

Atlanta Falcons Media Conference

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Kyle Pitts

Draft Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We will start out with questions for Kyle Pitts.

Q. Are you humbled to be the highest drafted tight end ever in the league?

KYLE PITTS: I'm definitely humbled. It's a dream come true to even get drafted. To be top five, that's something special. The first tight end ever... I mean, I don't even know how to put it into words. I'm just elated with joy. I can't even put into words how excited I am.

Q. What do you know about the Falcons? How do you think you could fit in in your in-line blocking?

KYLE PITTS: There are a lot of vets and great minds on that team, in that building. To just learn from Matt Ryan, Julio Jones, the list goes on. But to be able to come in and make an impact, is something I want to do.

Blocking-wise, I'll be ready when the day comes. First day of camp, I'll be ready. I know Coach Smith does a great job of getting his tight ends ready. I'm eager to see how he uses me.

Q. What has your conversation with Coach Smith been like? You talk about looking at his body of work. He's a tight end guy. What does it mean to you to work with a coach that has this history with tight ends?

KYLE PITTS: It means everything. I get to learn from someone who played the position, coached the position. He's biased for tight ends. I can't wait to learn from him, take my game to another level.

Q. We can all put on your tape and know what you bring. How did Tim Brewster and your Florida coaches best create space for you, mismatches for you? What did they do to elevate that for you?

KYLE PITTS: I think Coach Mullen did a great job in moving me around, making it easy for me to get

mismatched with the guys that can't guard me. It came with a repetition, practice, great game planning. I appreciate, like I said, Coach Mullen for dialing it up, making sure when I do go out into that lineup, I'm winning my matchups and doing my part.

Q. When did you think you might be a first round pick? At what point in your head does that actually click to you, This could really happen?

KYLE PITTS: I would say at the end of the year when I started to put some thought in it. Once I declared, I feel pretty happy in myself. I'll put the money on part of myself. I feel like God was going to put me in the best position.

I don't like to read the media, but seeing myself picked first round, Okay, that's a start now, but put your head back down, keep working till the draft day comes, and when that day comes and get to be a starter and be an impact on the team.

Q. Your decision to go down to Florida from Philly, Northeast not exactly known for its college feedback. Southeast is. What went into your decision to go to Florida? Did you go there with the thought one day this could happen?

KYLE PITTS: I would just say during high school I always knew about the SEC. I watched Florida, watched 'Bama, watched Kentucky, Vanderbilt, all those top SEC teams, LSU.

But when I started getting offers and national exposure, I was doing my research on the tight ends at these universities. I felt like I could play in the SEC in Florida. I could get a great education, maybe sit a year or come in and make an impact early. I weighed my options, prayed to God about it, I committed. I stuck with it. I don't regret anything about it.

Q. Your thoughts about joining Matt Ryan and an offense that at the moment includes some other pretty nice weapons with guys like Julio and Calvin Ridley? What do you think you can bring to that offense?

KYLE PITTS: I'm just going to be a sponge in the beginning, learning from those guys who are going to be Hall of Famers. To be drafted to their team, to be able to



learn from them, see how they go about the game, see how they win, how they go about their business is something I can't wait to see.

Day one, like I said, I'll be like a sponge soaking everything up, all the knowledge I can, all the relationships I can build. I'm excited for the journey.

Q. How do you feel about going to a team that's in a bit of rebuilding mode, has obviously some nice weapons, but has not had a lot of success the last three years?

KYLE PITTS: I think this team's on the rise. Coach Smith is going to turn the organization around. I feel like people may think it's a work in progress, but I feel like we have a start. I think we'll be ready to start the year.

Q. Obviously you've been in a lot of mock drafts where you were projected to go to the Falcons. When did you first have the feeling they were really interested in you, and when you really first believed that's where you were going to be selected?

KYLE PITTS: I would say they -- how can I say this? They didn't like overly show it, I guess you'd say. Like all the other teams were, they didn't -- I can't describe it. They didn't give it away, I guess I should say. They weren't throwing any hints.

I was just talking to them a lot, having meetings. I was picking their brains, they were picking my brain. I didn't have a feeling. I feel like all the conversations went well, all my interview process went well.

Q. You didn't really know till they called you, basically?

KYLE PITTS: Yes, sir.

Q. How do you think let's say the offense that you were in at Florida to some degree translates to maybe what Arthur Smith is going to be running with the Falcons?

KYLE PITTS: Just like Coach Mullen, Coach Smith, they love their tight ends. I'm eager to see how they make motions and mismatches in the offense. I'm eager to see how also he uses his all stars, kind of throw me in the fire.

