

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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LSU Tigers

Derek Stingley Jr.

Press Conference



Q. Derek, it's been a while since you talked to the media. I want to just check in on a few things. Do all the outside projections of you possibly being a top five, top ten pick, possible aspirations of maybe Heisman Trophy, any of that excite you about your junior year at LSU?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: Yeah. It's cool to hear that stuff, but I like to focus on the team and what we can do as a group.

Q. We're hearing a lot of good things about the interaction with the players and the coaches, that the team chemistry is a lot better than it was a year ago. Is that true? What can you share about that?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: Yeah, it definitely is. On the defensive side of the ball, when Coach Jones walks in the room, he just gives us energy. We all as a group from the front line to the secondary, we're all hanging out, outside of football, interacting more, and it's showing on the field, and it's going to show this fall too.

Q. The noise about when you first came to LSU, you spent your first two years on defense, and now your third year, which is now playing both sides of the ball, how much of that is going to come to fruition, and will we see No. 7 being at wide receiver this year?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: That just depends on what Coach O wants, and if he needs someone to do that, then we'll talk about it.

Q. Kind of going off of that, from your perspective, what's the quarterback battle been like this year?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: They're both great. They both work hard. They both work real hard. I'm excited to see how it all plays out.

Q. Derek, I know COVID had something to do with it

last year, and there was a lot of opt-outs. Did you ever consider it? And if not, why did you want to come back this year? What was the driving force for you to do that?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: No, I've always wanted to finish out the season strong. I never thought about leaving. I've always wanted to finish everything out good, you know.

Q. How pumped are you that you're wearing the vaunted No. 7 jersey for the LSU Tigers? Some monster names in the past, some legends have worn that jersey. How excited are you about wearing that number?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: I'm very excited. It's something I've always seen as a kid, the hype around it, and what everybody did with the number. That's what I look forward to doing. I really want to leave a mark.

Q. Can you just talk about being here today and doing this. You're a humble guy. You haven't done a ton of interviews in the past. What kind of made you take that step forward today?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: Anything they ask, I do it. I do it with a smile on my face, and I try to do it the best that I can.

Q. What's the status of the rivalry with A&M? Do you guys look at them as a real rival, or is it still big brother, little brother kind of deal?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: I don't know. I go out there, and I just play. I don't really feed into who's a rival and who's not.

Q. This would be the third defense you played in. You were under Dave Aranda and Bo Pelini, and now Daronte Jones. How does he stick out after your first two seasons? What may be similarities to what he may bring compared to what Dave Aranda taught you guys and coached you up to do?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: Coach Jones, he brings a lot of



stuff from the NFL, and whenever he introduces something new to us, he breaks it down on an NFL level, and he shows how they did it when he was at the Vikings. He shows clips from that, or he shows clips from the Bengals and stuff like that. When we see that, we're like, okay, we can do it. They're making it look simple, so we can go out there and do it too.

Q. How does that compare, in your experience, with Bo Pelini and with Dave Aranda?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: Coach Pelini and Coach Aranda, they both had their own schemes, but all defenses are similar in a way. Their defenses were great too.

Q. Getting to wear that No. 7 jersey obviously is such an honor. I know that also the No. 18 jersey is a huge deal. They even have a whole kind of group text thing. Do you all do the same thing for the No. 7 jersey? Do you all talk to former guys who wore the jersey? If so, what's some of the best advice one of those guys gave you?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: I've talked to a couple of the previous 7s, but with Tyrann Mathieu, I asked him how to be the perfect leader, and there is no perfect way. It's just however you feel it needs to be.

Like me, I'm a quiet guy, so he told me, he was like, You don't always have to go out there and scream and yell and be this rah-rah guy. When you speak, people are going to listen.

I took that, and I started noticing, whenever I had something to say, people would listen. And I didn't think I had that kind of power at all, like I thought I was just a normal guy, just like everything else, you know.

Q. Derek, with all this new NIL stuff, I know you were one of the few guys who immediately capitalized on it. With you and maybe any of your teammates, what are you guys looking for when NIL deals pop up? I'm sure they're coming by the boatloads, and why was it important for you to ink one with Louisiana sports bar chain Walk-Ons?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: Everyone has their own wants and needs, just like everything else. You're going to go, and you're going to listen to what benefits you. So with my process, I'm still trying to figure it out. I'm still -- you know, everybody is. This is all new. So I'm looking forward to seeing how it's all going to pan out in the end.

Q. What are the challenges of bouncing back from a .500 season, something that's not that common at

LSU?

DEREK STINGLEY JR.: I don't think of it as a challenge. If anything, I would say it's motivation, and it gives everyone on the team a chip on their shoulder because we want to be one of the top teams, like we usually are every year. That's what we're coming back for this year.

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