

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Tennessee Volunteers

Joe Milton III

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have Joe for us and he's ready for questions.

Questions.

Q. How much more confident were you when you got the shout at the end of last season and take another step this season?

JOE MILTON III: I'm extremely, extremely confident. I trust the guys around me. I trust my coaches to go through the preparation with me confidently. I'm extremely confident, and I'm ready for it.

Q. You came as a quarterback from the transfer portal. We're seeing that more in college football. What are the most important things that a newly arrived veteran quarterback needs to do to win over the locker room?

JOE MILTON III: Being able to understand the guys in the locker room, I feel like once you understand the guys in the locker room and what the team wants, what the coaches want, if you have new coaches or old coaches, doesn't matter, just understand what they want inside the playbook, understand your playbook. I feel like the playbook is the main thing.

Once you know that, then the guys around you are kind of rallied to you to get your help, see how you see it. I mean, every mind in here thinks different. Just being able to see that and process that, it will be fine.

Q. You came up from Michigan. You've had experience in different offenses. Tennessee and Michigan very different offensively. Is having experience in all these different offenses beneficial to you as a quarterback?

JOE MILTON III: Absolutely. The terminology for each of those coaches was different. Being able to have Coach Pep as a pro-style guy, more NFL terminology, then Coach



Gattis, more of a kind of pro style but spread-ish, then Coach Heup, spread and making plays, right?

It does help and translates to the next level because you get different terminology, like I said, you get a different mindset, how the plays work, how to prepare for those plays, read those plays.

Q. In the summertime you work on your game. At the passing academy you launched a rocket. What is the furthest you've thrown and feel comfortable throwing the football?

JOE MILTON III: I actually don't know the furthest I can throw the ball. I kind of just let it go. It's a mindset thing. As a quarterback, once you feel like somebody's too far, then they going to be too far from you, right? I kind of just let it go no matter where they at.

Q. What have we not seen from Bru McCoy yet?

JOE MILTON III: There's a lot of things you haven't seen from Bru. He's a different person than he was last year. I feel like that's everybody on Tennessee's team. We're different from last year.

The more explosive plays from him. Pretty much anything you can name Bru can do. Whatever it takes, Bru is going to get it done. He also let me know that pretty much every day (smiling).

Q. It was no surprise or secret the relationship you had with Hendon Hooker last year. What are the things you learned from him that you're going to take into this season?

JOE MILTON III: Becoming a pro is one of 'em. I feel like that's the main thing I could take from Hendon, is becoming a pro. Obviously he's older than me. I never had no one that actually treated me like I would say a little brother. You know (laughter)? I never had nobody treat me like a little brother, and that's what he did.

I wouldn't say it was under the wing because we was going head-to-head. It was a 1-2 punch no matter what. If he



needed anything, I was there. If he came to the sideline about a play or coverage, I was there no matter what. It can be anything. I can be anybody. I was there to help first.

I feel like that's one thing that he led, contributed as a teammate and as a big brother. It was great.

Q. About Hendon, what sort of things did you take from him? What are you looking forward to taking Georgia on again?

JOE MILTON III: I don't know how to answer that question. I feel like we prepare well enough. Was the experience what we wanted? Absolutely not. But at the same time he played his heart out. He gave it his all for Tennessee. That's all that matter in that situation. That's what I'm going to do for this year, give my all for Tennessee.

Q. Hendon said you were cooking up dinner earlier this week. What are you cooking for dinner?

JOE MILTON III: My baked spaghetti, yeah (smiling).

Q. You're such an energetic, positive guy with your teammates. How do you balance between that and holding guys accountable?

JOE MILTON III: Most definitely. I think that's where the backup quarterback role came into play. You get to understand guys more. Hendon was busy last year, right? It was just how it was this off-season. I'm here and I wasn't just taking the trips. Last year he came here, right? I mean, same thing for Nico. Nico is at school right now working out with the guys. There's an opportunity to build as a backup, however you may name it. It's an opportunity to build amongst the team.

For me, my best way to get connection with guys is handshakes. As a man, as a quarterback, I got handshakes with guys that barely even played, but that makes them feel special. That's what I'm willing to do. I want guys to feel special on the team. Doesn't matter if they play or not, right? They contribute on the team, so they matter.

Q. I think everybody in the world knows you have a hell of an arm. A big conversation now is since you've been a backup quarterback, you've been able to learn from people, are you excited to be able to show off the mental side of your game as well this year?

JOE MILTON III: Absolutely. I'm just ready to show off my game, period. It means a lot to me to show off to myself. I mean, nothing else matters. Once you make yourself

happy, I feel like you'll be good to go, so...

Q. You came from the Big Ten to the SEC. Auburn just signed a quarterback, I won't mention which school, but what is different about playing in the SEC as opposed to the Big Ten? What is similar about the two leagues?

JOE MILTON III: The size. Guys, they may be 200 plus, right, but they're running. Those guys are running.

For example, my first let's say big SEC game, I won't mention who it was, but I was running, and I saw the goal line. I was so happy. I'm thinking that I'm going to score, right? I just feel a big old hand come across my visor. I just went with it. At the same time I was thinking, This game is real. Those guys in the SEC can run and they're fast.

Q. You said you talked about the handshakes. How many players do you think you have handshakes with?

JOE MILTON III: 85% of the team.

Q. Coach Halzle, how has he improved your game? What is the dynamic of y'all's relationship?

JOE MILTON III: He improved me a lot. Every meeting I'm willing to learn from him. He been around great guys like Coach Heup, for example, national championship winner. He pick brains, right? He challenge you to become the best player you can be every day.

Just being around Coach Halzle, man, his mindset of winning, getting better every day, it's great. It translate to you. That's all you're willing to do.

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