Q. You talked about how the Falcons didn't really show you that they were going to take you. What are some of the those meetings that you had with them like? Can you let us in on the types of questions and things you talked about?

KYLE PITTS: The first couple were just relationships, seeing how I am as a person, mentally, physically, just trying to get to know me. Once we started getting into ball, watching film, getting on the board, they were trying to I guess give me a couple plays and see if I could retain them. That's how it started.

In the end it was kind of I feel like going in the right direction because I was maybe hitting on things I wanted to hit, I was showing them that I was prepared.

Q. When you got to the call that you were going to be taken, with the number four overall pick, what word would you describe of the feeling you had?

KYLE PITTS: Surreal. To get that call, finally just walk across that stage and see my jersey and pick up that hat is something I've been dreaming for since I was a kid. Every year when I watch the draft, now I'm in the draft, I'm walking across that stage, it's mind-boggling. But I'm ready for the new experience.

Q. How much extra time at practice at Florida did you kind of work as a receiver? How is it that you are able to be somebody who can line up as an X receiver but also on the line of scrimmage next to the tackler?

KYLE PITTS: I didn't really do a lot of practice or individual on the outside. But it really came after practice. That's when me and Kyle got our chance to get the reps that we need from the outside. I just stayed tight end all during practice.

Me and him kind of had a relationship. We kind of knew coming from what we already had, what we already knew, we had good timing.

It's pretty good being versatile and having that.

Q. In the tight end position, from your observance in the NFL over the last five, 10 years, how important, more valuable is this position now than back then when you were a kid growing up?

KYLE PITTS: I think it's real special because, like you said, now that the tight end position has started to evolve. They're being used much more in the offense. Sometimes first read on some plays. To see how it's changing, how tight ends are a mismatch, it's kind of hard for defenses to scheme up on the offense and certain tight ends. It's pretty special to see how the position has come, how it's changing, will make it interesting.

Q. Julio Jones, is he a guy that you watched growing

up or recently? What is it going to be like playing with him?

KYLE PITTS: Definitely watched Julio since he was at Alabama. He's a great route runner. A big, strong receiver. I can't wait to pick his brain, see how he goes about his matchups in the NFL. It's a new level. It's not college any more. You're going to have to use different tools to beat these DBs.

Q. Arthur, Terry, did anything they said stick in your mind?

KYLE PITTS: Just starting off with, Are you ready to be a Falcon. It a lot of work (indiscernible).

Q. I was reading online about a GM that said, I'm usually against drafting tight ends that high but he's a bad dude. If someone has never seen you before, what makes you so bad on the field?

KYLE PITTS: I just feel versatile, being able to do different things, line up in different places, motion, playing the backfield. Someone that you just can't say he's just going to play on the left side or right side, just going to play receiver. Just moving around, being mobile, getting mismatches, scoring the ball.

Q. Most guys in high school that are 6'6", 240, usually play defense. Were you ever on the defensive side, want to be a defensive end? When was the switch that you realized you had a special skill set on offense?

KYLE PITTS: I played both sides of the ball through high school. But I never kind of liked defense. I was always an offense guy, I always loved scoring. You don't know what I'm doing, you're going to guess, and I'm going to win.

Q. I spoke to your assistant coaches down there, told me about your approach to practice. He said you brought it every day. How do you maintain that focus?

KYLE PITTS: Practice is important. Reps, reps. I'm a rep guy. I love practice because I know practice is supposed to be harder than the game. Practice is hard, I'll be prepared for the game. I won't be winded. I'll know my assignment, know my opponents. I'll be ready for all four quarters.

Q. When you were watching tape of Coach Smith, some of the assistant coaches, they like to maybe pick on a guy to find matchups. What did you learn in watching some of those scheme breakdowns on how they're going to use you?

KYLE PITTS: We didn't go that far into depth. They were just telling me, Look at what (indiscernible) has done. I'm eager to see how this goes. I think it will be a great experience.

Q. When you think about making the transition to the NFL level, what do you feel like the biggest challenges are going to be? Are there NFL tight ends in the game that you've studied and picked up nuances from?

KYLE PITTS: I'm excited for the speed. It's another level of speed. I'm excited to see how these professionals play the game, match myself against them.

I look up to Travis, Eric, George Kittle. Those are three guys right now that are representing the position very well. I take some of their things they're using in the game, add it to mine. Not that I'm in the same league. They just bring it every weekend. Trying to be the best.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Kyle. We look forward to seeing you in person.

KYLE PITTS: Thank you.

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