

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Alabama vs Michigan

Saturday, December 30, 2023
Pasadena, California, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide Kool-Aid McKinstry Press Conference

Q. I want to start you off with something fun. I'm from ESPN. So we are going to do some would-you-rathers, and last question, I'm going to ask you what is your mantra for Monday. So just a word, phrase, sentence. What's your mantra, go back or go home or be where your feet are, something like that. Give me your full name and number.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Kool-Aid McKinstry, No. 1.

Q. Work out in the morning or the evening?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Morning.

Q. Breakfast or dinner?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Breakfast.

Q. Run or lift?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Run.

Q. Super fries or regular fries?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Regular fries.

Q. Arm day or leg day?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Leg day.

Q. Dogs or cats?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Dogs.

Q. Have your own shoe or an award named after you?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Shoe.

Q. Why?



KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like I can make money if I have my own shoe.

Q. Businessman, okay. So what's your mantra going into Monday?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Just keep where my feet are and have a good time with that.

Q. I'm sure you've been asked this a lot, but your nickname, comes from your grandmother? Is that accurate?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yes.

Q. Is she still alive?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yes.

Q. How old is she?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I'm not really sure.

Q. Your mom's mom?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: My mom's mom. Not sure my grandmother want me to say her age.

Q. What do people call you? What do your teammates call you?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Kool-Aid.

Q. Call you Kool-Aid. But gentleman Quincy, is that how you pronounce it?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yeah.

Q. And your daughter's name is Quincy. Have people always called you Kool-Aid?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: My name is Kool-Aid since birth.

Q. Does anybody call you anything else?



KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I get called G a lot but mostly Kool-Aid.

Q. Even your mom calls you that?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: My mom calls me G the most.

Q. Who is Michigan -- who of Michigan's pass catchers, receivers, tight ends stand out to you most on tape?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like 18, No 1, both of those guys, they do a good job, and the offensive coordinators do a good job of using their abilities to support.

Q. What could be the key for you guys slowing down their offense?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, everybody on the field, I got to let the guys do their own job. Do their job, read the keys and execute the game plan. Execute the plan, whatever the coaches are giving us that day.

Q. Do you feel like things have not gone your way a lot this year?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I mean, I'm not always with the other team, so I'm not with the teams -- all the other teams we're playing against. I'm not sure if that's just their game plan or not but it could easily look that way to the eye.

Q. Have you felt that way; that teams are afraid to test you more now than they were a year or so ago?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, I mean, it's easy to say that but like I said, I'm not with the offensive coordinator. I'm not with the team we are going against. I'm not sure if that's their game plan or their game plan to do something else. I'm not really sure. Just out there trying to make sure I'm doing my job for the guys that's out there with me.

Q. I guess what I'm getting at is do you feel like you've had less balls come newer way this year?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yes, sir, I do feel like I've had less balls thrown this way than the previous two years I've played here.

Q. When you go home for Christmas or the holidays, do they call you Kool-Aid or Domination?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, it depends on the person. Every person have a different name for me, I would say. One person might call me Kool-Aid. One person might call me G. Depends on different things. I would say a lot of

people in my family call me G because the world know me as Kool-Aid and they know me as G, you know what I'm saying.

My mom never really calls me my real name, no matter how mad she is, she just never call me my real name.

Q. We are minutes away from Hollywood and some incredible celebrities here in L.A. If we are making an Alabama football movie about this season, who do you want to play you in that movie?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Which celebrity?

Q. What actor do you want to play you?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Trying to think of someone who is kind of funny, you know, that also have a little swag about his self. Definitely got to have swag. A celebrity or an athlete.

Q. A celebrity. Or an athlete -- I don't know.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Can it be an athlete?

Q. Sure.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I guess Jalen Ramsey. I guess that's the easy way out.

Q. When you look at the tape of Michigan's offense, what jumps out the moment you started watching?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: They are a very physical team. They know their job. They know their assignment and their coaches do a good job of using the team's skill set to the best of making them a better team and make them an even better team. I just I feel like those guys are very physical and they know how to execute the play that the coaches are giving them and the coaches also understand the players that they have and make them an even better team.

