

Southeastern Conference Football Championship Game: Georgia vs Alabama

Monday, December 1, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Alabama Crimson Tide

Deontae Lawson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for Deontae Lawson.

Q. With you having played in this SEC Championship game before, what does it mean to you and what are you telling some of your teammates experiencing it for the first time?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Man, it will be a great experience to get them guys in that environment. I'm just telling them another big game, another challenge that we got to get over to get to our goals.

I'm sure we'll be ready to go when the game comes. It starts with a great week of practice. Obviously I'm fired up, another opportunity to get another SEC Championship. It means the world to me.

Q. Zabien Brown, how have you seen him grow into the player he is now?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Man, Zabien, ever since he first stepped on campus, he always been a pro in the way he went about his business. Not really the loudest in the room, but will definitely say something when he need to this year.

Yeah, his play is just on the rise. He's definitely trending in the right direction. It's great to have him out there on the edge. I know he'll just continue to get better.

Q. As a captain, older guy on the team, what are you telling your teammates going into the SEC Championship game, trying to get a Playoff spot as well?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Yeah, I think the biggest thing is just don't let the game be bigger than what it is 'cause with



kind of games like this comes a lot of outside noise or external factors that you don't want them to get heavily involved in.

Just don't let the game be bigger than what it is. At the end of the day you still got to control what you can control. That's what goes on between the white lines. That's really the biggest focus.

It just starts with a great week of preparation. I know we going to be all fired up to go.

Q. As you prepare for Georgia, I assume you're looking at film from the last game, how much have you seen this defense grow?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Yeah, well, I just think we have more reps under our belt. Obviously we playing faster. We're anticipating things at a high level. That's really what stands out to me on film.

Man, we practice hard every week. I think we meet new - what I can say - like a new landmark of how hard we're practicing every week. I think that goes into effect also. We emptying the tank every week trying to be better, never being satisfied. I think that's the thing that stands out. We're just still starving, yeah.

Q. Do you start from scratch in terms of preparation or do you go based off of building off what you saw before?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Well, you can look at that. Obviously they have improved as an offense. You can't really just base it off that game.

You don't have to start from scratch. I mean, you can only change so much. Like we know them, they know us. It's just going to come down to who has the most physicality, who is more detailed, honestly who wants it more. That's what it's going to come down to.

Q. It seems like so many times this defense has been able to make game-winning plays. Is there a clutch identity of this team, something you take pride in?



What would you credit it to?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Man, we always talk about being elite in clutch situations. That's what we pride ourself on. I mean, I'm sure everyone in the country practices those situations in practice. I just think we kind of have a different demeanor how we attack those situations in practice.

Man, we also just got confidence in each other. I think that's the biggest thing, too, is just being confident in the person that you're next to, that they're going to do their job so you can just do your job full speed.

In those moments, we know someone going to step up and make a big play. That's what we bank on.

Q. What does it say about this new coaching staff to get back into the SEC Championship?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Yeah, I mean, man, it says a lot. To replace Coach Saban obviously is definitely not easy for anyone that would have did it. I think Coach DeBoer handled it great, better than some people would have.

Last year I feel like Coach DeBoer, we followed him, but he wanted the players that was here the whole time or the leaders of the team to kind of run the team in a way, like be more player-led.

Basically us - how can I say this - leading the team, honestly. This year he just put his stamp on this team, how he wants things to get ran.

Obviously we still have great leaders and are player-led. He kind of has his standard or what he wants to see. He let that be known after the bowl game on January 14th. Just says a lot about him, his character, his resilience as being a coach.

I think the guys, man, we just bought into what he was preaching to us. We pride ourself on being unbreakable. That's the theme for this year. I think that played a big part, as well, us being back in the SEC Championship.

Q. In terms of film study, how important is that from the linebacker room, setting up the defense?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Can you ask that one more time?

Q. From a film study standpoint, how important is that role in just kind of setting up the defense properly, the overall communication?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Yeah, I mean, it has its ways. With

the (indiscernible) connection, I got Coach Wommack in my ear talking to me, just trying to get everyone aligned, trying to pick up on any tendency that they have to let us anticipate faster.

It's kind of natural, honestly, to get everyone lined up or anything and also be able to hone back into my key so I can do my job. It's kind of natural, something I've kind of grown into.

I don't really have as much challenges as I used to have. I definitely have to stay locked in, for sure.

Q. You gave Georgia its first home loss in six years. What kind of bragging rights would it be for you guys to beat them twice in their home state?

DEONTAE LAWSON: I mean, when you look at it, was like you said, that was the first time they lost at home in a minute. But Mercedes-Benz, Alabama and Georgia played there numerous times. I'm sure Alabama is up on there. I wouldn't really say it's bragging rights in that way.

Man, that's nothing that we can control. All we can control is going out there and emptying the tank and being detailed, just flying around the field.

We're not even worried about having bragging rights or anything. We just know this is another steppingstone on our way to get to where we want to go. That's really our main focus.

Q. You spoke about not making this game bigger than it is. Do you have any concern that you need to win to assure yourself of a spot in the Playoff?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Man, I feel like honestly we've kind of had that mindset ever since our first loss. I don't really think anything would change in our mindset or anything. We know that we don't want to put it in no one else's hands.

Just control what we can control, and that's doing our best to win the game, leave nothing up for chance, so...

Q. Hearing from Tim earlier talking about going against Georgia's offensive line, when you look at the defensive linemen in front of you, how much confidence do you have in those guys?

DEONTAE LAWSON: Man, I got full confidence in those guys right there. You got T.K., you got Edric, you got James Smith. You got guys that's dying to get dirty. That's how I can say it.



Those guys, they practice hard. That's why it shows up on game day. They hold the double-teams up. They just anchors in the middle. So yeah, I got full confidence in those guys.

I know they'll be excited 'cause Georgia likes to run the ball. That's what we want to defend. We know they kind of caught us on a couple big runs in the first game that we played.

Yeah, that will definitely be something on our minds, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Deontae, thank you.

DEONTAE LAWSON: Thank you.

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