

Heisman Memorial Trophy Presentation

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

New York, New York, USA

DeVonta Smith

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for joining for our first ever virtual press conference. Before we introduce our winner, on behalf of the Heisman Trophy Trust, we would like to once again congratulate Mac Jones, Trevor Lawrence and Kyle Trask on their tremendous seasons, especially given all the additional hurdles that they were presented with this year.

Now without further ado, I would like to congratulate and welcome the 2020 Heisman Trophy winner for questions, DeVonta Smith. Congratulations, DeVonta.

Q. DeVonta, Nick Saban has described your game, he's always said that you played bigger than you are. Obviously that sort of drove you, that mentality, by your comments tonight. I wonder how much that gave you the edge, people telling you that you weren't big enough?

DEVONTA SMITH: It gave me a lot. It just made me want to just do everything more physical and just be a bigger version of what I am, just everybody just thinking I'm so small, just showing everybody that I'm not the person that you can bully.

Q. DeVonta, when did you start to envision that maybe there's a possibility that you could win this award?

DEVONTA SMITH: Honestly, I never just have thought about it for real. I've had conversations, seen people send me things about it and I kind of brushed it off, but I honestly I never sat up there and honestly just thought about I could possibly win it.

Q. It seems like it was just yesterday when you were a freshman and you caught that touchdown to win the game and win the title back in Mercedes-Benz Stadium. At what point did you think to yourself, was that the moment or was there another point shortly thereafter or even before when you really felt like you were going to rise to become one of the next greats to wear the Alabama uniform?

DEVONTA SMITH: Well, that was always the goal, even after that, even before that, to always try to leave my legacy and be one of the greats here. After doing that, that kind of set the bar high, so I could only -- I tried to only elevate from there and just get better.

Q. DeVonta, was there a huge piece of advice that Coach Saban gave you or a teammate gave you or family members gave you? What's the biggest piece of advice that you always carried as you're now holding this trophy?

DEVONTA SMITH: Just remain humble and just keep doing things the way I'm doing it. If I just keep doing things the way that I've been doing it, it got me here and it's going to keep me going.

Q. You talked a little bit on TV about your advice to younger players. You were kind of told you were too small at times, and Mac kind of touched on people doubted him, as well. Can you talk about that message again that you have after having the Heisman Trophy now in your hands?

DEVONTA SMITH: Just that you've got to put your mind to the things that you want to do. If it's something that you really want to do, you have to truly believe in it and work for it, and just keep working and you're going to get everything that you're looking for.

Q. Now that you've won the trophy and one of the things that you guys always talk about is finishing, how important is it to your legacy to go out and finish this the right way Monday night?

DEVONTA SMITH: It's very important, just because the two main reasons I came back was to get my degree and to win another National Championship. So I've checked one box, I'm just trying to check the other one now.

Q. I feel like I've heard your teammates talk more about how great you are on the field rather than you. I can't help but want to ask to you, now that it's here and you won the award, how does the moment feel, and was it kind of surreal when you heard your name?



DEVONTA SMITH: I kind of feel relieved just that it's over with now. I can just focus on this last game. But it feels great just to hear my name called to win this award.

Q. DeVonta, growing up outside of Butler Town Park, what does this mean to you, your family and your neighborhood? And then also on top of that, what drove you to be the best receiver to ever play at Alabama?

DEVONTA SMITH: Really just everything that I've been doing since I was little, just seeing people at the park just playing basketball and football, just me just going out there wanting to play with them.

And just if I'm going to come here to play receiver and play football, I mean, why not want to be the best at doing it?

Q. And what does that mean to your family and yourself, winning the Heisman Trophy, and your neighborhood?

DEVONTA SMITH: It means a lot. Just the place where I come from, small place, not a lot of people know about it. Just someone giving their kids something, someone to look up to and laying the blueprint out for everybody that's coming up after me.

Q. You're only the third player to win the Heisman Trophy for the University of Alabama. What does it mean to you to be enshrined in history as one of the most important players in the history of the storied franchise that is Alabama football?

DEVONTA SMITH: It's a blessing. Those guys set a standard, and I'm just excited that I got a chance to come here and try to play to that standard and set the standard for everybody else that's coming after me.

Q. DeVonta, I know you get to talk to Jaylen Waddle every day, but have you heard from Ruggs and Jeudy at all?

DEVONTA SMITH: Yeah, just from what I have seen, I've heard from Ruggs. He just congratulated me and just told me keep going and just that he's proud of me.

