

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Ole Miss Rebels

Jaylon Jones

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Ole Miss defensive back, senior Jaylon Jones. I'll ask Jaylon to make a comment about the season, and then we'll take your questions.

Jaylon, as you head into the 2021 football season, what are you looking forward to as the season approaches?

JAYLON JONES: Looking forward to big things. Looking forward to -- I think the future is bright for this team, especially this year. A lot of returning guys, a lot of more experienced. Our second year as a team, to offense and defensive scheme, and I think it's going to be a good year.

Q. I know everything today is geared towards offenses, most teams are getting more points in yards than ever. How tough a year was that last year for you guys defensively, and what gives you confidence you guys can play better, hold teams down a little bit better this year?

JAYLON JONES: I think just more of an execution. I think that us going into our last two games, the two games we won, the Egg Bowl and the bowl game, started to give us a little bit of confidence. Also, too, having a spring this season. Spring ball went well.

Like I said before, our second year under this scheme, it's giving guys a lot more confidence. We've got a lot of guys coming back. So we're going to be a more experienced defense this year.

Q. How are you feeling, man? How was your road to recovery? What are you looking forward to health-wise this season?

JAYLON JONES: I'm feeling good. I'm feeling fresh, blessed. I can't thank God enough. Like you said, coming off of injury, I had a pretty quick recovery, thank God for that, and just looking to have a really good, healthy season. Playing a major role on this team, just trying to

lead the team and looking for success.

Q. Being a Texas guy, how much do you kind of look forward to getting to play Texas A&M? I know, I believe, they offered you. What was that recruitment like from the Aggies?

JAYLON JONES: Being a Texas guy, it's always good to be back home. That means more family can come to the game. That's a great stadium to always play in. I remember my freshman year I played in it. Kyle Field is a very loud stadium.

And for recruiting, they definitely were heavy on me. They were in my top five. My dream was to be in the SEC, but Oxford, the town and the people, won me over.

Q. With defense this year as secondary, what are you looking to improve? Was it better over the off-season to have time together? What are the things that you all are working on to get better this year?

JAYLON JONES: Like you said, a lot of things, really, just that brotherhood, bonding, learning more, not just on the physical, but on the Xs and Os. It's our second year under that scheme, so us knowing where everybody would be at, what's in the right places, and what we are expecting.

Just to know what your brother on the right has and just knowing everybody's job. Us coming as a unit, putting the pressure on ourself, knowing that if we do our job and let the D-line get to the quarterback, this defense could be real good.

Q. I wanted to ask you a couple questions about Matt Corral. I assume you guys faced him some in the spring. What did you see from him? How do you think he could be even better this coming season? And after the Arkansas game, the fact that Coach Kiffin stayed with him and made it clear he's still the guy, what did that mean for the team? What did you think about the way he bounced back from that game and finished the year?

JAYLON JONES: Matt is one of the hardest workers on



the team, and just with Coach Kiffin sticking with him after that Arkansas game, it didn't shock any of us because we knew Matt was our guy. He's our leader.

In the spring, all I've been seeing, Matt, every day he's looking to get better. He is getting better. This year, I think he's going to put up way more numbers than he has before just because of his mental side of it. You can tell that he's noticing things before the ball snaps. He's getting guys aligned. He's really becoming a general more than he was before.

Q. You talked about Matt's mental side. From a physical standpoint facing all the great quarterbacks you have in the SEC, what makes him a great quarterback from a physical standpoint, do you think?

JAYLON JONES: From a physical standpoint, it's obviously his arm. Whether at practice or in games you've seen DBs can be right on the receiver, and Matt is going to throw his receiver open. For the deep ball, he's real accurate, no matter if you're running with the receiver or not, you've got to play his hands because Matt's going to throw it right in the bread basket.

And Matt is actually pretty fast. During this off-season right now, he's sticking with a couple of us, or trying to, and I think he uses his legs real well in games.

THE MODERATOR: Jaylon, last year obviously not the regular buildup to the season with the pandemic, not knowing the games, and some defenses struggled to tackle and play consistently. How much are you looking forward to a regular preseason to lead up to the season, and what impact do you think that could have defensively?

JAYLON JONES: I don't like to use that as an excuse, but we definitely can use this preseason well. I think it all starts with what we're doing now during this off-season leading into camp, focusing on those things, and those things are on our mind.

Film doesn't lie. We weren't the best at executing. We weren't the best as tackling or stopping offenses, so we make that a main focus as a team. The coaches stress it enough. Tackling and all those little things, the little details, we know that's what it takes to just be a successful team and go down and win a lot of games.

Q. You guys open up with Louisville. That's a pretty big nonconference game. Obviously, you didn't get to play any nonconference games last year. How do you feel about opening up with Louisville? Does that bring a little more sense of urgency to summer workouts and fall camp?

JAYLON JONES: Not really, just because of the confidence in this team. It doesn't matter who we're going to play. We're treating it like they're the best team in the nation, no matter what.

Opening up at Louisville is going to be real special. Just to be in a neutral site in Atlanta on a Monday night, there's not much more you can ask for. We're ready to show the nation what this team is about and how hard we've been working.

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