

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Nashville, Tennessee, USA

**Georgia Bulldogs**

**Sedrick Van Pran**

Press Conference



**Q. Amarius Mims is a guy that thought about leaving and pretty sure he's pretty glad he didn't leave. Where does he fit in on the O-line and what excites you about his role this year?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: So just being frank, I think he fits in as a goofball. He's the guy that provides comic relief whenever things are getting serious and hot. You know, you may be a hundred degrees and running guys are ready to get after it, and he says something funny to kind of calm guys down. He's that kind of guy.

But also, he's like, immensely talented. That guy is one of God's gifts, just physically. Super, super excited to see what he can do this year.

**Q. Dating back in your senior year of high school, you won the State Leadership Award in the State of Louisiana for football players.**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: Yes, sir.

**Q. You've always been a leader. What does leadership mean to you, what is your leadership style and how do you go about doing it?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: So to be honest with you, I think leadership has always been important to me for the simple fact of -- it's going to sound weird, but I've always just cared about the guys that I put in time with.

So I'm a firm believer that if you're a friend, you're family. I think that's how I've always been. I think that natural care makes you want to help people out when they may not be going in the right direction and I think that's where it originated from is wanting to help out people that you love.

And what was the second half of your question? Oh, okay. Got you.

So leadership style I would say usually is very calm. So I

would try to build as best of a relationship as I can with people, and I try to be very good about it and the reason why is because, I'm not going to lie, sometimes I have a tendency to snap when necessary.

I think when you build those relationships, guys can take that because they understand that if iron the guy that's going out of your way to go eat lunch with a guy or take a guy here or do this with a guy when you may raise your voice, they are not going to take it in the way of, oh, Like, this guy is trying to attack me, they are trying to do something to me. He's just passionate about what we are doing.

So I think that's my leadership style. I try to connect with everybody, and I try to have an understanding of who they are as people.

**Q. You started every single game for the past two years, you're a two-time national champion, you've proven to be one of the best linemen in America. Even though you were eligible for the Draft this year, you chose to come back. What went into that decision to return to Georgia for your senior year.**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: That's a great, great question. I think starting off, just from the selfish side, even though I hate talking about myself, it would have to be that I felt like I could gain more from coming back. But then when you start to think about the aspect of the University of Georgia, I really felt like I had a great opportunity to help my guys. And I think that's what ultimately drove me back is I think that we had a great opportunity to be a good team, and I wanted to be a part of it and help try to lead the guys to a good season for us.

I think that's what it was and ultimately the connection that I felt with the guys in the locker room.

**Q. They talk about your leadership ability, and that obviously was very last year; you only gave up nine sacks. As a unit, you guys were phenomenal. This year, a lot of new starters and turnover on that line. What's it like trying to navigate that this year and also trying to make sure that as a leader, you are there for**

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**those guys in helping them grow in that role?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: So in my opinion, the beauty of the offensive line is that the more guys you have working, the more out comes you could possibly have.

So what we try to do is we try to spend as much time together as possible, whether it be working out, eating or whatever it may be, we just try to spend a lot of time together so that whenever there's a situation where different guys could possibly play or be plugged in or whatever the case may be, we don't lose a beat. That's the hope, right. The hope is that you can have multiple guys play.

So that's kind of what we try to, you know, I guess pride ourselves on as far as players is being so connected that multiple guys can play and be synchronized together.

**Q. Ladd McConkey has come a long way within your program. How vital is it to have a guy like him back and in those rooms and at practice and all of the above?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: Man, I would say this: It's amazing. I know a lot of people talk about my decision to come back, but I think his decision to come back is something that really, really will help the team. I think it was essential for the team to really on a good start as far as work outs and things like that.

Ladd is a great guy. I was really, really excited that he decided to come back, but it's been amazing to see his growth. I remember Ladd always talked about, he was so excited to just be able to travel, and then you know years later, man, he's really, really been a big piece for us making plays down the field.

