

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Auburn Tigers

Elijah McAllister

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Elijah, and he has opening remarks for us. Welcome and go right ahead.

ELIJAH McALLISTER: Just want to express my gratitude for all you guys here and my appreciation for you taking the time out to spend your day here with some amazing athletes. Thank you. War Eagle, let's do it.

Q. I just kind of wanted to ask, some of your former Vanderbilt teammates were in here this morning talking about the leadership you brought to that program. How special is it, A, for you to be back here in Nashville where you obviously played for so many years? B, what do you think it was about your impact that you made at Auburn that made you a selection for this after you'd only been on campus six or seven months?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: It feels great to be back in Nashville, a place I shared many experiences with a lot of people. The best part about it is I'm here representing the Auburn family.

You talked about leadership. What makes my leadership unique is my connectivity, my ability to be consistent every single day. That shows up in how I play and how I interact with my teammates.

Q. Elijah, due to the craziness of the SEC schedule -- I mean, you've heard that Auburn is one of the toughest places for opposing players to play. You have not played in Jordan-Hare Stadium because Vanderbilt hasn't played there in a long time. How much are you looking forward to getting in front of the orange and blue, the home crowd, and playing in that atmosphere?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: I'm so excited and blessed to have the opportunity to play in front of the Auburn faithful and to represent them the best way I know how by making plays. To be able to be in a stadium where the fans are for you, they're excited, and they love their football, I'm very excited

to experience that.

Q. What can you say about the other guys playing your position there, the jack room at Auburn? And what you've gotten to see since you arrived on campus.

ELIJAH McALLISTER: The jack position room is unique. We all have different skill sets. We all have different experience levels. We all have different things we can bring to the table to elevate our defense, elevate the team in a lot of different ways. I'm excited to put that on tape every single Saturday.

Q. Just wanted to ask what was it about Hugh Freeze that sold you on Auburn? What kind of leadership has he brought to this team in the short time he's been here?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: I think it's three simple things. The first thing is the foundation of our relationship is based off faith. That's a unique thing that not a lot of people have. I think that allows us to have confidence in who we are as people and also confidence leading the program. It's something that he stays strong with. He's an amazing person of faith. I'm excited about that.

The second is the opportunity to lead. And the third thing is the opportunity to play. Those three things have been amazing, and he's held true to that.

Q. Elijah, firstly, this Auburn defense traditionally very tough, always stingy defense. How excited are you to be a part of that? Secondly, playing that jack position, an incoming freshman Keldric Faulk, what have you seen from him? How has he jumped out to you in your eyes since you guys have been around the program?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: I'm so excited to be a part of the Auburn family and represent them here today, but also be able to experience and make plays a part of the defense. Like I talked about previously, the defensive back unit is amazing and they're talented. They're going to allow us to be better up front.



Specifically talking about Keldric Faulk, the kid is special. He's a young guy who's going to be successful in football and in life on and off the field. I'm excited to continue to work with him and mentor him in the best way I know possible.

Also, he'll be able to help the Auburn family and Auburn University in the future but most importantly now as well.

Q. You got your Bachelor's. You got your Masters. You're working on your Doctorate at Auburn. What's your end goal when it comes to your education and what you want to do when you're done with football?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: I laugh when I tell people all the time, I don't know if you've ever know of or seen Thanos. I want to get all the infinity stones I can in life. I want my family and the kids and everybody around me to understand you can do anything you want in life.

The end goal is to continue to elevate who I am as a person mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, in all facets of life. Continuing to work in the academic space and working on my doctorate. I want to be able to write two books. In the future, be a professor in university and continue to improve myself off the field and on the field. I want to continue to become a better football player and let the chips fall when they may.

Q. If you do become Thanos, can you not snap me? Talking about the offensive line, you guys had some transfers come in with you in this class. What did you see out of those guys as they kind of gelled throughout spring practice, and what do you think that group has done well opposite you on the line of scrimmage?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: First, want to give a shout out to our recruiting staff. Coach Freeze and everybody in between who had a great hand in allowing our roster to elevate specifically on the offensive line. I've seen great things and great improvement on the offensive line, particularly thinking January to now, where we sit in July. Coach Thornton is an amazing coach.

All across the board, there are guys that have experience in different leagues. Some guys have experience in this league. And I'm excited for you to see what they can do on Saturdays.

Q. Is there anyone on the team you've bonded with since arriving? Anyone you've become particularly close with?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: Two guys I'm really close with,

Donovan Kaufman and Malcolm Johnson Jr. Those guys I hang out with every single day. They actually have a podcast called Behind the Helmet that allows you guys to get an inside look at who we are as athletes, behind the helmet. Those guys I connect with every single day.

I'm actually going to be featured in an episode here on Thursday of the show as I do my back to school drive at Auburn to give back to the community.

Q. You come over from Vanderbilt, and you're in the portal, and you have all these options. What made you choose Auburn? And on top of that, what's that game in week 10 this year when you go back to Nashville, what's that going to mean to you personally?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: Firstly, what drew me to Auburn is who Coach Hugh Freeze is and how he connected with me on my visit as well as the opportunity to lead in the play. And most importantly, the tradition that Auburn has and the fans they have and the love they have for their program.

I'm just excited to continue to represent them in the best way I know how. I'm not really looking too forward to the game week 10. I'm just looking forward to putting my best foot forward and making plays on the field.

Q. I talked to somebody, I'm not going to say who it was, but they talked to you earlier today and came away so impressed they think you're going to be president of the United States someday. Any political aspirations?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: I try not to get in politics. I'm more interested in people and elevating them to make the world a better place.

Q. What's more difficult, studying for your doctorate or the upcoming opposing offense for the week?

ELIJAH McALLISTER: Probably I wouldn't say the upcoming opposing offense for the week, but getting a quarterback sack is more difficult. When I think of studying for a Ph.D., there's nobody stopping me from studying and working on getting better in the academic space, whereas when I'm rushing the passer, that person in front of me is like, no, you're not going to do your job. That's probably more difficult than studying and working on my academics.

Thank you guys for having me. War Eagle, as always.

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