

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Thursday, July 18, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

Texas A&M Aggies

Taurean York

Press Conference



Q. Taurean, what's different about the defense this year with Coach Elko and his staff?

TAUREAN YORK: The scheme is a lot for sophisticated. I feel like I've been telling a lot of people, my sophomore year has been harder than my freshman year just because of the level of difficulty of the defense presents itself and the amount of communication that it takes to run the defense.

Q. What did it mean to you when you were named captain to get that affirmation from your teammates how much they value your leadership on the team?

TAUREAN YORK: It means the world that my teammates think that I'm capable of leading them, of course, and granted my age and going into my sophomore year, I am still considered young and an underclassman, but happy that they chose me to lead them throughout the difficulties of the season.

Q. First off, how bad did you beat App State in the video game? I don't know if you have played any of the old ones, but how cool is it to be able to play as yourself and be part of this group of guys that is in the game?

TAUREAN YORK: Well, to answer your first question, it was 14-0 before they pulled me away to do some more interviews. I definitely feel like I got my get-back on App State for that. It's a blessing to be in the video game. To play as yourself, to be on the front page as A&M and to have my teammates and friends back home to be able to play as me as well, I feel like it's a full circle moment for me.

Q. Coming off of that with the video game, Kyle Field was ranked the toughest place to play in the country. Can you speak to your experience obviously getting to play in front of the 12th man and just how difficult it can be for opponents and what makes it so great for

y'all?

TAUREAN YORK: I truly do feel like it's the hardest place to play in college football. The 12th man is real. Especially in they're rocking. The atmosphere is there. It presents a challenge for myself as well because obviously they're going to be loud when the opposing offense is on the field and that means my defense is on the field. A lot of games I lost my voice just trying to communicate to my teammates and the defensive players to call. It's a special place to play, so I'm happy to be playing there.

Q. I know you kind of came into your recruiting class a little later on in the cycle and I know you probably would have come in and worked hard regardless, but did you, kind of coming in so late and acclimating to the guys and to the team, did you have an extra sense to really prove to everyone that you were there to do the work and I guess just coming in so late in the process really make that strong impression that kind of carried over?

TAUREAN YORK: Definitely. Obviously I committed late as well, but coming into the class, they welcomed me as if I was already there.

I remember when me and Chase Bisontis moved in to Park West on opening day, me and him just went up there to work out, I could tell that he wanted it, and I wanted it as well.

Guys like Chase and people who want to work hard, I can respect that a ton.

Q. You played a lot as a true freshman. What are the keys? What kind of advice would you give to somebody who wants to make that kind of impact coming straight into the SEC as a freshman?

TAUREAN YORK: Continue to make strides each and every day regardless of your situation. Be diligent in your work.

Definitely know the playbook, know the inside and out. Know all the checks and communications, the adjustments



you have to make. Just be ready whenever your opportunity is presented.

Q. You got to play alongside Edgerrin Cooper last year. I'm curious what are some of the biggest lessons you took away from playing alongside him?

TAUREAN YORK: Play fast, play physical. Don't hesitate. Coop played very fast, and he played with bad intentions for the offensive players for sure. Those are the two things I learned from Coop.

Q. You were freshman All American last year. What's it like to be one of the guys representing your team here at media days?

TAUREAN YORK: It's awesome just to have this experience, especially at my young age. It's also a blessing as well, and I just have to continue to put in the work.

Q. What do you foresee Shemar Turner's role looking like on the defense this year?

TAUREAN YORK: A leader for sure. Just having him on the field is a great impact, but I know the energy he brings and the way he runs to the ball is a sight to see, so I'm happy to have him back.

Q. There's a school about an hour south of Temple that's coming to College Station late in November. What do you anticipate that game like to you? I don't know if they were involved in your recruiting process at all, and just with the fan base as well.

TAUREAN YORK: No, they weren't really involved in my recruiting process. I don't think they reached out to me too, too much. Obviously it's a special game for everybody in the state of Texas.

We're excited for that game. I know Kyle Field is going to be rocking when that day comes.

Q. Going up against the offense in practice, how have you seen -- in what ways do you feel like they've gotten better from last year?

TAUREAN YORK: I feel like the offensive line is much nastier. Having a guy like Ar'maj Reed-Adams come to the team, he set the standard. He lights a fire underneath all of those guys.

I feel like Chase is coming into his own. Mark has gotten better as well. The problems they present us on defense is very hard. They have a lot of new plays that they run, and

they run the ball a lot harder. It's a testament to everyone involved on the offense. They got better this spring.

Q. In that vein, certain teammates have talked about the biggest shift in mentality about players holding each other accountable. How have you seen that yourself? How have you seen that in practices and summer workouts?

TAUREAN YORK: Everybody is where they're supposed to be at on time, when they're supposed to be there. Guys are being more receptive to leadership. Guys are open to hearing like Coach Moffitt. Coach Moffitt is one of the experienced guys and won a lot of national championships, so you would be silly to not listen to him.

Q. As a captain and leader on this defensive side of the ball, how have you seen transfers like Nic Scourton and Scooby Williams gel with that unit?

TAUREAN YORK: They gel perfectly. Almost as if they have been there since day one. Even guys like Cashius Howell, they all came in here not with a big head. They just want to help the team win any way they can.

Q. You have a defensive-minded head coach now. What's it been like having both of those guys to kind of talk with and learn from over the past six months?

TAUREAN YORK: Just the amount of detail that they have in the defense and the communication, like I mentioned previously. Like I said, it's a much different defense, much more sophisticated. It's wonky in a sense, but I know it works because it's very complex.

Q. Talking about Connor, you talked about the offense a little bit. What are you seeing in him as far as taking that next step?

TAUREAN YORK: The next step, being a leader. I know for the 4th of July break that we had, he had all the receivers up there in Austin at Lake Travis I think, and had he spent the whole week together. They lifted weights and spent a lot of time together, so I feel like that was definitely a big chemistry boost when it comes to him and the receivers.

Q. What were some of the biggest lessons you learned going through your first collegiate season and the SEC? What kind of advice have you given maybe some of the freshmen or transfers that have come here for the first time?

TAUREAN YORK: For starters I feel like the game is never over until it's over in the SEC. I feel like it's always a

dogfight no matter the score. You have to finish games. I feel like we lost a lot of games that were one-possession games that we had the opportunity to close out, and we didn't. That's a main focus for us.

Guys like freshmen coming in, like I said, savor every day and make the most of it. Be as predictive as you can. The game can wait. The parties can wait, if I'm being frank. You have to focus on yourself and be the best version that you can be.

Q. You said a couple of times the defense is complicated, sophisticated. Without giving away any trade secrets, of course, is your role changing at all? What can we see from you?

TAUREAN YORK: Same old linebacker making every call.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports