

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Arkansas Razorbacks Myron Cunningham

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Coming into the 2021 season, what are you looking forward to heading out on the field?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I'm looking out to starting the season September 4th, when we play our first game. It's going to be an exciting moment coming into my senior season. I'm just excited for it.

Q. Sam was just telling us the number of super seniors and seniors you guys have; what does that equate to? Does that mean you make a big jump in the league? How can that benefit your team?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I feel like it will benefit us, especially because we have all the super seniors. It's only bringing back knowledge of the game and experience through what we've played. The only thing we can do is pass it down to the young guys as we keep going throughout the year.

Q. Coach Pittman has a humble, kind of an awe shucks attitude in front of us. I'm curious, what's it like behind the scenes when you get in a team meeting or kind of one-on-one? What's he like?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I wouldn't say he's too much different. Only thing I would say is he's probably a little more joking with us. He'll probably crack a few jokes here and there. He's not that much different. He's the same guy you see up there.

Q. Myron, I guess they're going to have the media poll tomorrow released, but in the magazines you guys aren't picked real high. Is that a motivating thing? Last year you showed people you can do some stuff. Or do you think you guys could be a surprise again?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I don't think we -- people thought we were a surprise last year, but in our locker room and in our group we knew what we were capable of, so we weren't really surprised.

This year, we're just going to bring our hard work and our effort to the field and just show people what we can do again.

Q. Generating a pass rush is seen as one of the biggest things Arkansas' defense needs to do. What did you see from the ends, guys that you blocked in spring? Is there a chance for improvement in the ends? And can you talk specifically about the guys you think are going to do something this year?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I've seen a big jump in our defensive ends, especially from the transfers that we've gotten, with Tre Williams and Markell Utsey. Tre Williams is very twitchy and he's fast. With his knowledge of the game I think he's going to be one of our better pass rushers this upcoming year.

Markell Utsey, he's very strong. He can play the end or he can play the three. He flips his hips really well. I think he'll be a great addition to us.

Q. Myron, asked you about the guard position earlier. There's a couple of other guys I wanted to ask you about. Ricky Stromberg at center. He's made all SEC lists and stuff. What makes him a good center? What makes him right for that position? Also, Dalton Wagner on the other side, another senior, what have you seen out of him, his progress, and what makes him a key player over there?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: As a rookie, something that makes him a great center is he's just very vocal. Just like our quarterback he would command the offense. He's very assertive in what he says. By being like that, it just brings us all along and we believe in him, so that only helps him.

Dalton Wagner, he's improved since I've been here. So he comes in every day, works hard, brings his work ethic. I mean, he's going to be one of our best tackles this year.

Q. Sam told us that you passed up probably hundreds of thousands of dollars is the term he used, maybe a middle round pick. What do you need to do to put a



better Myron Cunningham on tape this year? How do you improve this year?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I would say sharpen my skills, focus on the little things. Little things that can get me beat technique-wise, whether that's hands, eyes, reading the defense before the play even starts.

Q. Myron, you're in your last year, but recruiting is always the lifeblood of a program. I was just curious, what is a recruiting trip, like when these recruits come in to Arkansas, how does that go for them? What are some of the points of emphasis, hanging out with the players and stuff? Any insight you can provide on that?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: When recruits come on campus we just try and show them like they're family, that when they get here, they're part of the brotherhood and that we'll treat them as such. We just tell them about the fans, that like they'll be loved here, and it's going to get shown almost every time and every chance they get.

THE MODERATOR: KJ Jefferson stepped in last year and played really well at Missouri. What does he bring to the huddle from the offensive side, and what have you seen of him as he continues to develop?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I think KJ brings a great swagger about himself. He's very -- he's getting more vocal, but he's very assertive in how he plays. He's very athletic. He's just got a great leadership factor, and I think it's only going to help him.

Q. I know we talked a little bit about the barbecue deal, but name, image, and likeness in general for everybody on the team, everybody across the country, how good do you feel? Because you guys obviously work really hard. It's like a full-time job. How good do you feel that these opportunities, whatever they may be, are coming for everybody in all the sports?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I feel great. I feel appreciative because me personally, I feel like athletes should be able to make money off their name, image, and likeness. I feel like that's our right, but I feel like it's going to take college football in a great direction.

Q. I want to ask if you could describe what summer workouts have been like, where you've seen improvements in the team, maybe some guys jumping up in leadership roles who might not have been last year.

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: As far as summer workouts, it's

been tough. The Heat gets pretty crazy out here, but Jamil Walker, he's been working us pretty good. I don't know, the running is pretty strenuous, so he just tries to focus on straining that little extra bit.

Q. You came here with Grant Morgan. He's been at Arkansas for a long time now. It might be his sixth year. What have you made of him from a leadership standpoint? What do you think of him as a player and as a leader?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: As a leader, I think he's phenomenal. He definitely sets an example for our younger guys, and even some of the older guys, he pushes us to be more than we are, even on the field and in training. As a player, he's great. He's great to say the least. He's one of the best players I've been around.

Q. You talked about KJ a little bit, and I'm just curious, he's a little bit different type of quarterback than Feleipe was. Feleipe could run, but maybe not as likely to run as KJ is. I know you can't see behind you, but is there anything different that you guys do as blockers for a guy like KJ, who's maybe more likely to scramble outside the pocket and try to pick up stuff with his feet? Just any other tendencies that changes the approach to blocking for him?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: No, I don't think the tendencies will change. I just think that, since he can run, like you said, he can run better than Feleipe could, I think we just have to have that in the back of our mind whenever we do drop back to pass the ball. We just have to have that in our mind that he could be scrambling. So we just have to be ready for it.

Q. Myron, with everything being broken up and kind of makeshift last season, how hard was it to build team chemistry, and what's something that returns this year that you all missed basically that will help you build more chemistry?

MYRON CUNNINGHAM: I wouldn't say it was too hard last year. I feel like our staff did a great job in keeping us close in a tight knit group, but this year compared to last year, I would say that one of the things that we missed is just getting together as a whole team.

I feel like last year we couldn't really do that because of COVID protocols. This year getting together as a whole team has definitely gotten us a lot closer.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports