

# Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

## Tennessee Volunteers Miles Kitselman

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Miles Kitselman.

**Q. Who are some of the tight ends you watched growing up, and why?**

MILES KITSELMAN: I've touched on this. I would say Gronk. I'm nowhere near his level yet, hopefully. But just like how he took blocking personally. Him and I love George Kittle and that Netflix series that George Kittle did where he touches on, I focused on blocking and protecting my quarterback and doing what I need to do in the box, and the rest will take care of itself. So I love that.

**Q. Do you see more fleet tight ends these days as opposed to the big, structured guys you saw 10, 20 years ago?**

MILES KITSELMAN: There's just a bunch of great athletes out there. I don't want to say I'm not one of them, but man, there's just a bunch of great athletes out there that can run and jump really well.

I have to look at myself saying, hey, I may not do those things as well what can I do to separate myself from them. I think inside the box is where I try to do that.

**Q. What's been the coaching message this year coming into the season? Obviously last year was very, very successful. You have change every year. What's the message?**

MILES KITSELMAN: There's a word in it that I can't quite say, but we don't need anybody outside of this facility. All that we need, all that we got, if you're strong, I'm strong, let's go do it.

**Q. How difficult or easy is it to build chemistry with a new quarterback, especially in such a unique situation coming in so late?**

MILES KITSELMAN: I've touched on this a little bit today.

Joey is one of those guys who has a very outgoing personality. He walks into a room and is automatically friends with everybody.

Whenever he first committed I hit him up on Instagram and said, man, love to have you. Let's go out and get a bite to eat and let's get to know each other. We were just off since then.

We get along super well. He gets along with everybody. Him and Jake and George, they all thrive together. They all compete with each other. And I don't think we could have asked for a better dude.

**Q. What do you think of kind of the way you guys are viewed nationally and in the SEC going into this year, for a College Football Playoff team. A lot of the rankings don't have you guys maybe toward the top, maybe because of Nico's departure, whatever, have you talked about it internally much?**

MILES KITSELMAN: No, and I try to stay off social media as much as I can. It's just rat poison, stuff you don't need, stuff you don't need to focus on. No, I haven't really paid attention to any of that stuff.

**Q. I was going to ask you about the Ohio State game. When you reflect on that game, not dwell on it, but you must have learned something from that game moving forward because you are trying to get into the playoffs again. What did you learn from that experience?**

MILES KITSELMAN: I think when you look back at that game, you can say whatever you want about it. It's 21-10 at halftime, we have the ball coming out of half. If we go score it's 21-17, it's a ball game.

I think when you look back at it like that, it's how close we were. You come out of halftime and you have a good drive, that could be a completely different ball game.

Ohio State's a great team. They have a lot of great players. But that just puts it into perspective of how close we were.



And then all of a sudden it's, okay, it's time to reflect. What do we need to do better? What do we need to do differently? And that's all of us. That's coaching staff. That's players. How do we need to attack this offseason where we don't end up in that same situation this upcoming year?

**Q. Arion was just in here. He mentioned he and the other leaders went to Joey when he first got there and sat him down. They went over expectations for everybody and what the plan would be moving forward. Can you take us inside that room? I assume you were probably one of the leaders in there talking. What were the first initial conversations like with Joey?**

MILES KITSELMAN: What I was touching on before, as far as Joey is a very easy guy to get along with. He also knows how to handle his business and he takes this football thing very seriously. Anyone who cares about this game is going to buy into whatever program they're at.

We have a leadership meeting every Wednesday morning. This is the standard. If you let that standard walk, you just set a new standard. We're not doing that here.

I know you're new. I know you may feel like, hey, I need to prove myself, because I was there last year at this time, coming into Tennessee being a new guy. So I understand where you're coming from but you don't have time for that. You don't have time to prove yourself.

We believe in you and Jake and George, and we need a competitor, we need you to be a leader right off the bat. And whatever you see that is not the standard, we need you to call it up to the standard.

**Q. What were your early impressions of DaSaahn Brame? What have you seen from him so far?**

MILES KITSELMAN: DaSaahn is a competitor. DaSaahn is super athletic. All those young freshmen, all those young tight ends are just willing to learn. I love that, how somebody like DaSaahn, a really high recruit, can come into a building, has put his pride to the side and said, no, this isn't high school anymore. I need to improve my game. I need to get better. Who can I pull from? Who can I go seek knowledge from and seek wisdom from?

And I love how anytime I try to help him out, anytime I try to hold him accountable he's right there, willing to listen to me and take whatever advice I have. Same thing if Ethan Davis is trying to do with him, it's the same way.

I just love how there's a mutual respect there because you

have a lot of guys in today's day and age who are five stars and getting whatever. And they come into a program and they might have a little bit of pride to themselves. And I love how we don't have that on this team.

**Q. What does the Alabama game mean to you specifically?**

MILES KITSELMAN: Not worrying about the Alabama game. We play a really good team week one. We're worried about fall camp. We're worried about tomorrow's workouts. We're ready to go attack fall camp in week one.

**Q. We saw glimpses of what Boo Carter could do last year. How excited are you to potentially add him to the offensive side of the ball as well?**

MILES KITSELMAN: Boo has a lot on his plate, stepping up on the defensive side. And we're going to try to do everything we can to put him in a position to help our team out. I'm really excited.

**Q. Do you know much about Syracuse at this point? Have you taken a look at them?**

MILES KITSELMAN: Just kind of like what I said, man, I'm focused on tomorrow's workouts. I'm focused on fall camp. I'm focused on what I need to do to get better, and I'm focused on how I can help our team right now.

**Q. Not a lot is known about you guys as wide receivers nationally because you guys have some young guys ready to step in there. What do you see from Mike Matthews and Braylon Staley, some of the younger guys that are ready to take on bigger roles outside?**

MILES KITSELMAN: I would say the two biggest things I've seen from those guys is, last year they always did what they were supposed to do but that's just your job, and the one thing I love about those guys is not only are they doing what they're supposed to do at a high level, but they're also bringing guys along with them.

You have Rah Rah in there, Radarious, and you have Travis Smith, and they're bringing those guys along with them.

I love that because I don't think last year's Braylon Staley and Mike Matthews would have done that as freshmen. Now that they've grown into this leadership role, they're bringing those guys along with them, because we're going to need those young guys this fall, and they know that. And I love that.



**Q. You talked about coming into a new situation, you're kind of focused on yourself, like you were a year ago, Joey. But how weird was this offseason with everything that went on with Nico and just you're coming off the playoff, you would think, kind of like what we were talking about earlier, it would be a lot more hope and hype right now and it just doesn't seem like that obvious?**

**MILES KITSELMAN:** We had a group text with a couple of the guys. Whenever some stuff was going around, we all came together and said, hey, man, we want somebody who wants to be here.

I talked about it earlier, it's the next snap, next play, don't worry about what happened before. I think that can translate over into life, can translate over to the situation, if you don't want to be here, that's fine, we're going to go find somebody who does and he's going to come in here and compete and want to be here. We didn't skip a beat and I love it.

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