEAL: The limit for this defense is the sky, beyond the sky honestly. We're not going to miss a beat with those guys gone. They helped us out a lot, and with respect to those guys, the most respect to those guys, but we have guys that stepped up this spring and continued to step up this summer. I'm looking forward to seeing what they do throughout the season.

Q. I want to ask a little bit about your defensive ends group with you, Michael, and Tyree. You've got a lot of experience there, but you've also got some young guys. Can you talk about what you're seeing from everybody?

DeMARVIN LEAL: Everybody is just helping each other out. We compete getting to the QB. We compete throughout workouts. We're just making sure that we keep our standard where it's at and making sure that we know that every single day that we have each other's backs and that, if we want to be successful, we can't do it alone. We have to do it together.

Q. I assume you face Kenyon in practice. If so, what are your thoughts on him? How do you think he rates with the other great tackles in the league? And what do you think about offensive line overall? A lot of new guys, but Kenyon says he feels pretty good about the group.

DeMARVIN LEAL: I feel confident in our offensive line, and Kenyon Green, he's been fantastic at just showing those guys, those young guys how to do it, what to do, and just -- man, in my personal opinion, he's the best offensive lineman in the SEC, and going against him every day is the best thing because iron sharpens iron.

To be where we want to be, we need to have guys like us going at it and showing the young guys how to compete and how to practice the correct way.

Q. Jimbo talked about going against the offensive tackle from Tennessee, Johnson had transferred. You said you had firsthand knowledge of how good he was. Can you talk about that game, what you remember about him?

DeMARVIN LEAL: Tennessee game against him, it was a good game. We definitely threw blows back to back, so I'm definitely excited that he joined our squad. And iron sharpens iron, so I'm just ready to get to work and get it rolling.

Q. Jimbo Fisher said he feels really good about you guys. Obviously, you have to go out there and prove it. You lost a lot of great players, but it seems with the recruiting classes he puts together, it's reloading, not really rebuilding. How do you feel about the talent level, and do you feel like you guys can challenge for a playoff spot? Is there extra motivation, after coming

so close last year to making the playoffs?

DeMARVIN LEAL: This team, we're ready. We know what our standard is, and we know we've all made the commitment to each other just to be the best that we are and to do that every single day. As far as playoffs, we're definitely going to be able to work our tails off to get there.

Q. I know you've had a chance to join with a marketing group. What has NIL meant to you, and what do you think the possibilities can be in the future?

DeMARVIN LEAL: Don't really talk about NIL, but it's been amazing and very exciting. And just being able to focus on football is my main goal right now. Just being able to show our young guys what our standard is and what we need to do to be successful.

Q. As far as I know Commissioner Sankey said earlier that 6 of 14 teams have been vaccinated 80 percent or more. What is the vaccination effort? How would you describe it? What are the thoughts on vaccines amongst the team, and could it bring a competitive advantage this season?

DeMARVIN LEAL: I feel like our team has done a fantastic job being able to stay safe with COVID. Our trainers have done a fantastic job to tell us about the vaccinations and just filling us in on the pros and the cons of it, the side effects, and it's just been nice to have them around and let us know what it is that we need to do.

THE MODERATOR: DeMarvin, talk about Texas A&M's always had a very talented defense. What's it like to be at an institution and a program and play on that Texas A&M defense, to represent that university in that way?

DeMARVIN LEAL: Our defense is able to represent in a fantastic way because defense is what wins championships. So coming to A&M as a whole, we already knew what it was going to be and what the expectations were not only for ourselves, but for the 12th man. Defense means everything to our 12th man, and just being able to make them proud is a blessing.

Q. Jimbo Fisher was talking at the Houston Touchdown Club, I guess a few weeks ago or months ago, whatever it was, and got asked -- I'm paraphrasing here -- are you hoping Nick Saban will retire so you can beat Alabama? And his answer was essentially, we're going to beat him while he's there. That's the plan. How good do you feel about your coach being confident like that and not backing down at all? What you heard about that, what was your reaction?

DeMARVIN LEAL: My reaction is just that Jimbo has the most confidence in us, and he knows what we can do, and we know how we're going to do it. His comment, I just loved it because it shows how much he believes in us, and it shows having a coach like that to stand behind you, and it matters a lot.

Q. This question may be a little sillier than some of the other serious ones you've had. A couple weeks ago, Jaden Peevy said that he wasn't sold on the nickname of the Wrecking Crew coming back, that he thought this was a new bunch. Where do you stand on bringing back the Wrecking Crew nickname debate?

DeMARVIN LEAL: I have all respect for the Wrecking Crew, and I would say that this generation is different. So I would say taking their name, that's not something we should do. It's a new generation. It's a new full tour. It's a new Aggieland. So I would say that there is a name that we're going to come up with, but it's not The New Wrecking Crew.

Q. Do you know what the new name is going to be? Are you guys talking about that? Is that something you can break here at media days? What's the deal?

DeMARVIN LEAL: I would have to say that we're going to keep that one under wraps. Stay tuned. It's going to come. We just have to deserve the name first.

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