

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Vanderbilt Commodores

Diego Pavia

Press Conference



DIEGO PAVIA: Obviously South Carolina has great talent there. I felt we fell short by a mile. They beat us, I think it was 28-7.

But we'll focus on Charlton Southern first and then we'll get to game three when we get there. They're coached by Coach Beamer, and he's a great coach too. But we're super excited to go play on the road in that environment when game three comes.

Q. To that point, obviously matched up against LaNorris Sellers in that game and will match up with him again when you rematch with South Carolina. As a fellow SEC quarterback, how would you just evaluate his talent?

DIEGO PAVIA: I think he's a crazy talent. One, his athleticism is just different. He's got God-given talent. He's 6'3", 240 or something. And so that kid is just gifted.

Then you see him on the field. He breaks tackles and he's a good thrower too. We'll be excited to play him. I know our defense will be excited to play him in game three when it comes.

Q. Over your career, you're 3-0 against teams coached by Hugh Freeze. Why do you think you've been so good against him and his teams over the years?

DIEGO PAVIA: Oh, dude, I don't know. Maybe they have a spell on him or something. I'm just kidding.

Obviously Auburn is a really good team. Coach Freeze, he wouldn't be at Auburn if he wasn't a good coach. I think the world of him. He's a great person.

Obviously I played him at Liberty, and we were fortunate enough to beat him. That was one of our clutch wins to go to a bowl game too. But I don't know, maybe we'll see what happens in Nashville for game four.

Q. Eli Stowers, what does he bring to your team? And the fact that both of you guys are back, what is the chemistry like between you and him?

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Diego Pavia.

Q. You had a great first year playing in the SEC. What did you learn from that that you think you can build on for an even better season this year?

DIEGO PAVIA: I think last year I got banged up at the Kentucky game. Maybe being in the training room more, that's something I worked on in this offseason to make sure my body is prepared because after that game my production kind of fell off.

I've got to be there for my teammates. They'll expect a lot out of me this year. We can't wait for this great season.

Q. From a notoriety standpoint, how much do you think the win over Alabama may have helped grease the wheels of the NCAA case? You were a public figure when maybe different things might have transpired?

DIEGO PAVIA: I think the win over Alabama was big from a Vanderbilt standpoint of just allowing us to go get talent. And it eventually helped us go to a bowl game. Each one of those six wins was important. But that one, obviously they're the No. 1-ranked team in the country.

But when it comes down to it, every win was important. And I think that one was because we finally got people to believe kind of in Vanderbilt football. So from here on out, obviously we've got to win more games to get the things done that we want. Winning solves everything.

For my case, I don't know, maybe ask the judge that one. But I was just super fortunate that I got cleared to go.

Q. I believe on the "Bussin' With the Boys" podcast you alluded to a certain game that was circled on your calendar, South Carolina game. I'm curious why that was or is?

DIEGO PAVIA: I know you see that smile on my face when you bring him up. Natural talent. He's just like LaNorris, gifted. He's like 6'4", 240, power cleans 365. On power day he's going to run a 4.4. He'll jump a 44-inch vertical. He's so naturally gifted.

And what makes him the best tight end in the country is that he's played quarterback before, so he knows the openings, he knows where to sit. He knows what's open. He gets a pre-snap read. He's just an all-around player.

Off the field, he's just one of the best persons I've ever met in my life.

Q. The Texas game last year was one of those close losses you guys had. Just what you remember about that game, any thoughts on Texas. And then I know it's down the road on the schedule, but just looking forward to the return match in Austin this year.

DIEGO PAVIA: As a quarterback, I feel like I put the blame on myself for every loss that we have, but most importantly Texas.

That's where two of my interceptions came by tipped balls. I need to get better. I need to find those throwing lanes. And we score on one of those, then it flips.

So I've just got to be better at my craft and what I do. And we go to Austin this year, so it will be a super exciting environment.

Q. LSU game last year, you hit them for a deep pass early, close game. What are your memories of that game and LSU coming to Nashville this year?

DIEGO PAVIA: LSU will always be good. I remember we took that 7-0 lead, and we kind of just fell off from there. We were kind of banged up. I was banged up that game. Same thing, I need to go in healthy. I feel like I'm a better player when I'm fully healthy, 100 percent. So I hope when they come to Nashville that I'm 100 percent.

Q. What are your thoughts on the stand you took as far as eligibility? It's changed the landscape of college football but has given so many junior college players now the hope of getting a chance to play and play extra. What are your thoughts on that?

DIEGO PAVIA: I feel like I have good thoughts about that. I have a lot of teammates, ex-teammates from New Mexico Military Institute who I played with who text me and say, hey, thank you. A lot of people reach out and tell me thank you.

It wasn't really me; it was my lawyer who did it. So got the job done. And I'm super excited for those guys because they get another opportunity.

Q. To that point of hearing from other players who had a similar situation to yourself, South Carolina running back Raheem Blackwell is in a similar situation. I wondered if he has maybe reached out to you, if you had a conversation at all?

DIEGO PAVIA: No, he hasn't reached out. But he played in the same conference as I did, right? Did he play at Blinn or something? He's a great talent. I remember scouting for him. I don't remember his name exactly on the paper, but I remember scouting for him.

Q. As an avid "Bussin' With The Boys," I saw you on the podcast. I want to ask you about the experience with Taylor and Will.

DIEGO PAVIA: I had a good experience with those guys. Obviously they're some nut jobs for sure. That's everyone on the podcast, you've got to have some humor to you. And same thing with Avon (phonetic), that's my guy. He's a really cool person.

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