

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Texas A&M Aggies Ainias Smith

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Ainias here, and he wants to open things up himself.

AINIAS SMITH: First, I want to say thank you all for having me. I'm blessed and honored to be here, but I do want to give a special shout-out to Coach Terry Price. I'm doing this for you. We're going to keep balling and praying hard for you, and we're just hoping that you are looking over us.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Much love for Terry Price in Auburn. He has a lot of friends there. What can you tell us about how the offense is progressing this offseason, what you have seen with the changes they've made in the last few months?

AINIAS SMITH: One thing I'll definitely say is Coach Petrino has come in and sparked the energy, sparked some light in us, opened up the playbook a little bit more. Not going to speak too much on scheme-wise, but it's very exciting. Let's just say so to, the least, sure.

Q. Every season every team, regardless, there's always outside the noise before the start of the season. How are you handling that, and how is your school handling that?

AINIAS SMITH: I try to just let everybody know in the previous years we've had a lot of hype and attention that has come to us. A lot of it, me personally I feel like, is a little unwanted attention, you know what I'm saying?

We have had a lot of people talking about us in the previous years, but this year it seems like a lot of people aren't talking about us, and I personally like that.

Being an underdog is somebody that I've been for a long, long time in my life, and I just like the fact that we have to be able to prove ourselves and show everybody what it is. So I just like that fact and that feeling for sure.

Q. Is there anything you've really made a point to try to improve upon this offseason from your own game?

AINIAS SMITH: Nothing specifically, no. Just showing how much work that I've done, you know what I'm saying, showing how much work we've put in together as a team.

Really just the accountability that we've been holding ourselves to and really just wanting to show everybody our standard, how hard that we work, for sure.

Q. Who are some of the best DBs that you've gone against in the SEC so far?

AINIAS SMITH: Great question. One I probably would have to say Patrick Surtain being up there as one. He was one of those guys that is very patient, very hard to get around. He definitely plays his technique very well.

Another guy I'll have to say is Jaycee Horn out of South Carolina. He was very tough.

There's a few guys that I can name, but those are the two off the top of my head.

Q. How will Texas A&M's offense look different in 2023?

AINIAS SMITH: One thing I would say is just the upbeat, the uptempo-ness of the team. We definitely have, let's just say, a quicker mindset on how we should run our offense. Definitely want to start with a lot more energy, a lot quicker, and being a lot more consistent throughout the entire season for sure.

Q. Of course, you guys have Conner Weigman and Max Johnson both coming back. So far in the spring -- I know Weigman, you haven't played any in-game reps with him yet, but what's your chemistry like with Weigman, and have either of these guys separated themselves as far as the clear QB1, as far as what you have seen in practice?

AINIAS SMITH: Personally I don't know who is going to be



QB1. I have no say-so in that. I don't know who will be QB1, because both of those guys are looking very great.

The chemistry between me and Connor, we've played some 7-on-7 before when we were younger. That was the only time we really played ball together other than spring, you know what I'm saying, but I definitely like the way he is throwing the ball.

Both him and Max Johnson are looking real nice, so I just hope for the best, you know what I'm saying?

Q. I was curious, I mean, you're a guy that gets snaps all over the field, whether it's outside, in the slot, even in the back field sometimes. Is there a spot on the field you feel most dangerous?

AINIAS SMITH: Me personally, I feel most dangerous on defense. A lot of people don't even know, like, I played DB, and I feel very confident playing DB. So defense for sure.

But in reality, I would say in the return game if they give me the ball in open spaces, it's deadly.

Q. How seriously did you consider leaving for the NFL Draft, and what were some of the factors in your decision to play another year of college football?

AINIAS SMITH: It was very serious. I try to take every situation as serious as possible, especially with how life is going nowadays. You're not really able to take shortcuts, so I tried to go in with a clear head, a clear thought process, and really try to understand what it is that I was getting myself into, you know what I'm saying?

I wanted to make the best decision not only for myself, but for my family and everybody that was relying on me. But I feel like that whole back half of the season was just interesting. Not only for myself going through the injury, but for the team.

I definitely wanted to look at each and every factor, whether I was going to be coming back and having to babysit or coming back and being the guy, you know what I'm saying, or even leaving and trying to be the guy somewhere else and trying to bet on myself.

I took every single factor that you can think of, and I tried to make it -- make the best possible decision. With me coming back, I'm just very thankful that I still have this opportunity to play college ball. There's nothing like it, especially playing in front of 100,000 fans every weekend.

The SEC is the best of the best, and with me just coming

back being able to boost my stock, show that I can do a lot more than what the people say that I can do or whatever, really just in a way betting on myself.

Q. Some of your best games have come against Alabama and Auburn, big-time opponents statistically speaking at least. What would you maybe attribute your success in those big-team moments to? Is there anything about those matchups that you were able to expose or maybe just generally speaking?

AINIAS SMITH: Not for real. I try to play every game the hardest, you know what I'm saying. Of course, I have a little, I guess you could say, back history with Alabama and whatnot with my brother going there, but I always try to go hard each and every game.

I try to play each game like it's my last game. Those big games that you call, I just look at it as a normal game. We try to go into practice each and every week like it's just a regular game, and that's my whole thought process each and every week.

Just don't make the moment too big. Just go ahead and be in the moment. Be where your feet are and just enjoy the process.

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