

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Nashville, Tennessee, USA

## Vanderbilt Commodores

### Ethan Barr

#### Press Conference



**Q. Ethan, good morning.**

ETHAN BARR: Morning.

**Q. Would you mind just kind of talking about the excitement of this team entering 2023 season and looking to build off of what you guys did last year?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, we're really excited. We have so many guys coming back, returning, especially on the defensive side of the ball. So we are looking forward to seeing what we can do and put on display this season. We have been putting in a lot of work, doing a lot of extra stuff this summer. It's been really busy. We've created a great bond between our team meets and we are really excited to see what we can do.

**Q. What's it like being here at Media Day representing Vanderbilt and in your backyard this year?**

ETHAN BARR: It's fun. We had a workout this morning and just came from that. It's nice that we get to just come down the road and be able to do this. It's a great experience. So I'm really looking forward to being here and being able to talk to you guys.

**Q. What's the biggest difference right now in the locker room between a year ago or earlier in your career in terms of the belief and culture Clark has established?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, we have created a lot of belief, like you said, a lot of confidence, and that's all coming through just knowing our techniques, knowing our schemes better and having guys that can help the younger guys.

We have so much experience, like I had said earlier, so we have been able to be teachers to those young guys. So we have been able to create a lot of depth throughout the summer and even through the spring with some of the guys who had not had as much experience prior to.

So yeah, it's a total different atmosphere in the locker room and a different confidence that we have going into this season because we have been putting the work in.

**Q. SEC Media Day is the unofficial start to college football season. You guys get to start the season with the first game in the country. How cool is that?**

ETHAN BARR: It's so cool. It's awesome that we get to be in the spotlight that Saturday and be the only game on television. We are really looking forward to it. Are excited to start camp next week and excited to see what the season brings for us and excited to make big things happen this year.

**Q. McAllister is here with Auburn today. What can you say about the kind of leader he was for you guys?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, he was a great leader. He's one of my really good buddies. I was just texting him, actually, right before I walked in this room.

So I mean, he meant a lot to the program, and it's great to see him go on and still continue his career, and I wish all the best for Elijah. We all love him and respect him for who he is and what he did for us.

**Q. I wanted you to reflect on the season last year. You all had so many great moments, beating Florida and Kentucky, what was that like for you to make history that way and have those big wins?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, those were my two first SEC wins and to be able to get those back-to-back last season, it was amazing. It really just solidified some of the things that we had been working on so hard and being able to close out some of those close games. So we can really build on that from last season.

Obviously the record that we had last year wasn't where we wanted it, so we have a lot to prove this year and we are looking to do that but it was great to have those wins last season, and we look to do that again this year obviously.



**Q. What do you know about Hawai'i? Is this the first year for their coach?**

ETHAN BARR: It's the same coach as last year I believe.

**Q. Same coach. So what do you know about them?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, I believe they do like a spread offense. As far as that goes, that's all I really know this far. But I mean, we're excited to have them come to Nashville and get to play them again, especially -- I mean, that's not a team that you would obviously expect playing coming into college coming into the SEC so it's going to be a good experience and I'm really looking forward to it.

**Q. Cut put into words what the Tennessee/Vanderbilt rivalry is like for you as a player?**

ETHAN BARR: I would say, honestly, I don't really let the rivalry, like, bother me too much, really. We understand that we don't like the guys in the orange, though, at the end of the day, and so it kind of is what it is. Obviously every year we look forward to that game, but we've just got to take it one game at a time as we go throughout the season.

I'm not too worried about obviously that game yet but yeah, I think we have respect for those guys and we look forward to playing them every year.

**Q. What kind of challenge is it, the tempo they go is as far as anyone in the country, for you as a defender?**

ETHAN BARR: It stresses a lot of things. It stresses communication. Just being able to get on the same page with everybody and being able to get lined up. It taxes your breath a little bit, I will say. But that's something that's one of their strengths and they use as a tactic for that. So being able to combat that and practice that as much as you can; that's what we did last year.

We try as much as we can do prepare for that, and I think we did a great job of preparation. So obviously that's just something that they use to kind of get people tired and being able to throw it downfield and get those long, touchdown passes.

**Q. Your head coach is a Vanderbilt alum. There are a couple other Vanderbilt alums on the coaching staff, I remember Coach Haye as a player. Is more significant or more special to be playing for guys who went to Vanderbilt and have been in your shoes?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, it's really cool. I think they have

good advice for us, being they played at Vanderbilt. Like you said, they have been in our shoes and not a lot of coaches can say that. Vanderbilt is a special contemplation and it's a little different than everywhere else considering we have a high level of academics expected from us. It's obviously an elite university. So they have definitely special advice that they can provide for us.

**Q. Along those lines, how has Coach Lea maybe grown into that role over the last couple of years from your perspective?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, Coach Lea has learned to trust us some more I think. He's been hanging over the program to the players a lot, and saying, You guys as leaders, take over, and being able to least your teammates. That's what this off-season has been really big about.

We have created a really good leadership kind of council, leadership group, and some different levels within the leadership that he's been entrusting us with; a lot of the things in the program and being able to like direct a lot of the younger guys. So that's some of the things that have changed over time and it's been really about for us.

**Q. Going off that, what's the team's reaction and response to the contract extension that Coach got and knowing that before the season start, what's the momentum like of this program coming off last year?**

ETHAN BARR: Yeah, momentum is on the up friend for sure. We are all excited that Coach Lea is going to be here, hopefully for a long time. He's always said to us, like he plans to be here for the rest of his career. He loves it here. Nashville is his home. He went to Vanderbilt obviously.

Yeah, there's a lot of good momentum, good energy and a lot of belief within our program for what can happen here at Vanderbilt.

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