Q. They have some good receivers but the tight ends have really stepped up for them at key times this season. As a secondary, how challenging is that whenever you have two tight ends?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, as a secondary, you just have to read your keys and understand your assignment and make sure that you're on the same page of everybody on the back end. I feel like in the secondary, everybody got to be on the same page. I feel like one guy on the whole defense can mess up the whole play. Only take one guy to mess up on defense. A big play can happen or it

can be a touchdown. I feel like everybody on defense, we got to be on the same page and all guys got to make sure that we are executing the play.

Q. A lot of people out there might say that Florida State should be sitting where you guys are right now. How does that change your mentality going into a game to say, you know what, this is our chance to prove that, yeah, we beat Georgia; we belong on this stage?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like this whole season for us have been us just trying to prove who we are, proving our identity to the world and showing who we are as a team. Just having the opportunity again to go out and show the world who we really are and it's just another great opportunity for this team to show who we really are.

Q. You mentioned Jalen Ramsey. Told me the other week, battling -- it's a challenge. He finds ways to stay engaged, so what moment happens, he's ready for it -- going through games where you're not challenged, what has been your mental challenge to be at your best even though you've got to respect -- they are not going your way?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I learned this from Coach Saban. Coach Saban always told me that being a corner that you might have five plays; you never know when those plays are going to happen at corner. So you've always got to be prepared.

I feel like me just knowing me, I know I've got to be on my A Game every play because like Coach told me, you never know when that play is going to happen, and you always want to be prepared for that play. And you never want to be a guy that hurts you are team. You always want to do your job.

So just knowing, being a cornerback, that a play can happen at any moment of a game, could be the first play of a game and you may not see a play again till the third quarter. Just making sure when you make a play you're on the A Game.

Q. Telling yourself, you're like a center fielder -- might not see a ball for a while?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Sure. Not doing anything like -- corner on the team -- I talk to a lot during the game, ask him what I see, ask him hat I did wrong during the play. Just a guy that I talk to, ask him -- make sure I'm staying in the game, staying alive, using my feet, using my hand. That's just the way I approach the game.

Q. Is this a match you're looking forward to -- seeing Wilson on tape, that's my guy, that's who I want to see?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: No, I'm just going out there doing my job for the team and being a good player for my team and doing a good job for my team.

Q. Can you talk about the excitement and the enthusiasm that you guys feel once you step out on the field?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I'm going to be very excited just to get out here with my team, and having that opportunity just to show the world who we are and being out there with guys that I actually love and love playing with and love being around.

So just being around these guys and getting the opportunity to go out here and play with these guys is just very exciting for me.

Q. What's your inspiration?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, I have a lot of inspiration, just me being a kid from Birmingham, coming from a place where it's very hard to get here and just being a guy that's like one out of a million. A lot of guys that I grew up around that had tough circumstances or had a hard life, just me being able to overcome and be here and just being able to glorify God and give God all the glory is just amazing to me.

Q. What's your inspiration?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: My inspiration as an athlete probably be Jalen Ramsey and LeBron James. I just love the way they carry themselves and handle things. Those are guys I've always looked up to in sports.

Q. How was the Meat Ball?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: It was very good. The meat was good. I really loved the corn. The corn was the best. It was good.

Q. Give a shoutout to your friends and family.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I love all my family and I love all my friends and I love my fans. Thank you for you guys. Without you guy, I wouldn't be here today.

Q. Inaudible?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I would say the win -- of course



you have to give a -- I would just say that play shows the identity of this team and that we have been trying to prove to the world all year. I would say that game show that we never give up until the shot clock says 0-0. We always preach about playing for 60 minutes and that play right there showed that we played for 60 minutes here at University of Alabama.

Q. Playing in the Rose Bowl, a lot of people watching this game. What does it mean to you --

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Well, you know, me being from the East Coast, I'm just getting out here and learning about how storied it really is out here. Hearing how exciting it is for people that we are really playing here is enough for me to understand how important this game really is.

Q. Do you think it's easier or harder when you have had a month off, is it hard to stay locked in or easier because you have more time to watch film and prepare?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like it can go hand-in-hand. Depends on you as a player and depends on you as a person and depends on how the coaches are having you work and get prepared for the game. I feel like that can go hand-in-hand. It's on you to decide if you want to lock in, though, as a player. It's on you deciding if you want to not lock in or lock in or look at it like it's far away.

I feel like we did a good job here as a team of being locked in at practice and understanding how far away the game is and how we are going to prepare and just trusting Coach Saban and trusting the coaches, making sure that we are locked in the right way.

Q. Anything specific the coaches have been preaching to keep you on that track to be ready for the game on Monday?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like early when we first started practicing, they was mentions that we not get lackadaisical and that these practices do mean something and these practices will help us in the future and will help us in the game.

I feel like now they haven't been really saying that. I feel like we as a team understand that the game is Monday and today is Saturday. So we understand, like, this is a natural Thursday for us. So I think we understand that as a team.

Q. Inaudible.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Like you said, I came in, J-Mil, just seeing him, we came here early together, from my first

days we got here, Alabama was in the National Championship. So we was here by ourselves. We was working and had a couple receivers and a couple DBs who went to the practice field while they had their game. We just was working and doing things, and I just always knew that he had dedication and work ethic.

Q. Inaudible.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I'm just very proud of him, I would say. I've always believed in him. You can ask him. I always believe in him and I always talk to him and I always let him know that we follow his lead as a team and how he rock, we rock. Just letting him know that we trust in him.

Q. Tell us about your development as a cornerback.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Just believing in Coach Saban and believing in everything that he's teaching us is very important on why we make cornerback position a strong part of this team. He had a lot of guys who played a lot of ball at cornerback, tear I don't know and Trey, play a lot of ball at cornerback, so we very much understand the game. Also have defensive coaches like Coach Saban and Coach T-Rod that make us better as a team and make us better as a cornerback position.

Q. What makes a good cornerback?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like as a cornerback, you have to understand yourself and you have to understand your body. I feel like you have to have great technique, great instincts and also know how to make tackles.

Q. What are the challenges that this Michigan offense presents in how you prepare?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like the Michigan offense is very physical. I feel like the coaches understand the guys that they have out there on offense, so it makes the players more comfortable in the scheme, and it make the players and the plays that they are calling, it fit the players better because the coaches understand them. So just having that connection between the team and the coaches by watching on film. So seeing that let us know how good their offense is -- our key to play good ball.

Q. How well you played in the year --

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: We just have to keep on keeping on. Just being there for each other. Keep on leaning on each other. Keep practicing hard against each other. You know, just keep making each other better. Keep on listening to coaches and keep on trusting coaches



and keep on being there for each other.

Q. What was Coach Saban's message to the team?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Coach Saban's message to us has been play to the 'Bama standard. Play fast and physical. Be that team. Be there for each other like we been there, and just go out there and do our thing.

Q. Can you evaluate Michigan's offense? What have you seen so far?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like Michigan's offense do a good job of running the ball. I feel like they are very physical. I feel like the coaches that they have understand the players that he got. So I feel like they make the players more confident in the scheme and make the players more confident in the plays that he calling. So I just I feel like they have a great connection within each other.

Q. What do you think about the quarterback?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I feel like McCarthy is a good player. I feel like he can make all the throws. I feel like he can hit the ball into all the windows, tight windows, open windows. I feel like he's a good player.

Q. Dallas talked about the offense is sneaky, do you agree with that?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Yeah, I feel like the offense is sneaky. They do a good job at what they do. I feel like the offensive coordinator understands them, so I feel like it makes them a better team.

Q. I do the social media for the Rose Bowl and we asked for some fan questions. Can I read you a couple and see if you want to answer any of them?

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Sure.

Q. First one, would you rather play in an historic stadium or a modern stadium for a Bowl game, like the Rose Bowl being a historic stadium.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: I'd probably pick the Rose Bowl.

Q. Can you do that as a selfie video, "Hey, it's Kool-Aid." Just hold down the button.

KOOL-AID MCKINSTRY: Hey, how you guys doing, it's Kool-Aid Mckinstry. I'd definitely rather play in an historic stadium because you never know if you'll get another opportunity to play in an historic stadium again in your career. I feel like there's a lot more modern stadiums out

here, so I feel like eventually you'll get to play in a modern stadium before an historic stadium.

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