

Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

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Allegiant Stadium

Cincinnati Bearcats Scott Satterfield Press Conference

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: First of all, just excited to be here. As we know, anytime you start Media Days, we're getting close to the season. So excited to be out here in Vegas, bring some of our players and let them experience this atmosphere.

We head into year two in the Big 12. Obviously learned a lot last year. Went through obviously a difficult season for us our first year in the Big 12, looking forward to the second year.

One of the great things that we have going for us, I think, this year is bringing back several of our key players from last year's team, including our starting five offensive linemen coming back and really the two top reserve O linemen coming back. We have Corey Kiner, thousand-yard rusher, coming back. Our top receiver, Xzavier Henderson, coming back. We're excited about that.

Defensively, hired a new defensive coordinator, Tyson Veidt, from Iowa State. He showed up this past spring, will bring great wealth of experience in playing defense in the Big 12. So hopefully it will help ourselves there.

We feel like special teams-wise, feel like we have a great squad coming back as well with Mason Fletcher, who is here today, one of the best punters, and hopefully we'll be able to put a much better product on the field to compete in the Big 12.

Excited for this second year and looking forward to playing all the new teams that we have in this league.

Q. Cincinnati recently announced that Dontay Corleone will be out indefinitely when it was discovered he had blood clots in his lungs. Do you have any more updates? I know it's only been about 11 days since, but do you have any more updates on



his status what his future might look like?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: First of all, just want to recognize our medical team and our training staff and our doctors. They did a phenomenal job of identifying what was going on with Dontay. Did many, many tests and come to find out that he did have some blood clots in his lungs.

Fortunately, for Dontay, there was nothing else. Everything else, his health, his heart, no other blood clots. So now right now working with the medical team, he actually is back with our team working out. Started last week. He's been with our team yesterday and today. So he will continue to work out all summer, hopefully. We're taking it day-by-day.

But hopefully, as we progress throughout the summer and head into fall camp, that he will be available to play and available to go. I know he wants to. He's such an incredible young man. But I think we'll take this day by day and we'll see where it's at. But obviously the hope is that he'll be able to play with us this fall and play at a high level.

Q. Following up on Dontay, just what does he mean to the team and would he have been here had he not had the ailment? And from what you know, others players have played with blood clots in the past. Any more you can tell me about his situation?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: Well, first of all, he means everything to our football team. He is from Cincinnati, went to high school there, grew up there, has been a huge part of our program for many years.

He's one of our outstanding leaders on our team. So, yeah, he would have been here had he not been dealing with this, and I think with Dontay, obviously the number one thing is his health, I mean, outside of football. I mean, we want to make sure he's going to stay healthy and live a long productive life. We'll see, hopefully with the technology that's out there, there have been a precedent with other players that have played with the same thing that he has, and including a player at West Virginia, I believe, last year. So I think hopefully he'll be able to go

down that same road to be able to play and play at a high level.

Q. Just from your time, whether it's Appalachian State or just your whole career, what are some core values you've managed to implement at Cincinnati that you have seen grow and blossom, not just within the team, but just how they approach this conference?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: I think it comes down to people and what kind of people you have in the organization and how do they approach each and every day.

For us it's we talk about EAT: effort, attitude, and toughness. That's been a core principle ever since I played and certainly since we've been coaching.

Coming into every single day with a great attitude, and you've got to produce a lot of effort.

When I talk about toughness, it's not physical, but it's mental. Just being mentally tough because I think everybody, no matter what you're doing, you're facing a lot of negativity. You're facing things into your life that is difficult, but how are you going to get through that mentally.

And I think our players have really approached that this offseason. It's been huge for us. We went through this all season with 48 new scholarship players. In this era of portal time, you're able to -- we signed 21 high school players and the rest portal. You've got a lot of new players; how can we bring everybody together?

That EAT mantra is part of the thing to help bring it together, how connected can we be as a football team because I think the connected teams are the teams that win a lot of these games.

Those are things we've been working on the whole offseason and summer, and that's what you can feel and sense when you walk through our building.

Q. 47 new scholarship players this season, 7 of those in the defensive back room. Talk about what you've seen from guys like Mekhi Miller, Kye Stokes, Ormanie Arnold, and a couple of those other guys?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: Yeah, and Canteen, who is here today as well. We struggled last year in secondary. We gave up a lot of plays. We're one of the worst teams giving up big plays in the country last year. We knew we had to shore up the back end.

Those players that you mentioned that we brought in, most of those guys came in the spring. We're able to go through

the spring practice, those 15 practices, really learn the new defense and find positions for those guys.

We feel like those guys have certainly helped us out, did not give up those big plays, and they will help us as we go throughout this season.

It's a new scheme. We all had to learn it, including returning players, but also all the guys we brought in. But I think all total maybe 12 new DBs when you count the freshmen and the transfer guys, and so -- but the new defense now, we're basically playing with five DBs, three safeties, and two corners, and hopefully we'll put a much better product on the field to stop people.

Q. I know a lot of people will fixate on the home record last year, which was obviously less than ideal. But I'd like to look on the flip side of that coin, there were a pair of really gutsy road victories you guys had. What about those two games do you look to bottle up and sort of use this season?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: I think there were other games, too, that we were right there. One-possession games. I think maybe four games that came down right to the end of the wire that we did not win. And you've got to be able to win those close games. If you win those close games, you're sitting there, now you're bowl eligible last year.

So part of this offseason was to keep the guys that were a part of those teams that competed at a high level, like the Corey Kinners and the Luke Kandrass and the guys that are here, and keep those guys, the Dontay Corleones, and then add some guys to that that will help that mix and I think having that connected team to be able to finish some of those games off.

You're right, we went to Pitt had a big win there on the road and went to Houston, had a big win. Take the things we did good and apply those this year. We know in this league, from top to bottom, there's some outstanding football coaches and great football players in this league. If you don't show up, you're going to get beat, and sometimes you'll get beat bad.

You better bring it each and every week in this league with the kind of players and coaches that are week in and week out.

Q. It's not too often when you go into your second year of a new conference that even more teams are coming in. Do you have any advice for these new teams? And do you guys still feel like the new guys in the Big 12 campus? Or with that year under your belt, do you feel a sense of relieved pressure?



SCOTT SATTERFIELD: We're obviously still relatively new. It's the second year, and we're playing some teams that we didn't play last year, and you're going to some places that you haven't been to. We're going to Texas Tech, didn't play them, Kansas State. Of course some of the new teams as well.

So I think these teams, the difference, I think, probably mainly was last year we brought in four teams that basically were a group of five teams, where now the teams we're bringing in have already been playing at the power level and amongst that competition level.

I think that's probably the major difference. And the fact that you're playing so many new teams and now our league is spread from the East Coast all the way to the West Coast now and trying to logistically figure that piece out, with all the traveling we're having to do in this league. And then playing these new teams.

But it's exciting. I think the opportunity -- we're going to Colorado this year. That's going to be awesome. Go to Texas Tech, Kansas State, Iowa State. We're getting to see some great parts of the country where they have outstanding fan base and great coaches and players.

To me, it's a great challenge and it's fun. It's fun for our players and our student-athletes that get to experience this, the fact that college football opens up so many doors for our players and our coaches to be able to experience everything this country has to offer. And I think that's fun, it's exciting, and it's certainly something that we look forward to.

Q. The players had mentioned this all season how difficult the training program and everything else has been off the field. How is the disappointment of last season helped with the culture shift that you and your staff continue to try to implement?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: It was huge. We won some games last year and had pretty good success. Probably wouldn't have been as difficult as it has been this year because the guys really demanded it. Our coaches, our strength staff, everybody wanted it this offseason. We knew it needed to be the hardest thing.

We were not a very disciplined football team last year, and it cost us games. We implemented an offseason program, was the most difficult program offseason that I've seen and been through, and our players will attest to that. Hopefully that translates to more success on the field.

I know what it has done is it's made our guys tougher

mentally. It's brought them together. And to me, when you bring in that many new players, it needed to be that way. And the guys that came back from last year, they hated that feeling in that locker room and don't want to taste that feeling again.

I think it was a strong motivation for this offseason.

Q. How important will it be for this offensive line, who returns a ton of experience, to rally around and adjust to this new quarterback in Brendan Sorsby?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: Well, I think the offensive line, anytime you have a bunch of guys coming back, that's a positive. What we went through last year, we finished fifth in the country in rushing against a lot of teams that knew we were going to try to run the football, and we were still able to do that. I think that bodes well for us.

But to bring those guys back with that experience and also a couple of backups that really quite honestly could be starters as well, we're going to rely on those guys up front.

What it's going to do is hopefully take some pressure off the quarterback. The quarterback knows he doesn't have to make every play. He's got a great support cast with Corey Kiner, with some of the receivers and tight ends that we have, and will help take the pressure off that guy.

Now, if we can get some great play out of the quarterback and be able to push the ball down the field, it will open up more in the running game as well. Hopefully this year we'll be able to stretch the field more with our receivers and throw the ball down the field a little more to help open up the run game better.

Q. You talked about obviously the map now of the conference. What do you feel -- a lot of times obviously you see in recruiting the players going to different schools in the conference. How do you feel it opens up recruiting for you?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: I feel like basically the whole United States is at play. I think maybe 15 years ago, maybe it was more regionally. Now, particularly in the portal, we get players from all over the country. We got West Coast players, players from Texas and obviously down in Florida and the Northeast.

I think when you think about the transfer portal, it opens it up for really quite honestly everybody, for every school in the country, to recruit anybody from the country. At that point, it really comes down to fit, comes down to culture and what you need. And so I think in that regard it's going to help open that up.



I think maybe still high school recruiting you're still going to be more regional. But as a portal, and a lot of teams are using the portal, that you are going all over the country to be able to do that. These guys know at some point they'll play near wherever they grew up when you're playing these teams throughout the country. I do think that makes it more of obviously a national sport now with the way these conferences are set up.

Q. With the quarterback position and the competition, what's the status of that competition? Do you expect it to roll into fall camp, or are you ready to name a starter?

SCOTT SATTERFIELD: We want those guys to compete. People mentioned Brendan Sorsby, you got Samaj Jones that we signed as a true freshman that just got to Cincinnati in January. And you've got Lichty. Lichty started one or two games for us last year and played a lot. All three of those guys are competing.

And we're going to see how it goes throughout camp. I think it had been a great summer for those guys competing, and I tell you it doesn't hurt to have several guys that can play at the quarterback position. So we all know that. So I think by the end of the camp, hopefully a week or week and a half before our first game, we'll be able to name a starter.

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