

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Mississippi State Bulldogs Jo'Quavious Marks

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have Jo'quavious here. He's ready for some questions.

Q. In general, aside from your guys' place, what would you say is the toughest environment in the SEC?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: I would probably say Texas A&M.

Q. Any particular reason why?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: Their stadium gets pretty loud. It's a big stadium, holds a lot of people. And they play some great football up there.

Q. A little different one, what would you tell a freshman or transfer coming into the program and wanting to know what the SEC is like? The level of competition that's unique to that conference.

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: I would tell incoming freshman or a transfer, the SEC every week you're going against a good team that's capable of beating you or capable of losing to you. Basically, you've got to bring your A game every week.

Outside of the SEC is pretty good too, so never underestimate nobody.

Q. How difficult has the transition been? Just kind of the end of last season to just starting this season with your new coach. How do you plan on honoring Mike Leach this year?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: We plan on honoring Mike Leach by just going out every week and winning for him, going 1-0 every week.

The transition hasn't really been that bad because Coach Arnett has been there. We all have a great relationship with him from being on the defensive side. From me being on the offensive side, he has just been open arms, even



though he was the defensive coordinator, to the offensive players.

Q. Of course this year you're in a new offense. You have Kevin Barbay as the new offensive coordinator. I just want to ask you how have you gotten acclimated to this new offense? Do you expect your role in this offense to continue to grow with your first year with your new offensive coordinator?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: I think it's going to grow tremendously because we're doing a lot of formations out of running sets and we're still having a lot of passing sets. With Coach Barbay, he's big on giving his best player the ball. So just being really on his type of scheme, and he runs a pro style scheme.

Q. You guys go back and forth with this series each year. Kentucky won last year. You won at home in Starkville. What is it about that matchup? If you can speak to last year, the defense of Kentucky, what challenges do they present? Obviously I know you don't want to go specifically into one game from last year, but what is it about a Kentucky team that you guys physically match up one another kind of right on par with each other?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: Three years I played Kentucky, they always have a good defense. Their D-line is pretty good every year. They have great linebackers coming out of there.

It's just a back and forth, so we're just looking at who is going to take the lead right now.

Q. You've been very durable in your career. You've only missed one game. What goes into being a durable player, and how important is that to you?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: I think it's just important to me because just knowing that my teammates know that I can do whatever it takes to try to win the game for them.

Q. Looking back at last year in the running back room, you all had the most rushing yards under Coach Leach



in his tenure there. What can you say about the development of the running back room going into this year?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: Going into this year, we have a lot of new faces. We've got three new faces in our running back room. We've got one from last year, Simeon Price. Our running back room is pretty good. We're pretty stacked right now.

I think, if any one of us gets put in the game, out of like six of us, I think we'll be up to the table to do some great things.

Q. You talked about the transition being kind of seamless since Arnett had been there. How much did him coaching that bowl game kind of solidify -- just rally the guys, yeah, this is our head coach. What's it like playing for him?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: It's very fun playing with Coach Arnett because he got the same mindset as me, I'll say. He got the same mindset as me. I want to win. I want to attack opponents. I get very fiery when it comes to football. I want to learn new stuff.

And that's what type of person he is. He's very kind. He's very fiery on the field. He was a defensive coordinator. So defense, they always tough, hard-nosed, and I feel like Mississippi State is hard-nosed. So that's why we picked him as the head coach.

Q. Obviously with the Egg Bowl every year, that's always circled on your schedule. Are there any other opponents you're looking forward to playing this year?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: I'm looking forward to playing everyone on my schedule.

Q. Anyone specifically or no?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: I don't want to say, no.

Q. For people who haven't been to your campus or seen your school or town, what is it about it that is appealing that they should go see it?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: It's very unique. I'll say downtown, downtown Starkville is a very unique place. We've got a lot of places to go eat. We've got places to go just chill out.

The campus is very nice. You can sit in the middle of campus and just read books or just lay there and watch the sky or something. Play with your dogs. People are very

kind with their dogs out there. They love dogs out there. That's one thing I know about Starkville. And their food is pretty nice.

Q. Speaking of dogs, does your tie have bulldogs?

JO'QUAVIOUS MARKS: Yeah, my tie has bulldogs on it. I like it because it stands out a little more than just probably a maroon tie with just one bulldog on it. I wanted multiple bulldogs on mine.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports