

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

## Mississippi State Bulldogs

### Will Rogers

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: The final person of the day is Will Rogers, and he has a few welcoming remarks.

WILL ROGERS: Thank you for having me. It's a huge privilege to be here alongside both of my teammates and represent Mississippi State University. Thank you all for having me.

**Q. I'm curious, as a State guy through and through, obviously from the state of Mississippi, what would you like to see -- I guess, what does it mean to play for State? We've seen Mississippi State put a bigger emphasis on retaining those instate kids. What does it mean for a player in Mississippi to get an opportunity to go play in Starkville?**

WILL ROGERS: It just means everything. I think Coach Arnett is doing a really great job of keeping the best players from Mississippi to go to Mississippi State. I think that should be the main point of emphasis when recruiting, recruit the instate kids first.

You look at a lot of the guys on our team -- myself, Walley, Tulu, Emmanuel Forbes was my class. We had a lot of guys that came through my class that are from Mississippi. I think that should be a big point of emphasis.

**Q. Will, obviously -- I mean, you were with Mike Leach for a long time. Just as a quarterback and head coach, what was your relationship like? How do you plan on honoring him this season?**

WILL ROGERS: We had a really special connection, obviously. Played three years for Coach Leach, recruited me out of high school. Very, very sad when he ended up passing.

I look forward to honoring him this year just by playing hard and hopefully throwing a couple touchdowns for him. Just doing as he would do.

**Q. What's the difference for you and this offense under your new head coach? Did you have any discussion with family or friends about transferring from Mississippi State to somewhere else?**

WILL ROGERS: I think the biggest difference in this offense is just going to be a more balanced attack maybe. 11, 12 personnel, more designed runs and more runs in the run game schematically, RPOs. I mean, just a normal pro style offense for us.

I think we really look forward to accepting that challenge and maybe expanding our offense a little bit.

In terms of you were asking if I was going to transfer? No, there wasn't very much talk about that at all. I kind of stayed faithful to my commitment at Mississippi State ever since I was a junior in high school. Obviously going into my senior year, kind of want to finish it out with some of the guys I came in with.

**Q. Last couple years, I know it was two different coordinators defensively for A&M, but you've had great success against the Aggies the last couple years.**

WILL ROGERS: Don't jinx me.

**Q. Not trying to do that, but why do you think you've had that success? And what do you look forward to going back to Kyle Field this year?**

WILL ROGERS: First of all, I want to say that's my favorite place to play besides Starkville. Kyle Field is number two on my list.

I think it's honestly just a whole, collective, team effort group the past couple years. In '21 we played really well, and last year we played well as well. Got to run the ball a little bit more on those guys last year with Coach Durkin's design in his defense.

I think it's just been a whole, collective group just kind of coming together and just playing well. I guess it just lined up for the Aggies the past two years. I don't know.



**Q. I understand you're a bit of a throwback? You don't watch much TV or spend much time on the Internet? You like to just be outside and be an outdoors guy?**

WILL ROGERS: Yes, sir.

**Q. That might be refreshing to a lot of people. Can you just talk about that?**

WILL ROGERS: Yeah, just who I am. Kind of from Mississippi, grew up deer hunting, things like that. Enjoy being out in the outdoors and hunting and being out there with my friends. That's kind of me.

If I get some off time and I'm away from football, I'm not going to just sit in the house and play a video game all day. I'd rather be outside hanging out with some of the buddies and maybe going hunting or fishing that afternoon or something.

**Q. I wanted to ask about y'all playing Georgia. What was so tough about their defense? Was it schematics? You're smiling. Was it the players? Schematically? What was it?**

WILL ROGERS: Jalen Carter is pretty good. I mean, everybody on their defense is a five-star or plays for the Eagles. So they're pretty good.

**Q. This year you're in a new offense. You spent your first three years, the past few years in the air raid under Mike Leach. What should Mississippi State fans expect differently from the passing game this year? Of course the passing game, you would think, there's not going to be as much. But your current coordinator Kevin Barbay has been very efficient. What do you expect? How do you expect the offense to look differently than it has in years past?**

WILL ROGERS: Just a little more play action, more designed shots down the field. Coach Barbay did a really good job of scheming that up. It's something we're really looking forward to this year.

**Q. Will, as a senior and a leader on this team with the adjustments that have been made over the course of this off-season, how big is your role in preparing all of the younger guys on the team for these changes and for this upcoming season?**

WILL ROGERS: Kind of all of us as seniors and returning starters to really get it together and realize it's on us to lead this team now. If there's a young guy slacking or something not right in the locker room, it's kind of on us,

and we have to fix it.

As a senior, as a fourth year starter, I kind of took that head on. I'm looking forward to really showing the young guys the ropes and how we do things in Mississippi State.

**Q. Obviously coming off a big Egg Bowl win this past year, can you talk about the precedent it's setting up for the future years to come?**

WILL ROGERS: Obviously a huge win, huge team win, huge win for our program. Any time you can beat your in-state rival, no matter where you are, it's always going to be a big win.

We just look forward to playing those guys every year. It's always a tough game. It's always a hard fought game. We look forward to defending the Egg Bowl this year.

**Q. Just with a guy like Austin Williams, who I'm going to be honest, seems like he's been there forever. That was kind of your guy. You had a very close relationship, roommates. Who in that receiver locker room is kind of like your guy, your go to, who you kind of rely on?**

WILL ROGERS: Good question. I don't know this year that there's like specifically one guy as it is the whole group collectively. I think Coach Bumphis is doing a really good job of bringing that room together. They're really, really close.

Obviously you have Tulu, Walley, Justin Robinson, Zavion Thomas, several guys in that room that are going to play a lot of snaps for us, Jordan Mosley. The list goes on of guys that can play for us.

So I think it's kind of on that group as a whole to come together and really make up for that ground.

**Q. You have an early season game against LSU in Starkville. What are your thoughts on playing the Tigers over the years? What make that game special or unique or challenging?**

WILL ROGERS: Yeah, challenging is a good word. They're a really good program. I think Coach Brian Kelly has done a really good job of getting those guys ready to play and play hard.

I was telling somebody earlier that's kind of like one of the only games that I've been at Mississippi State where I feel like they've played harder than us, and they did last year.

I think he does a really good job. I have a lot of respect for

them and their program. We need to be ready to play.

**Q. Is there a big aspect of your game that you think's taken a leap over spring and summer? Something you're excited to showcase this fall?**

WILL ROGERS: Well, we'll see during the fall. I've just been trying to become more consistent in my game. Obviously trying to get better every single day, trying to get better from year to year.

So I look forward to trying to showcase that in the fall and win as many games as possible.

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