

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Monday, July 15, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

## Vanderbilt Commodores

## Gunnar Hansen

### Press Conference



**Q. Have you had a chance to preview Nate Johnson, transfer quarterback? What can you tell us about Nate?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: Nate, one of the fastest guys on our team. He brings a great attribute to our team, fast. But we've got three or four good quarterbacks in that room. Like we preach every day, we've got to earn it every day, and during fall camp we'll see who earns the spot for the Saturday upcoming.

**Q. Another transfer you got this season Jamoni Jones, curious what he brings to you as an offense?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: With all these transfers coming, we've got bond with them bringing them into the program. Bonding with him, I'm with Jamoni a lot. He brings a great ability from the standpoint, and we just preach true brotherhood and I think he's doing very well.

**Q. You're one of the first offensive linemen we got to talk to today. What can you say about the rest of the group there on the offensive line from Vanderbilt? What can you say about the work you've done this offseason?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: This was a huge offseason for Vanderbilt. We brought in four new O-linemen Steven Hubbard, Chase Mitchell, Cade McConnell and Steven Losoya, and a couple of them bring a lot of great experience. They played a lot of football. I feel Coach Klenakis, the new O-line coach, his biggest thing is repetition. During practice and extra work we're repeating a lot of reps to get better at them.

So I think this will be a great group to go in the season with. I feel like last year we were here and there with the run game, but this year we're going to establish the run game and dent the front and be physical up front. That's our biggest goal this year.

**Q. What in this offseason gives you confidence that you guys will be improved this year and have a bounceback season?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: Just the numbers. We got a new strength and conditioning coach, Coach Stiner, and all it is is work in there and just seeing the numbers, how fast people are getting, how strong people are getting. So just getting bigger, faster, stronger every day, and we see the numbers because it displays outside.

**Q. How excited are you to actually have the stadium complete and be playing in kind of a renovated stadium for this season?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: To my knowledge, I think one side will be done, the other side will be halfway done. I think it will be cool; people can sit there having a closed atmosphere, it will be really cool.

**Q. We talked a lot about rivalries today. But one we haven't talked about is Vanderbilt/Tennessee. Could you tell me about Tennessee/Vandy, that rivalry?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: That's a rivalry way before I came to college. It's always a game we look forward to. It's always a game we always circle, and when we're in the same state, it's a home town rivalry and a pretty cool experience.

**Q. You mentioned a lot of new faces on the offensive line. What stuff are you doing to build chemistry and camaraderie with a lot of new teammates, and how important is it for all five offensive linemen to be on the same page?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: I'll start with the second question. All five, that's what Coach Klenakis preaches. Five is one. You can have all four right and one wrong and it's a busted play. Having all five knowing what they're doing. We preach trust a lot. You have to be able to trust the guy next to you. I have to trust that someone will be in slot protection with me.

Your first question, what are we doing? Coach has held a dinner every Sunday that we go to. Or sometimes I'll take

the O line to Topgolf or something like that. Doing events like that, and sometimes the best thing to do is to hang out at the house and chill. One time we bought, like, 500 wings for the O line. We're big guys, like to eat. Stuff like that.

**Q. Why is it that the offensive linemen are among the most fun to talk to on the team?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: Because as the O line you have a different head space. You don't get recognition. You can have 99 perfect snaps, miss one last one, it's all on you, even though it's one bad snap. So just talking to us, we're unique, we're big, we're funny.

**Q. You can argue if you don't have an offensive line the team could go down the drain.**

GUNNAR HANSEN: Yeah, I mean, that's the most important position. Protects your quarterback. Starts with the running game up front. Open up shots in the back.

**Q. How is the defensive line coming along? I'm sure you see them every day at practice, able to watch them put in the work. How is the defense at Vanderbilt looking this year?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: Most excited about Khordae and Zaylin Wood, one came from Purdue and one from NCSU, and they just bring a lot to the defensive line. And I feel like they're going to help the O line because they're really good.

**Q. Who is better dressed, you or your teammate, CJ?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: CJ and me are roommates. We're competitive about everything. I think I am. He'll say he is. But I know I am. Everyone else knows it.

**Q. What are selling points about the school or program that some guys overlook? What do people not see about Vanderbilt as a school and program?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: We're an upcoming program. We're going to be best in the nation at one point, soon enough. Also just the city of Nashville, you've got everything there, Broadway, a lot of CEOs, a lot of businesses. Up and coming city, we're growing everywhere. Stuff like that.

**Q. What's a non-conference game that you look forward to playing?**

GUNNAR HANSEN: I'm looking forward to every game but one that we're going to start off is Virginia Tech. It's our first game. It's going to be a point we set. We're going to

show them what we're capable of doing from the offseason.

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