

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Hoover, Alabama, USA

South Carolina Gamecocks

Shane Beamer

Press Conference

COMMISSIONER SANKEY: Our final coach of day one of SEC media day is South Carolina's Shane Beamer. I think everyone knows he's heading into his first season as Gamecocks head coach. Youngest coach at South Carolina since 1993, was part of the victorious team -- not led his team to victory, he clarified, part of the victorious team at the 2021 Peach Bowl golf challenge a couple months ago.

On a personal note, I've known Shane since he was a young guy at Mississippi State, and he's one of the people who every time we're in a stadium together, when he was an assistant coach at different places -- South Carolina, Georgia, and Oklahoma -- he would always take a moment to come say hello before a game, after a game. Just very personable, and I always appreciated that touch.

So it's my privilege to introduce South Carolina Gamecocks head football coach Shane Beamer.

SHANE BEAMER: Thank you, Greg. I am honored to be here, excited to be here on SEC Media Days day one. As someone who has grown up around this league, has always enjoyed watching this on television each and every summer as an assistant coach at other places, to be here today representing the University of South Carolina, I'm very honored, very grateful, and, frankly, really, really cool to be up here in front of all of you and representing our program today.

Glad to be the second person in my family to be part of SEC Media Days. My wife, Emily, went to school at Mississippi State. I just saw Larry Templeton out in the lobby. She worked for Mike Nemeth in media relations. She actually was here in this room as one of the persons back in the day who would pass the microphone around to reporters to ask questions. She's been here, she was a part of it, and now I'm the second Beamer to be up here as well.

I'm excited to be back in the SEC after three years gone.



This is my 13th year as an assistant coach, now head coach, being in this conference, and there is no conference in America like this league. I've been a part of multiple leagues, and the passion, the intensity 365 days a year, the way this league is covered, there's nothing like it. I couldn't be more excited about being back here.

I've told Greg before, when I was in Oklahoma working as an assistant coach, I had a TV in my office, and most days that TV in my office was on the SEC Network and watching Paul Finebaum and Peter Burns and Alyssa Lang and people like that. Certainly was working to get my job done in Oklahoma, but always had an eye on this league as well.

I want to thank Greg Sankey for his leadership. He's someone, he mentioned it in the introduction, but someone I've had a lot of respect for for a long, long, long time. Being back in this conference now as a head football coach, that respect for him has only grown in the seven months since I've been back in this league. Being part of Zoom calls with him with the other head coaches and following his leadership, fortunate for his leadership last summer in allowing us to have a college football season and the way, the path that he led throughout the country, along with some other commissioners, to allow us to play. So certainly thankful for his leadership.

Appreciate you guys and the job that all of you do in covering our sport. Hope all of you are having an awesome summer. Really appreciate you being a part of this today.

Excited about the two young men I have with me today, Nick Muse and Kingsley J.J. Enagbare. I've been working with him on the pronunciation of one that as well. Two guys that I'm very excited about. Those two guys, really appreciate their leadership in our program since the day that I got hired. Two young men that did not have to come back for another season, had opportunities to leave South Carolina and continue their playing career at the professional level, chose to come back, chose to come back for the right reasons, and have been fantastic leaders for us since that day.

Nick won our Most Outstanding Offensive Player during



spring practice. Kingsley won the Most Outstanding Defensive Player during spring practice. They're leading guys on and off the field. They're both having fantastic summers. They're tough, they're talented, they're gritty, they're competitive, and both have great futures ahead of them in football.

They're just two of the guys doing a great job for us academically in our football program. Kingsley and Nick have both graduated, along with 18 other guys on our team that have graduated as well. 12 more we'll have that will graduate in December as well at the end of our season.

So doing a great job academically. 22 of our guys made the dean's list this past semester. One young man made the president's list. We have the second highest graduation success rate in the SEC, and I'm proud of what our young guys are doing off the field in South Carolina and really proud of what they're doing on the field.

I know every head coach is going to talk about his team and how excited he is about them, I'm no exception. Our guys have bought in and done everything we've asked them to do since I got hired in December and really fired up about what we're getting done right now. Offensively we returned seven starters. We've got a lot to prove. There's a lot of question marks about our offense, there's no doubt about it. I'm excited about the scheme we put together, being able to marry some of the things I did at Oklahoma and other places I've been, along with what Marcus Satterfield, our offensive coordinator, and our offensive staff have done at other places that they've been as well.

