

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Thursday, July 18, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

Kentucky Wildcats D'eryk Jackson

Press Conference



D'ERYK JACKSON: I just want to say, thank you all for having me. For me just to come out and represent my brothers back home in Lexington and coming to represent them in a good way and just really I'm dedicating this season to my grandmother that just passed in April. Just really, really trying to live her dream that she had for me and always put God first.

Q. Do you feel this year maybe the team will be complementary with the offense and the defense more than the past few years?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I think we're going to complement each other very well this year with the offense that Coach Bush had brought. It's very complementary to the defense to help us out and we can help them out, vice versa.

Q. Coach Stoops in the other room talked about the importance of kind of recognizing where you are, but also wanting more. I guess how much is the mindset of we're capable of more, we can achieve more, and we're kind of on the right path to getting there?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I think that's the best mindset to have. Even if you winning or losing, you always want more. You just want more. Even in life you just want more.

Just for us as a team I think we can just build from off of what he's done these past couple of years since he's been here, having been in the program. We just have to make that next step to get to the next step.

Q. Twice he mentioned the word authentic. Being authentic as a head coach. How is he authentic with the players?

D'ERYK JACKSON: He's very real with us and what he is saying, we come to meetings. He's being very real. He tells us what we need to hear, not what we want to hear.

He is also a good person to be around. For me, my

personal experience with him from everything he said he will do for me, he have done. Just being around him, he's a good man.

Q. A lot of times schools around this conference have a great reputation with their home field and how tough it is. Why is UK overlooked? How much have you guys built that up?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I think just from him being here, football have become big in Kentucky and Kroger Field be jumping. I remember when I came on my first recruiting visit and how loud it was when they played Florida and just seeing how loud it was, and I was, like, I just want to be a part of that.

Q. I think week two is South Carolina and then Georgia. The challenges of, I guess, the schedule that early and does it really amp up your preparation?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I think not even starting off with South Carolina and Georgia, Southern Miss. I think us just going in and practicing hard every day and having an even-keeled mindset, as my coach will say -- having an even-keeled mindset every day and practice every day like it's your last. If we have that mindset, I think we'll do good and make a good run in the playoffs this year.

Q. You alluded to a minute ago the Kentucky football and basketball players get along. Basketball has always been king over there. Talk a little bit about your interaction with the basketball team and how they might help you guys and as far as what you have done to help the university as far as recognition for football?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I think me personally, I really never had a personal relationship with anybody on the basketball team, but I think football has grown to where basketball is. I think both programs were good. I just think just keep building the brand of both of them.

Q. What are some things you improved this offseason?

D'ERYK JACKSON: For me individually, I really been



focusing on my speed and just focusing on getting sideline to sideline this year and just keep building my IQ, keep building my IQ up and keep getting better.

Q. A lot of the questions this week have been about the expanded playoffs. From a player's perspective, do you think about that? Does the season now really last longer because you have a shot into November?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I think for them expanding the playoff is good for college football because it give more teams opportunities. If they even lose a game, they just don't be down like, Oh, we are not making it because it's four teams. I think the 12 teams is good for college football, for all teams because it just gives you that extra hype.

You still have the hype already, but it gives you that extra jump like we still can make it because it's 12 teams now.

Q. When UK is selling its program to prospects, what are the big main points they hit on?

D'ERYK JACKSON: For me I tell a person Coach Stoops is very real and authentic, like you said. He keeps it real to everything he said. He is not going to sugar-coat nothing with you. He's going to tell it like it is. He's a cool guy, and the program that he has built, he put people in place to help us.

I think every year we always do something, like in the summer we do, like, this thing called "Four for 40." It's really based on these four years you got now for your next 40 years of your life, and it just build on life. Not even football, but just your life skills and goals.

Q. We had one player sit in that chair this week and said he has had four head coaches in four years. He didn't complain about it, but how beneficial is it to players in your program if you have had one guy the whole time?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I think it's beneficial to have a guy that's there because I think it helps the program in general just in the long run just knowing you've got a coach that's been there for a long time, knowing he is going to be there next year.

I think it helps the recruiting for teams too if you have a head coach that been there for a minute.

Q. I know you don't make out the depth chart, but what are you seeing in that quarterback room, and does it look like Brock is the guy? If so, what are you seeing in him?

D'ERYK JACKSON: I seen the quarterback room is very competitive. I think all of them got a good shot, but Brock -- specifically Brock, Brock came in. He just bring a leadership about him. He just got this thing about him that he is just that guy. He got a thing about him where he got the long hair, and he is very competitive. He just bring, like, a mentality to the team that we needed.

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