

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Monday, July 15, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

South Carolina Gamecocks

Alex Huntley

Press Conference



Q. What needs to happen with the South Carolina defense to improve in the win total?

ALEX HUNTLEY: I think we have to play on Saturdays the way we've been practicing and preparing this offseason. I feel like the defense as a whole, we've got a lot of newcomers, a lot of transfers and young guys who have come in and they've helped the team tremendously. So I think all we have to do is show the world that we know who we are and just do it on Saturdays.

Q. Going off that, what has given you confidence this offseason that you guys are primed for a bounce-back year?

ALEX HUNTLEY: I mean, there's several things I'd say. First step, we've got a lot of guys who came in who have put immediate impact on our team, on our defense. That's something that, obviously, helps you in every aspect.

I think last year didn't go the way anybody on the team wanted it, and I think we all came back from that with a real big chip on our shoulder, ready to work, ready to just do what we've got to do to win because that's the only thing on our minds right now is win.

Q. Has Coach Beamer told you guys what playing at OU is like, and what are you kind of expecting that trip to Norman to be like?

ALEX HUNTLEY: I wouldn't say he's touched on it too much. I feel like right now we're focused on game one, really, just taking every game one at a time. But I do think the trip to Norman will be exciting. It's a good school. A lot of history there. I think it will be pretty fun.

Q. What was the decision-making in staying in Columbia supposed jumping into the portal?

ALEX HUNTLEY: Being from Columbia, I think the people, the place, I love it. I originally am from Maryland. When I

moved to Columbia, they adopted me with open arms. It's kind of hard to leave a place that has everything you need and great people behind it. And that's just all saying it about my teammates, those are my brothers. I will have a bond with them forever. So I didn't want to leave them.

Q. Brent Venables is probably familiar in that part of the country. Can you talk about his defensive style and what you expect when you play the Oklahoma based defense?

ALEX HUNTLEY: I'd say they're going to be fast, aggressive, trying to fly around the field. He's a coach with a lot of -- I give him, I guess -- aura, I guess, on the defensive side of the ball. He's a great coach. I expect great things. I know we'll prepare how we prepare and see how it goes on Saturday.

Q. Origins of the nickname Boogie?

ALEX HUNTLEY: Before I could even remember, I know I used to crawl really fast. My brother said look at him boogie. I started playing football at about four years ago. My mom said go Boogie, and the rest is history.

Q. Rocket Sanders joining the program. What's he been like for you guys so far? Any stories of him joining the program, what's he like?

ALEX HUNTLEY: That's a dude who came into the building day one. You can see how much it means to him. His care factor is huge, and all he does is work, and I think he's great for a lot of guys to see a guy who came in with already a big name, already stats to his name, but he still didn't miss a beat in workouts. He grinds. So I love having him on the team. I'm glad he came.

Q. We had a chance to get to know Coach Beamer when he was at Oklahoma as an assistant. We saw his energy and vigor. We saw in the game he head-butted guys with helmets, had to get stitches at halftime. Could you talk about his energy, what he means to you as players, what during the games he brings to the team?



ALEX HUNTLEY: Ya'll have seen it. He's a guy with high energy, high care. But I think a lot of things that people don't really talk about is passion and hunger. I think those are the two things that I take from Coach Beamer. And I think a lot of the team takes from him. He really loves what he does. He loves being able to coach us and he wants it so bad. And I think we all do. So being able to play for a coach like that, it's really easy to kind of fall in line because he has the same centers as we have. Great coach. Lucky to be able to play for him.

Q. Your thoughts on probably a lot of players have different thoughts on it, but the idea that you have video replay, iPads available to you during the season, how handy is that going to be to have?

ALEX HUNTLEY: That will be huge. I know from a defensive line standpoint, I'm excited. Just to be able to see what the O line is doing. And play calling, so much more insight to what's going on, truly. So I'm super excited about it. I think it's going to help the game of college football so much more.

Q. With College Football '25 coming out, how excited are you for that and how accurate do you think it's going to be with the ratings and everything?

ALEX HUNTLEY: I mean, I'm super excited. I feel like that's what most of the guys here are going to do when they leave here is go play. But, yeah, I feel like I'm going to have to do some proving wrong during the season. I feel like the history of sports games and ratings have never been the best. So I have mentally prepared for not the rating I want. But it's okay because the season is coming soon, so I have my chance to kind of show.

Q. How big is it to get Tonka back? And talk about who has made strides on that South Carolina defense this offseason.

ALEX HUNTLEY: I think Tonka coming back is huge. He's a great player, as everybody knows. Great teammate. And he's a great person. Being one of my close friends, every day, I kind of see him in a different light than a lot of people. But he's a very calm guy. Just too himself but on the football field he kind of lets it all go. So having a guy like that is huge, and we have so many guys on defense who either are new additions or who have bettered themselves in the offseason.

It's going to be cool to see how many guys are playing, and it's going to be a lot because I keep getting questions about the defense a lot, and rightfully so, because what we're going to do this year is going to be very big. So just about every position has a guy who you might not have heard of

but you'll see this year.

Q. With Texas and Oklahoma coming in, the schedule's changed around, but you still play Texas A&M this year. Can you talk about playing the Aggies, what kind of team they are when you've played them?

ALEX HUNTLEY: Texas A&M is one of those teams every time you play them it's going to be a battle, it's going to be a fourth quarter game. That's how most teams are in the SEC. It's the most competitive conference. That's just how the SEC is.

So it's always been fun being able to play these good teams. If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best. So that's how everybody on the team feels. We want our shot, a shot at the title. Whatever we do to play, we'll do that. We'll show up on Saturday.

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