

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Dallas, Texas, USA

## Georgia Bulldogs

## Malaki Starks

### Press Conference



MALAKI STARKS: It's crazy, we've got a count down clock in the weight room, and I looked at it the other day and it was like 80 something days and now it's like 40 something. So it's crazy.

**Q. What's it like working with Coach on the daily basis? What do you see that the public might not see?**

MALAKI STARKS: He's intense. He's very intense, but he means well. He's very competitive. He's just a guy who wants to go out there and win and wants to bring the best out of you. That's one reason why I chose to come to Georgia, just to be around a guy like that.

**Q. You've had such a high standard the past few years, how the Georgia Bulldogs have played. How do you get out of complacency and improve, especially as a defense?**

MALAKI STARKS: I think just realizing complacency gets you passed up. If you're flat lining people who are consistently growing are going to passed you at some point, and the goal is not to get passed, just keep growing. I feel like especially on defense there's nothing you can't get better at, nothing you can't keep growing in, so that's the goal is just to keep growing day by day.

**Q. Talk about the defensive identity; what are you most looking forward to this season and what can we expect out of the defense?**

MALAKI STARKS: Just that competitiveness, just to go out there and be hungry, be who we are, be the standard of what Georgia was built on. I think that's the biggest thing. Another reason why I came to Georgia is to play defense. Georgia has always been that school, when you look at defense that's who you want to be, and we just want to go out there and be what we can be.

**Q. Could you talk about the offense? Obviously with some quality pieces leaving, people have different**

**expectations. What are the expectations for your team and what are you seeing in them early on?**

MALAKI STARKS: Right. I think offense is doing great. They really are. The guys that came in like Trevor, Colbie, the transfers that we got, they've stepped up and they've taken a bigger part in the offense.

I like to say that we don't rebuild, we reload, and those guys are doing a great job of stepping up and learning, so I'm excited to see what they can do.

**Q. What do you notice from Carson Beck? Have you seen a step up in level of play from him?**

MALAKI STARKS: I have, and I think that last year was really big for him. I think the thing for Carson is just to step up and be Carson. Just be himself. And I think he's starting to realize that. He's starting to get a lot more comfortable with his role of just being that guy, being that voice on the offense and on the whole team. Just him being himself is the biggest thing for him right now, and I think he's doing that very well.

**Q. Who are some guys on the team that aren't be talked about that maybe should be and that could surprise some people this year?**

MALAKI STARKS: I say his name every now and then, but I think Dillon Bell. I think Dillon Bell is that guy people need to watch out for. The way he works, the way he goes about his business. It's just incredible. Just to be able to compete with a guy like that is huge, so I'm excited to see what he does this season.

**Q. Can you speak on the type of player that Mykel Williams is and what he brings to the defense?**

MALAKI STARKS: Yeah, I like to say Mykel is a generational talent, the things that he can do. He's very, very important to our defense. We wouldn't be the same without him. Just the type of guy that he is, I think that's the most important thing. He's a great guy and just his competitive spirit, just the way he goes about his business is huge, and I think that's why he gels so well in our



defense. He's a big part of what we do.

**Q. You all have been consistently atop the conference for the last handful of years. How much has the messaging remained the same, and with Nick Saban retiring has it changed at all?**

MALAKI STARKS: Not really. We want to keep the standard the standard, and that's not to talk about games, go win them. I think that's the biggest thing for us, and we just want to be able to do what we know we can do and just keep doing it at the highest level.

**Q. After an excellent All-American season you dealt with some injuries this off-season. How is your shoulder feeling, and mentally how are you feeling right now having dealt with some adversity in spring camp?**

MALAKI STARKS: I'm feeling good. Surgery went well. My rehab is going good, and I think it's just going back to that phase of being able to trust myself again. Going through summer workouts and stuff, I'm gaining that trust back, and I feel really good. I'm excited for fall camp to hit.

**Q. A guy like Cole Speer who's been in the program a couple of years and trying to work his way on to the field, how have you seen him grow and do you think he's someone that can make an impact to this team this season?**

MALAKI STARKS: Yeah. Cole is one of the leaders on this team, just the way he goes about his business, the way he puts his head down and works, great athlete. Cole is awesome. To see him kind of grow, and the role he's going to step into this season is going to be huge for him, and I'm excited to see what he does with it.

**Q. With Texas and Oklahoma coming in and you guys having Texas on your schedule, how much are you looking forward to welcoming those teams into the SEC?**

MALAKI STARKS: Yeah, I'm excited. I feel like the SEC is if not the best conference you can play in, so just being able to compete with the best of the best, going down to Texas and just having a chance to go compete with those guys, I'm really excited. I think the main thing is it's just focusing on us right now and then we'll hit Clemson in a few weeks and take it day by day, game by game, but I'm excited.

**Q. The Opener at Clemson, do you enjoy starting the season with games like that right off the bat?**

MALAKI STARKS: Yeah, man, it's competitive, and as a competitor I love it. There's nothing better than facing a good team. We've got a bunch of good teams on our schedule, they just happen to be one of them, so I'm excited to see what we can do. One of my friends I went to high school with, Sammy Brown, is down there now, so it's going to be exciting to go back and forth with him.

**Q. When you're at a place like Georgia, two National Championships in the past few years, probably at practice every day you're going to have some epic battles. Who's been your favorite person to go up against in practice and scrimmages this year?**

MALAKI STARKS: I'd say Dom, Dominic Lovett. When he got here from Missouri, he was fitting into the culture and now he's one of those leaders on the team. Just his competitive spirit, which is why we go at it a lot. We all talk about the Missouri game, how he got him and he got me. We go back and forth and we keep tally who wins, so that's huge.

**Q. OU and Texas is a storied rivalry. They play in a neutral site. What's it like, Georgia and Florida playing in Jacksonville, a neutral site?**

MALAKI STARKS: I think it's huge, and that's something I didn't really understand when I was little, that neutral site of Georgia and Florida and everything that goes on there. But just being able to be in that game the last two years, just being in Jacksonville, it's huge. It's a different feeling. You get to the stadium, and you're in an NFL stadium, by the river, in Jacksonville, it's an amazing atmosphere to be in.

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