We've got good young talent at the quarterback position, but that's what it is, it's young. Luke Doty is the most experienced guy that we have. We named him our starter coming out of spring practice. He's a guy that's been in our program for a year.

Around him, we have a true freshman. We have an older young man in Connor Jordan that walked onto our program and is doing a great job. Colten Gauthier is a true freshman, and then Jason Brown that transferred in. So good young talent, but inexperienced.

Our running back position is a great position of strength for us. Obviously, we all know what Kevin Harris did at South Carolina last season and the season he had. He's excited to build upon that and to have an even better 2021 season. To lead the SEC in rushing yards per game and to go over a thousand yards on a team that didn't have the success they wanted on the field to me is remarkable and just a testament to the workhorse that Kevin is.

Marshawn Lloyd, who we have high hopes for, is fully

healed and doing a great job in his rehab and is back to full strength. Excited to watch him. If you watched our spring game, you saw ZaQuandre White. He capped off a great spring practice with a great spring game. Fired up about what he can do.

Our offensive line has great experience in guys like Dylan Wonnum, Jovaughn Gwyn and Eric Douglas returning. Those guys have played a lot of snaps for us. That's a group that's deep and talented. Jakai Moore is another young man that started there in the past as well.

Wide receiver position, a lot has been made of the wide receiver position. It's deep, but it's very unproven, and those guys certainly are motivated to show what they can do. We've got a lot of guys at that position. We need some guys to step up as well, and they're off to a great start.

Dakereon Joyner had a fantastic spring for us. He won an award that we voted on as coaches after spring practice for offensive and special teams, being a fantastic leader for us. Jalen Brooks and Josh Vann are two other wide receivers that won awards for us in spring practice also.

Tight end position, something that's near and dear to me, something I've coached the last five years. In my career, we're always going to utilize the tight end. Every donor or booster club event that I go to, that's the one question I get asked, are we going to throw the tight end? We are going to throw to the tight end. We want the premier tight ends in America, and that's the way we're recruiting now as well, to go get those guys as well.

We've utilized those guys in the past when I've been at Oklahoma, and we'll continue to. One of those tight ends is here today in Nick Muse, a fantastic older player for us, and Jaheim Bell is another one we have high hopes for as well. That position will always be a key part of our offense at South Carolina.

Excited about our defense and what Clayton White, our defensive coordinator, is putting together. We want it to be a scheme that's attacking first and foremost, and that's what we're doing.

My dad used to always say in coaching, if you're good on the line of scrimmage and you're good in the kicking game, you've got a chance to be successful, and I feel that we are. We're certainly good on offensive line. We are deep, and we are talented at defensive line.

When you talk about Kingsley, who's here today, you talk about another young man like Zacch Pickens, there's not a lot of positions at South Carolina that I was familiar with

personnel-wise when I got hired. The defensive line was one of them because we recruited a bunch of those guys when I was at Georgia and didn't get them, and we recruited a bunch of them when I was at Oklahoma. Upset we didn't get them then, but I'm glad we didn't because they're with us now and excited about what they're going to be getting done.

In this league, you'd better be able to stop the run, and is it starts up front. We added talented freshmen to that group. We added talented transfers to that group, and looking forward to those guys starting.

Great competition at the linebacker spot. Sherrod Greene is a young man that has played a lot of snaps for us, but he's in a fierce competition with a lot of other young players at that position. That's another position we're here to see how that shakes out in August.

And same thing with the defensive back position. For those of that follow our program closely, you know that our defensive back position was hit really, really hard after the season, whether it be two young men that decided to continue their careers in the NFL, which we're happy for, and some guys that decided that they just wanted to enter the transfer portal and start fresh somewhere else.

So that was a position that was really hit hard, that we knew we needed to replace, and we started on that day one, and we've continued into the summer.

We've got five guys new to the defensive back position that weren't even there during spring practice that we've added since the end of spring practice. Looking forward to getting out there and watching those guys compete in the fall.

Then we talked about special teams. I've been involved in special teams anywhere I ever coached. Obviously, my dad, that was his bread and butter. We certainly want to be dominant on special teams as well. We return the corps of our unit with Parker White at kicker, Kai Kroeger at punter, our snappers return, excited about those guys. And some really good candidates for the return position in Josh Vann, Ahmarean Brown, Rico Powers, Dakereon Joyner, and Jalen Brooks. So we'll see how it shakes out.

Recruiting-wise, things are going great for us right now. I know you follow us closely from a recruiting standpoint. Things couldn't have gone better in the month of June for recruiting. We had prospects on campus 26 of the 27 possible days. The only day we didn't have prospects on campus was Father's Day. They may have come that day, I don't know, I was out of town. I said we need to get the heck out of town and have one day, so I went to Charleston for the day. It was great to have prospects visit

our campus, see our facility, and see the people, more importantly, we have at South Carolina.

I had a mom sit in my office and tell me, Coach, the best thing about this visit is you guys are the exact same people in person that you are on Zoom. And I said, What do you mean by that? She said, We've done so many of these virtual visits, they act one way on the computer, and then you get around them for a weekend, and they're completely different. That's not the way you guys are. We've had 12 commits since June 1st, and we're not slowing down any time soon.

I said in my press conference back in December that I didn't feel like there was anything at South Carolina that we lacked to be a championship program, that we had everything that we needed. I am even more convinced of that now after being there for seven months.

We have awesome academics. We talked about what our guys are doing off the field as well. We do have an elite academic program, the No. 1 university in America, public university for first-year experience, the nation's public university honors college, 300 undergraduate degree programs. Love what our guys are doing from an academic standpoint.

We've got the best fan base in the nation, loud, passionate. I've been to Gamecock club events throughout the state of South Carolina since I got started. I've got four more next week. We've got sold-out events. The excitement they have has only increased since I left South Carolina back in 2011.

Can't wait to get back out in front of Williams-Brice Stadium in front of those guys here in September to start things up. Our facilities, the way those have improved since I left in 2011, we've got as good of facilities in the country. Our Long Football Operations Center is unbelievable. Our indoor football facility, the city of Columbia, so much to offer our guys from a facilities standpoint.

Our coaching staff, there's another reason I say this, it took some time, but it came together perfectly. I had a mom in my office on an official visit telling me she has no doubt. She said, I can't believe you guys have only been together seven months because you get along so well and you complement each other so well. I said, That's the way we're going to be. We're real, we're genuine, we're honest, and what you see is what you get with us.

We have a level of success in South Carolina with other sports that have won championships, so they've shown it can be done, to win a baseball National Championship with Coach Ray Tanner, our athletic director, to win a basketball



National Championship with Dawn Staley, our men's basketball went to the Final Four, our women's soccer team played in the College Cup, coaches at University of South Carolina to learn from, and certainly have taken advantage of that as often as I can.

Excited about our administration and the support that they have given me, our new president, President Harris Fastides, being back, Ray Tanner, Chance Miller, our deputy athletic director, and the changes at South Carolina that they've implemented in the last ten years to give us a chance to be successful.

All of these Gamecock club events that I go to, any interview that I do, anywhere that I go in public, everyone tells me that there's never been more excitement about South Carolina football than there is right now, and I'm with them. I've never been more excited about a football season. I've never been more excited about the future of a program than what I am right now. We've got great people in this program. Absolutely, there have been bumps in the road, but I've loved every second of being the head football coach at the University of South Carolina since the day I got hired.

My wife and I bought a house. We haven't moved in. We're renovating it. We're still living in a condo 100 yards from my office. So all I do is wake up early each morning and go into that facility, and I can't wait to get to work each day and move this program forward and try and make this program better.

There have been some great days in Columbia, South Carolina, some great days for South Carolina football, but I am 100 percent convinced that the best days of South Carolina football are right in front of us, and I couldn't more excited about that, couldn't be more excited about being the head football coach of South Carolina.

And with that, I'll be happy to answer any questions you guys have.

Q. Obviously, with your father being who he is, I'm curious, have you found yourself trying to get out of his shadow, or is it something you've embraced and you're proud to be a part of the lineage of those sorts of accomplishments?

SHANE BEAMER: No, certainly very, very proud of that. Ever since I got into coaching -- really you go back to when I was playing high school football, growing up in Blacksburg, Virginia, there were kids I played with who said, The only reason you're the starting whatever on the football team or the baseball team is because your dad's the head coach at Georgia Tech.

Then I got into coaching. Whether it's right or wrong, I always tried to keep that chip on my shoulder or edge about myself to prove myself for sure. Certainly, I'm very proud of that. I got into coaching in 2000 as a graduate assistant with Georgia Tech with George O'Leary, and part of that was wanting to get out on my own and make my own name and not just go work for my dad as a graduate assistant and not be Shane Beamer, but to be Frank's son. It was important for me to go out and develop my own reputation and contacts. I did that, and I was thankful to be part of fantastic programs during that time and places I coached.

I went back and worked for him. Very, very proud of him. I learned a lot from him. I still rely on him a lot now for advice and things like that as well. I know he's excited about me being in this position and excited to be around Columbia quite a bit also.

Q. You mentioned Kevin Harris. I assume you watched a lot of film on him. What made him such a productive back in the SEC, and what improvement do you expect him to make this season?

SHANE BEAMER: Kevin is very tough, very physical. He's a guy that it's hard for one person to bring him down. He's a downhill runner that's really worked to improve his game, not just carrying the football, running routes, pass protection, all that stuff.

We hired a running backs coach in Montario Hardesty who played the position at a high level here in the SEC and in the NFL, and Coach Hardesty has done a great job with Kevin and all of our backs as well, bringing those guys along.

I think that's the biggest thing for Kevin is continuing to build up his strength and getting healthy, increasing that durability to be a running back in this league, and we've got to be able to help him as well. I hope he has the year that he had last year, but I hope we also have other running backs that do that as well to help lessen the load also.

Q. What defines year one success for you, and what's your plan on getting the Gamecocks back to national relevance?

SHANE BEAMER: I was watching Peter Burns and Chris this morning, and they were doing their top five cliches, and this is probably going to be No. 6 if it didn't make the top five, and that's to be the very best team we can be at the end of the season. I know it's cliché, but it's true. Right now we're trying to do the very best we can do right here on Monday. Back in Columbia, our guys worked out this

morning, and us as coaches and players that are here today.

Let's move this program forward today and let's try to get better each and every week and be the best we can be at the end of the season and take our head out of the water and see where we are at that point. Hopefully, we're the very best that we can be, and we've reached our potential for sure.

Then the plan, I'm not talking about something that hasn't been done before at South Carolina. In the last ten years, or my last year at South Carolina, we played for the SEC Championship. We beat Alabama when they were No. 1 in the country at Williams-Brice Stadium. We beat Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, and our in-state rival all in the same season. Within the last ten years, we've been in the midst of consecutive 11-win seasons. Within the last ten years, we were in the midst of beating our in-state rival five years ago.

We're not talking about something that was 40 years ago. It was recently done here in South Carolina. We're not far from getting back there and doing it again. That's our plan, to not just get back to that point, but to be better than we've ever been, and that's what we're working towards every day.

Q. I'm going to have a two-parter because I want to follow up because your father was asked about. I'm just curious if he ever, obviously, in his great career at Virginia Tech, did he ever consider the SEC and particularly Alabama at one time?

SHANE BEAMER: He did, good question. No, he did. I can remember a couple times that the Alabama job came open, Alabama reaching out to him at Virginia Tech for sure. You talk about the SEC. My dad got his start in coaching at the Citadel down in Charleston, South Carolina, so he saw up close and personal what the potential of the South Carolina football program was and is.

I can remember all those years growing up he always used to talk about South Carolina as a job that he thought had unlimited potential and had every resource you needed to be successful. I can remember Mike McGee, the previous athletic director at South Carolina, sitting in our living room in Blacksburg, Virginia, interviewing my dad when he hired Lou Holtz, and things worked out well for South Carolina, certainly things worked out well for Virginia Tech, because after that was when Michael Vick came to town, and we played for the National Championship. But certainly he considered this league has great respect for it, like I do.

Q. I'm sure you have players that you're excited about,

but did you feel like you lost a year of recruiting in the transition in some ways?

SHANE BEAMER: Not really. I've never thought that. I got hired -- with the early signing period, for any new coach coming in, it's going to be tough. Because I got hired, and I think a week and a half later was when Signing Day was.

Now, at that time, there were very few young men committed to the South Carolina football program. All of those guys stayed committed, but because we had such a low number, it really allowed me to jump in as a head coach, hire a staff, figure out what our schemes are going to be, figure out what we have from a personnel standpoint, and then utilize the month of January and then every month since then to add to this roster and increase it.

So certainly would I have liked to have been the head coach and have a lot more time before the December signing period? Yes, but so many of those guys made decisions before I even got hired, but I really like what we've done to the roster since I got hired.

When I got hired that first week of December, our roster now is so much better than what it is now. I don't mean that as a negative, I mean we've added a lot of great pieces through the transfer portal and through high school recruiting as well.

