

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Missouri Tigers

Connor Tollison

Press Conference



Q. What can you say about what it means to be representing Missouri and representing the offense there at SEC Media Days?

CONNOR TOLLISON: It's exciting. When I first got to Mizzou, you could see your teammates go every year. So now, to be in that position, it's nice.

It feels good to know that your teammates look up to you and see you as somebody they want to lead them or represent them. It's a good feeling.

Ultimately, that's who I do it for. I want to do it for them and represent Mizzou to a high standard.

Q. We just heard from Zion. Obviously I know you play on the opposite side of him, but what kind of energy does he bring to this team day in and day out that we're able to see?

CONNOR TOLLISON: Zion brings the juice for everybody. When we're at workouts, it's not just offense/defense, it's everybody. He's that guy. He brings it. That's one thing you know with Zion, you're going to get it every day. He's consistent.

Q. Going up against that defense all the time in practice, what are some words to describe what that defense is about and what they're going to bring to the field every day?

CONNOR TOLLISON: Fast and physical. Every day they bring it. They ain't got no off days. I wasn't there in the spring, recovering from injury. But I know when I get there in fall camp, it's going to be there and it's going to be fast.

Q. A lot of schools in the conference get a ton of attention. You guys get your share of it too. Are you proud the number of wins you've chalked up the last couple of years?

CONNOR TOLLISON: I think it speaks to the culture that we've built at Mizzou. It all starts with our strength coach, Ryan Russell, what he does in the weight room. He preaches an elite edge. I think that's just what everybody's bought into over the years. It's contributed into wins on the field too.

Q. You started pretty early in your career. What's gotten easier or more manageable as you gain more playing time over the course of your career at that position.

CONNOR TOLLISON: They say the game slows down. I think there's some truth to that. As I've been playing more, I feel the game slowly came to a speed that I can see things, make the right calls.

When you get in those pressure situations, you kind of feel like you've been there before, so it's not necessarily anything new to me. I'd say that's what you gain the most from experience.

Q. When you have kind of a change in leadership at the quarterback position, when Brady goes and obviously you're in a quarterback competition now, what's the challenge of that change in leadership and change of voice on that side of the ball?

CONNOR TOLLISON: I think it's just time for other guys to step up their leadership. I think I'm in that position to do so, just lead the guys in whatever they need on or off the field. If they're struggling on the field with scheme or off the field in the classroom or in life, they can come talk to me.

Like, I'm a guy. I'm just another dude on the team. I'm not going to judge you or look at you any way, shape or form just because you're having a tough time. I want to be there for you and help you get through that.

Q. What can you tell the folks about the Kansas-Missouri rivalry?

CONNOR TOLLISON: It's a big one. Getting a lot of questions about that. It stems from a long time ago. They



haven't played in, what, it's got to be 10, 13 years now.

I think the fans are excited. I would say these players, us and I bet they are too excited to kind of renew that border war, as you could say.

Q. Both your teammates we got to speak to shared memories of the come-from-behind win against Auburn, last year Brady leaving the game early, Drew stepping in, Brady coming back from the hospital. Your memories from that, what you experienced and what you remember from that game?

CONNOR TOLLISON: It's kind of crazy. You're out there playing and he gets hurt, obviously. So you get flooded with these emotions. It's my friend, the starting quarterback, he goes down, like, is he going to come back, there's some uncertainty.

We're all trying to rally behind Drew. Hey, Drew, you're our guy; you're going to lead us in this thing, let's keep pushing forward. Out of nowhere, they're like, yeah, Brady is going to be back, he's in the locker room, he's going to be out here next drive.

I think it just shows the toughness he had, what it meant for him to play for Mizzou. I think we're all nowadays at the school, and we play for the name on the front. But I think sometimes that meant more to him than the name on the back.

Q. You have a great heritage at your school. Are there former Tigers you've gotten to know that you've been friendly with or had an impact on your year?

CONNOR TOLLISON: I'd say right now Evan Bain, former Mizzou center, played in the league, he's come back to help us, be around the offensive line as a coaching assistant. As a former player, he's helped us out a lot.

Q. What are some personal goals that you've set for yourself this season that you hope to accomplish that can help bring success to your team?

CONNOR TOLLISON: As a center, you want to win the Rimington. I haven't accomplished that in the three years I've played center for Mizzou. I would say that's my biggest personal goal, but ultimately team success to me is more important.

Q. You've heard it said the offensive linemen on the team are some of the more interesting, insightful guys to talk to. Why is that the case?

CONNOR TOLLISON: I think offensive linemen keep it

honest with you, keep it real, tell you how it is, not going to sugarcoat nothing. I think we're guys that love football but we love things outside of football. We have a lot of passion for other things. I think offensive linemen are just the best guys in general.

Q. Is it more meaningful this career that you're having in your home state playing, as a Missouri guy playing for Mizzou?

CONNOR TOLLISON: Yeah, nowadays, a guy tells you "I've transferred," some might ask, "How many times?" There's guys transferring two or three times throughout their college career.

To be in one place and to know I earned my spot and made it on the field for Mizzou as a kid from Missouri, it does mean a lot. It really does.

Q. One of the key things for linemen is versatility. How important do you think it's important to start at more than one position?

CONNOR TOLLISON: It's huge. Versatility is availability. If you can play left and then you can play right, they feel comfortable putting you on both sides.

That's only going to increase your chance to play. If you can play guard and tackle, I mean, your value just went up immensely because those are two positions that aren't easy.

Q. What's the difference when you're blocking for a couple quarterbacks, their style of how they fit in the pocket?

CONNOR TOLLISON: Nothing. I mean, half the time I wouldn't know who's back there. You kind of always try to block the same. The interior is more for firming up the pocket and the tackles are more for the width and depth.

It doesn't really matter who's back there, I'm just trying to give whoever the best pocket possible.

Q. Have you talked much with Sam trying to be a dual-sport athlete, and obviously he was drafted earlier this week in the Major League Baseball draft by the Dodgers, have you chatted with him much about his football career, his future with the team?

CONNOR TOLLISON: Not a whole lot. We have talked before. He's going to play football for us in the fall and then go on and choose what he wants to do with baseball after that. But he's committed to football.



It probably caused him to get drafted a little lower than what he should. He's probably a top 100 prospect. I think he probably fell because he is committed to football, and he's committed to the Tigers and he will be there this fall.

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