

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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## Tennessee Volunteers

### Cooper Mays

#### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We've Cooper Mays, and he's rocking the look for the Tennessee Vols.

**Q. Boo Carter is someone that's come in and made quite the impact, it seems, early on in his Vols career. How do you see him contributing this fall? And what makes him special in your eyes?**

COOPER MAYS: Oh, man, I'm not sure how he'll be used, but a special player, really athletic. You said you're from Chattanooga. I'm sure you're familiar. You've watched him.

Super athletic kid. Cool kid too. Really easy to get along with, fits right in.

I'm not sure how we'll use him, but you've got to find ways to use somebody like that, you know.

**Q. First of all, compliments on the hat.**

COOPER MAYS: Appreciate it, brother.

**Q. You're up here representing the Tennessee offensive line. I want to give you a chance to talk about the other guys that are going to be starting alongside you on the offensive line this year.**

COOPER MAYS: We've got a few guys that some positions haven't really been figured out, but John Campbell is coming back, Javontez Spraggins, Jackson Lampley, Andrej Karic, Dayne Davis. Lance Heard is new transfer in. We've got a couple people in the mix for a lot of different things, but a bunch of good kids. Really good guys.

You know how O-linemen are, a bunch of good guys, super talented in my opinion, and a lot of experience under our belt too.

**Q. Josh Heupel has a lot of ties in Norman, won a**



**National Championship as a player. You're going to be there for the first SEC test, welcome to the SEC. What's the expectation around that game, and what has been said in that locker room from Coach going back to Norman?**

COOPER MAYS: My biggest expectation from that is just a great environment. I've personally never been to Oklahoma, and I've never played there either obviously. Really looks like a great environment.

Great team. We expect it to be a great game and really excited just to see what that stadium and everything has to offer.

**Q. Addison Nichols transferring to Arkansas in the off-season. What stands out to you about him off the field and what does he bring to the table?**

COOPER MAYS: I would say the biggest thing is he's a guy that works really hard and fits in. I think he's a guy that has a lot of physical tools. He's a huge guy, really strong. Strong in the weight room, strong on the field.

He's still young, trying to put it all together, like we all are. I think he'll have a good spot over there at Arkansas for sure.

**Q. I've got a number of questions. We'll start with the hat. Did you go in there and like have to get it fitted? Like offensive linemen obviously are going to have huge heads. I'm wondering how that worked.**

COOPER MAYS: We just came from a place like an hour ago where they did some shots, and they did a custom hat for me. I've never worn a cowboy hat before. This was my first time, and I was kind of feeling it. So I'm keeping it on.

**Q. You got a brand on it?**

COOPER MAYS: Yeah, they did brand it.

**Q. Is that your initials?**

COOPER MAYS: Yeah, my initials, and there should be a



T. I don't know where it all is. It's pretty nice.

**Q. You mentioned Lance Heard. Obviously we're pretty familiar with him at Louisiana. What do you expect from him?**

COOPER MAYS: I expect him to have a great year and a great career, however that shakes out. A kid that has a lot of physical tools, huge, huge powerful guy and long arms. That's kind of a recipe for success when it comes to O-line.

Really excited to see how he grows and develops. He's still a young kid, so he's got a lot of stuff to get through and work through, but I think he'll be a really, really good player.

**Q. I asked Coach about Dylan Sampson, and he said he's kind of been a leader since day one. Since now that it's his time, what are you seeing from him and expectations from him?**

COOPER MAYS: Just confidence and energy. Like you said, he's kind of been a leader from day one. He's really sure of himself and sure of what he's doing. He's confident in himself and his job. That kind of leads to you just being a natural leader anyway in the football arena.

He came in day one and was prepared and ready to go for it. He's done a really, really good job.

**Q. What's it like blocking for Nico? Kind of what do you expect from him this season? Maybe any differences from the line perspective of having Joe back there as opposed to now Nico?**

COOPER MAYS: Really excited for Nico, a kid that has come in and just gotten right to work and been really humble and really a kid that's willing to soak up any information that anybody will give him.

I don't know if you really block for him any different. Obviously that -- you can't really think about stuff like that, but playing with a guy like him that can get out and make plays and make stuff right, it does help as an O-lineman.

**Q. Cooper, what's your advice for young offensive linemen who are about to get their first taste of playing time in major college football or in the SEC?**

COOPER MAYS: I would just say -- man, that's a good question. I would say take every rep and do it the right way. Even when it comes to workouts, like don't miss anything and not apply it to football.

Not everything's going to be super applicable to football,

but you can tweak everything and make it work, you know what I'm saying? I would say take every rep and try to make it fit into what you want to accomplish.

I spent a lot of my time just wasting time, just doing stuff, you know what I'm saying? You've got six plays, Coop. Okay, I'll go out there and do them.

Try to go out there and make every rep be applicable to what you're trying to accomplish that week or just in general as a football player.

**Q. Is the offensive line, is that a question mark with the team? I mean, I know how you feel about your teammates, but to the fans of Tennessee. And then I want to ask about Bru McCoy and what has he done to help the team? He's been one of the leaders out there.**

COOPER MAYS: I personally, I don't think our O-line is a question mark. I would think that it's probably a strong point for our team, in my opinion. Kind of bias out of it in general probably, but I would say it's a strong point.

Then as far as Bru, talk about a guy that just brings it every day. No matter what the circumstance is, no matter what's going on outside of the building, inside the building, like just comes to work with the right attitude every day and just gets stuff done. That's what you want out of a guy, just a consistent person, and he's the same guy every day. Love that guy.

**Q. Why is it that offensive linemen are the most fun quotes and the best guys to talk to on a team?**

COOPER MAYS: We talked about this earlier. I would say the O-line is a difference maker personally because we were probably big growing up, and there's only one way to be cool when you're big, and that's by being a good person, being funny, making people laugh, stuff like that.

So we've had ample opportunity to help our personality develop.

**Q. What kind of luxuries -- you mentioned the experience coming back on the offensive line. How important is it for offensive linemen to be on the same page, and what kind of luxury is it to have a bunch of guys you're really familiar with playing alongside you?**

COOPER MAYS: It's huge. Five guys doing the one thing and being on the same page, when you've got a bunch of guys that have played a lot of football and seen it, it helps a lot.

We've got a young guy in Lance Heard that hasn't played a

ton of football, and putting people next to him that have played a ton of football or just being around somebody that knows what they're doing, it's invaluable.

Then when you've got five people like that all on the same page, it's a game changer.

**Q. We've been asking a lot of people about the headset communication and iPads and stuff. As an offensive lineman, is there anything that's applicable to you all? Will that help at all in a game, or is it pretty much just iPads on the sideline?**

COOPER MAYS: iPads on the sideline will be big, like you asked, that's huge. For the communication, I wish I had something. Obviously the quarterback is going to have it, but if you could make it two, that would be pretty nice.

For us, we've got a high powered offense that moves really, really quick. You cut out any miscommunication, you're just going straight to the source. I think that will be big time for us.

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