Q. You seem like a guy who doesn't necessarily need a lot of attention and you play on a team with so many stars, star receivers, that it seemed like you didn't get a ton of attention until the last six weeks. Have you ever craved that, or did you like the idea that everybody was talking to Tua or Jeudy and now Mac and Najee?

DEVONTA SMITH: I kind of like just being out of the way, not of the mix and people not talking to me. I'm not the most vocal person. I don't like talking that much. So it was kind of -- it was enjoyable while it lasted. Now things -- I have to talk more. I mean, I'm getting used to it now. I'm getting better at it, and I enjoy it.

Q. Are you enjoying the time in the spotlight now as far as winning this award?

DEVONTA SMITH: It's a whole lot easier, so yes.

Q. A lot of players or Heisman winners throughout the years have that one Heisman moment. I would assume yours is either the 90-yard long pass or the punt return versus Arkansas. What would you say would be your No. 1 Heisman moment?

DEVONTA SMITH: I would probably say the punt return against Arkansas just because to show that I can impact the game on more than just being a receiver, whether it's on special teams or anything else.

Q. What did it mean to you to see your hometown during that broadcast? And two, has it really hit you yet that you've won and this is going to change your life?

DEVONTA SMITH: Well, seeing the people back at home, it kind of hit me hard. I kind of wanted to cry, but I stayed strong. Just to see the support of the people that was there has meant a lot to me.

Q. How much of this award was a testament to your hard work and the Alabama coaching staff?

DEVONTA SMITH: Just with the coaches here, they help everyone around here's job a whole lot easier, putting us in the perfect position to do what we do. Just us as a team coming to work every day and buying into all the details and things that this team has set, just they make everything a whole lot easier for us.

Q. Just a quick follow-up to that, why is your family so crucial to your growth as a man and as a player?

DEVONTA SMITH: Just because they've been there with me the whole way, and I've seen the things that go on in the community that I've been around, and it's been great examples, it's been not-so-great examples. So just being able to have them behind me and them show the support just means a lot to me.

Q. DeVonta, you weren't alive the last time a wide



receiver won the Heisman. What does it mean to you to win this award at this position, and I guess what does that honor mean to you?

DEVONTA SMITH: It means a lot just to be one of the very few that play receiver that won the Heisman. That means a lot to me.

Q. You mentioned Coach Wiggins in your speech a little bit. I'm just wondering if you could talk a little bit more about his impact on you as a player during your four years at Alabama.

DEVONTA SMITH: He means a lot to me. Just every day I go in his office, and we watch film before even going to our special teams meeting. Just him taking the time out of his day just to sit down and watch film, go through the different coverages and go through the things that defenses like to do and the tendencies of defenses, so it means to me just for him to take time out of his day to do that with me.

Q. I wanted to ask you if you have any connections to Heisman winners or any Heisman winners in particular that you look up to.

DEVONTA SMITH: I've talked to Mark Ingram a couple times, but outside of that, no, not for real. He's probably the only one that I've talked to.

Q. You've left your legacy at Bama for sure, but it's been a long road even with the story of you playing scout team defense. Was there ever a moment where you thought about transferring or going somewhere else?

DEVONTA SMITH: No, not at all, just waiting my time, just watching the guys that was ahead of me, just seeing the way that they did things and just followed their lead and then eventually when my time came, just stepping up.

Q. I wonder if you feel comfortable enough to share what Mac said to you after the award. We caught a little bit on the broadcast. We heard he said he loved you, but did he share any words after that?

DEVONTA SMITH: Just that he was proud of me and he loved me. That's all he really said.

Q. If you could comment on your day because today was, I'm sure, a heavy practice day. How hectic of a day has it been for you?

DEVONTA SMITH: It's kind of been normal. Woke up at about 6:00, came to work out, got treatment, ate some

breakfast, stayed around here, watched film, talked to the media, went to practice, went home, freshened up, came back here to the ceremony.

Q. And won a Heisman.

DEVONTA SMITH: Yeah.

Q. You're dressed to impress this evening. Looking sharp. I was wondering, who's the first person that came to mind when they said your name as the winner?

DEVONTA SMITH: I don't even know. My mind just blanked out.

THE MODERATOR: I believe that concludes all of our questions this evening. Once again, we want to congratulate DeVonta on being named the 2020 Heisman Trophy winner. Thanks for joining us this evening.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports