

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Dallas, Texas, USA

Florida Gators

Shemar James

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Okay, we have Shemar, and he is ready for questions.

Q. Personal goals for this season? Things you have focused on this off-season?

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir, just getting stronger, becoming a better leader, better communicator on the field and just becoming a better overall linebacker.

Q. Shemar, I have been asking everyone with Oklahoma's interest in the SEC what can they expect on road games on Saturdays. Every road game is going to be a battle?

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir. One of the most hectic environments. Playing in the SEC for two years now, you can see some very interesting stadiums, very interesting crowds, so it will be something fun to see.

Q. OU-Texas comes in with a heated rivalry, it's one of the best in college football, but you have a rivalry. You go to Jacksonville every year, neutral site, just like OU-Texas, what's it like playing Georgia in that atmosphere, a neutral setting?

SHEMAR JAMES: It's amazing. You coming over the hill, coming down the hill it's split, blue and red, so it's a tradition that's going to keep continuing to thrive and it's amazing. It's a lot of emotion coming into that game, yes, sir, for sure.

Q. Shemar, how has the linebacker room improved this off-season?

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. It improved a lot with skill set, I would say, bringing in Pup Howard and freshman like Myles Graham and Aaron Chiles. We bring in a lot of skill with a lot of vets in the room like myself, Derek Wingo and Ronald Moten. So I would say it's improved skill wise and in leadership.

Q. What can you say about Ron Roberts and the impact he has had on the team and your game?

SHEMAR JAMES: Coach Roberts has brought a lot of experience and I would say personality to the room and to the unit as a whole. Coach Roberts comes in every day and works, instills in us to take it one day at a time and be intentional with your work.

Q. What's the most fun playing SEC?

SHEMAR JAMES: The most fun about it is every game. You know you're going to come in and play a tough team every single game, no matter who it is, no matter the record. Also the environment is hectic as well.

Q. Is the environment in the Swamp maybe the best?

SHEMAR JAMES: I would like to think so.

Q. Talk about the end of the season, five out of six games you guys see Georgia, Ole Miss, Texas, how do you guys prepare for that type of schedule? We know every week in the SEC is tough, but how do you look at your schedule this season?

SHEMAR JAMES: Take it one game at a time. You prepare differently for different opponents. You always come in on that Monday or Sunday and think about getting our heads down to go win this game. It's just obstacles in our way and just gotta go in and get the win.

Q. When you think back to your old playing days, old stomping grounds, how proud are you of where you came from and when you think back to the playing days and excited about where you are now, what comes to mind?

SHEMAR JAMES: I miss it, life was simple. You get to go to high school, practice, come back home to your mom. I miss it, born and raised there, it will always be home to me. Faith Academy, Coach French. I miss it a lot.

Q. Coach French, him and any others that come to



mind when you think about development, on and off the field, family members?

SHEMAR JAMES: Coach French and every support staff in that school, most definitely. Ms. Meredith, Ms. Shaw, Ms. Anderson. They all helped me along the way to get where I am now, so I'm thankful to them, yes, ma'am.

Q. What are your thoughts about the University of Texas coming into the SEC just from the outside looking at them?

SHEMAR JAMES: Most definitely. Texas coming in, bringing even more competition in the conference. I'm excited. I'm excited to play against Texas, go to Texas and get the job done.

Q. That's going to be a fun day in Austin. Have you looked at tape as far as Quinn and what that offense does?

SHEMAR JAMES: No, sir, not that far down the line yet, but there has been talks about it and their style of offense as well.

Q. Shemar, who is a name or two on the Florida defense people might not know but by the end of the season they will have broken through and proven themselves?

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir; Greg Smith, a freshman that came in, Jameer Grimsley, another freshman, DJ Douglas from Alabama. Got Trikweze Bridges, a transfer from Oregon. Those are some names that we have in the household right now that I believe is going to make a big splash this year.

Q. From a defensive standpoint, what have you seen from DJ Lagway, the freshman coming in, that has impressed you?

SHEMAR JAMES: He has a big arm. He can sling it 60, 70 yards, and I will say DJ comes in ready to learn. He's always with Graham in the playbook, on the field going through progressions, drops. So I feel like DJ is going to be pretty good in the upcoming years.

Q. We talked to Keenan, the Tennessee linebacker yesterday and he missed most of the season with an injury, but stayed involved. You missed games last year because of injury. What were things you were doing despite being injured to stay involved with the team and stay ready and mentally prepared?

SHEMAR JAMES: Staying close with the team. You

know, injuries can draw some guys away from the team, and I believe some guys consume themselves too much with football. That's what they become. I would stay just staying around the team, encouraging the guys each and every week, each and every opponent we may have. I would say that, yes, sir.

Q. Every rivalry is different, right? If you had to describe to someone who has never been, LSU and Florida, that environment, those fans, how would you describe it?

SHEMAR JAMES: Crazy, from the pregame to the first quarter through the fourth quarter, it's constant yelling, constant chirping from each side, the fans. It's an environment that you just can't describe in words, I would say, yes, sir.

Q. Do you have a particular favorite road site to go to or one that you don't care for?

SHEMAR JAMES: I played at Tennessee my freshman year and it was pretty loud, fun to play there.

Q. What are the most important things the young guys can do to help the team in the fall, guys that haven't played very much but can have a big role this season?

SHEMAR JAMES: Most important things they do is come to the facility and work every day. They never have excuses. When their body hurt they still going, giving 100%. I would say that's what's going to separate them and bring themselves to the spotlight.

Q. Shemar, talk about your growth as a football player and, again, Mobile, Alabama, having the rich tradition of football per capita, more NFL guys come out of Alabama and what that means to you in regards to your role models?

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir. As far as improvement over the years, I would say I improved in my vocal skills, my leadership, and as a football player I would say my tackling, I would say. And the thing that you mentioned about taking pride in 251, in Mobile, Alabama, yeah. I come in the locker room every day and talk crap about it, saying we the best city, the best state in the country, so yeah, that's the answer to that.

Q. As a linebacker, specifically, is it going to be nice playing LSU this year, not chasing around No. 5, Jayden Daniels, down on the infield?

SHEMAR JAMES: Ask that question again. I'm sorry.



Q. Going to be kind of nice you don't have to chase around a scrambling quarterback, Jayden Daniels, scrambling quarterback?

SHEMAR JAMES: Yeah, he gave us a hard time last year. I unfortunately didn't play in that game, but he gave us a hard time, yeah.

Q. What are things Graham has done to win the team over? It can be tough as a transfer to prove yourself to the guys but what are some of the things he has done?

SHEMAR JAMES: Yes, sir, Graham has connected with a lot of guys and I would say that's one of the biggest things you need to do in a foreign environment, connect with the guys so when times get tough you can challenge those guys. I feel like Graham made a great impression on me and the rest of the players so I feel like that's why Graham is one of the leaders that you guys see now.

Q. The hardest part for you being on the sidelines not being able to play I know you learned valuable lessons in high school watching, not being able to play, being injured. Tell me how that helps you and now that iPads are going to be on the sidelines as well so you can see realtime mistakes?

SHEMAR JAMES: Like you mentioned, being hurt at the end of my senior year, it kinda helped me in this journey that I had with the surgery and the knee injury that I had, and I will say it allows you to see the game outside of the game. See how things function outside of being on the field.

Just coaching up the young guys, guys that maybe not be fully confident in their abilities. I would say that's something that I focused on during my off-time.

THE MODERATOR: Shemar, thank you very much for your time. Good job.

SHEMAR JAMES: Thank you, guys.

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