As we all know, there's a lot of young men that fall through the cracks in that early signing period, and we were able to identify those guys and recruit them and sign them in January.

Q. You mentioned the tight ends. It's seeming like in the league it's becoming a trend, offensive coordinator-wise. I know you went and got Marcus Satterfield from the Panthers. Kentucky hired a guy from the Rams. Saban's done it a couple times. LSU's done it a few times. Why do you think that is, and do you see the league kind of transitioning to more 12 personnel to take advantage of what defenses are doing nowadays?

SHANE BEAMER: I think each coach is different in who he wants to hire and bring into the program. Certainly I hired Marcus, he had NFL experience, which was really appealing. He ran a part of the offense that LSU ran in 2019 because that's what they were running with the Carolina Panthers last season.

More importantly than that, I know what kind of coach Marcus Satterfield is. We were graduate assistants together. It helped that he was with the Panthers last season, but he's someone that for years, I knew if I ever

had the opportunity to become a head coach, he's someone I wanted to get on my staff at some point.

In regards to personnel, I know me personally, we always want to be an offense that has the flexibility and the multiplicity to, whatever the strength of our offense is personnel-wise, let's have a system that's flexible enough to adapt to that. If it's two tight ends and three running backs are the best players we have on offense, then let's go. If it's four wide receivers and a tight end, then let's go. If it's a running back and four tight ends, whatever it may be, we want to be able to adjust to it.

That was a great lesson I learned from Lincoln Riley at Oklahoma. Our offense in 2018 out in Norman with Kyler Murray and CeeDee Lamb and Hollywood Brown was a lot different than what it was in 2019 with Jalen Hurts at quarterback, and then it was different in 2020 with Spencer, and we were -- if you talk about 12 personnel and two tight ends on the field, my first year at Oklahoma, we very rarely had two tight ends on the field, whereas the last couple years, that's about all we did.

So whatever the strengths of our offense is, we want to get those guys on the field. I feel like we've got assets there with Nick Muse, and I mentioned Jaheim Bell earlier, and a lot of other guys in that tight end room as well that we want to get the ball to.

Q. With Texas A&M being a cross-division game yearly, curious your thoughts on that series. Did you know there was a trophy involved? Your thoughts on A&M as a program.

SHANE BEAMER: Great respect for the program. I was a graduate assistant at Tennessee back in 2002 or '3, working for John Chavis and Phillip Fulmer, and we actually went out to visit Texas A&M one off-season, and that was my first time ever to College Station. Then when I was coaching at Oklahoma, I was on a recruiting trip to College Station two or three years ago and drove through and was just blown away by what had been done there from a facilities standpoint.

Great respect for their program. Great respect for Coach Fisher, a passionate fan base, just like ours as well. Being in that part of the country, coaching at Oklahoma, I know a lot about Texas football from being a part of that.

Love the matchup. Obviously, it will be a huge challenge for us. They're a really talented team. They were one of the best teams in the country last year. I'm sure they will be again this year. I have a lot of friends in that program, and I'm eager for my first trip to a game in College Station this year.

Q. You might be the only first-year coach I would ask this of, but the role of a coach now -- and you talked about building a roster because of the portal and all the things you can do now -- how much of it is evolving from hand me your son and I'll give you back a man to becoming more of a general manager? And if that's the case, is that a bad thing?

SHANE BEAMER: No, it's a great question. I don't want to ever get away from hand me your son and we'll help develop him on and off the field to leave here with a degree from South Carolina and a better young man than what you gave him to, but certainly there's college athletics is different.

I'm an old-school guy at heart and love the college game and what it's about. I love the fact that you can get a 17-, 18-year-old young man in your program and then four years later watch him graduate, in addition to now I'm getting calls to go to their weddings and they just had babies and things like that.

I got into this business because of the players. I love kids. I love coaching these young men that I coach, and I'll never waver from that for sure, but certainly it's a different time now with everything that's going on throughout college athletics as well.

But I think that's regardless of now or five years ago, in a lot of ways, that's the chair that you're in. I've learned now, being in this chair as a head coach, I feel like there's six weeks since I got hired, I didn't do anything football related. It was everything else that comes along with being a head coach. That's part of it, the CEO/general manager aspect of the job, but at the end of the day, it's always about the young men in our program and always will be, and I couldn't be more fired up about the group of guys we have in Columbia.

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