I'm super, super proud of him and really happy for him because he's taken some amazing strides in his game and also as a person.

**Q. We heard yesterday that the two new schools maybe don't know what they are in for with the SEC. Based on your experience, what's waiting for Texas and Oklahoma when they join this conference?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: I want to be careful what I say because in my opinion, I think football is football, right. Anybody, any given day, like it doesn't matter conference, size, any of that. If it's your day, it's your day.

So I don't necessarily want to get into what's necessarily waiting for them. But I will say, I do think that they will be very competitive in this league and I think that it will be

good for the league because when you add two premiere programs like that that have such rich histories, I think it only elevates the status of the conference.

**Q. I could be wrong here, but when I turned on the film and the difference between 2021 and 2022, Luke and Searels being your coaching, both years, respectively, a difference in effort level. I could be wrong. But talk about what playing with effort means with Coach Searels and how he goes about coaching it?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: Let me say this: I think Coach Luke did a tremendous job, and he definitely did coach effort. That was his biggest thing. Coach Luke would have us have nightmares about the word "strain"; how much he talked about it.

But as far as Coach Searels, man, I really think he does a really good job of just allowing guys to be themselves, right. Like he's the type of guy that allows you to genuinely be yourself. He takes the time to build relationships, understands guys, and I think over time that allows guys to want to play hard for their coach.

Like Coach Luke, I think we played hard because we were connected to him and he taught that, but I really feel like, I think on face value, what Coach Searels has taught us, and you know just being connected with him, it makes a guy want to go out there and just genuinely play as hard as they can.

So I think that was something as to why we've played hard, really, to be honest, with both coaches just having that connection to them, whether it be Coach Luke or Coach Searels.

**Q. Said rake, a while ago, I asked Coach Smart about this perception that the program off the field has been lacking in accountability and discipline, and his answer to that was, "Talk to the players." What would you say about that?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: Can you repeat that question? I'm sorry.

**Q. Yeah, there's a perception out there that this program is lacking in accountability and discipline off the field, all of the negative press you guys have gotten.**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: Yes, sir.

**Q. And I asked Coach Smart about what he could say to change that perception, and he said, "Talk to the players."**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: Okay.

**Q. So I want to ask you, what you would say as far as that perception goes, and how you change that perception?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: Well, I think it starts here. Perception, unfortunately, I think in my opinion comes from when you make a mistake and you kind of give people a way to judge you, right.

So I think starting off is taking responsibility and understanding that we have made some mistakes. Don't shy away from it. Understand it and own up to it, but then from that point, take an action, right.

So make sure that if a guy is in a bad situation as a teammate, that you're taking care of him. Hey, Bro, I got you. I'll make sure you get home. Like, we're good. All of those things, preventative measures, having guys, seniors, juniors standing up in front of the team and talking about what being safe and cautious really means to them.

And then I think going beyond that and bringing it even more is just understanding that we have a responsibility to the guys that have come before us, whether they be successful businessmen or guys that have played football to, protect the University of Georgia.

And I think that's really the biggest thing is understanding that we have a responsibility to the university and some of the older guys really just speaking up about that.

**Q. Kentucky played you guys better than anybody last year. Is that a game that you guys have circled on the schedule, just kind of making sure that doesn't happen again, and if so, also, what's your thoughts on this new Kentucky team with a lot of those pieces gone from last year's team?**

SEDRICK VAN PRAN: So I would say this: We try not to get into the specifics of each game, because to be honest, every game is tough. There are a lot of opponents that give great challenges no matter who it may be, in conference, out of conference.

But what I will say is that Kentucky has a great team. They really, really do play hard, especially in the trenches. Those guys are really, really talented.

So I will say that we always look forward to games where we know that we'll have to like, you know, grind it out and things like that, but to be honest with you, it's like that every week. Every game, in and out of conference is a grind for

us, so I will say, I do think that Kentucky is very, very talented. However, we try to make sure that we are on our best for every game.

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