

Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

Monday, July 22, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

SMU Mustangs

Elijah Roberts

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Mr. Roberts.

Q. What is it like knowing you're going to be part of the ACC again?

ELIJAH ROBERTS: That's a great feeling, honestly. It's a blessing to be back in this conference, playing against these great teams we're going to see week in, week out. I'm just thankful this time around to be in a different position than the first time in the ACC.

Q. What have you learned if you are in a different position? What is different?

ELIJAH ROBERTS: As far as for me, I'm playing a whole lot more. I'm in more of a leadership role now. I'm more of a leadership role now. Just being able to feed the information that I do know about the ACC to the guys who may have not played against that type of talent yet. Just being able to do that.

Q. Your versatility, late in the year it seemed like coach started moving you around. What is in store on that front this year? Are you adding any new spots along the defensive line?

ELIJAH ROBERTS: I think you'll probably see a lot of the same stuff, see me in five technique, three technique, nose, even in the goal line I get bumped outside to outside linebacker now. It's a lot of new stuff for sure.

It's good for me and it's good for our team, for sure.

Q. Do you consider yourself more of a thoroughbred or dog?

ELIJAH ROBERTS: Definitely a dog. I mean, I feel like personally if I'm going at my best, I don't think there's a lot of people who can block me one on one, for sure.

Q. Coming into the ACC, defensively, what do you

want people in the ACC who might not know SMU's game to know?

ELIJAH ROBERTS: I just want people to know if they don't, they'll be able to see it, but we're going to be coming. We're going to come hard. Our defense, we like to bite. Coach Symons, he doesn't let us take off practices on small things. Just being aggressive, being physical.

Especially up front, our D-line has to be the most physical group on the team. I definitely think that's what people will see, for sure.

Q. You and Coach Lashlee go back like four flats on a Cadillac. I know you got ties to a lot of Miami players. Talk about how good it feels for things to come full circle like this?

ELIJAH ROBERTS: Yeah, it's crazy, man. Coach Lashlee was there my freshman year, sophomore year. Obviously he was on the offensive side, I was on defense. I was on scout team I believe my first two years I was there. Probably even a little bit on my third.

I was on scout team and I would go against the offense. Me just being the competitor I am, I'm going full speed. Those are really the only game reps I get throughout the week. Coaches just be screaming at me, can you stop, stop telling him to go so hard, it's scout team (smiling).

Just being able to come back and play for him now, him being my head coach, just having him, Coach Cooper, all the coaches from Coach Justice, those guys instilled confidence in me to being able to have the season that I did last year.

Q. With the amount of speed on both sides of the ball, having a great head coach that you have, how dangerous is this SMU team?

ELIJAH ROBERTS: I think we're going to be really very competitive. It's one thing to talk about it, one thing to show it.

We got a lot of speed, a lot of guys who can run, especially



myself. I think I'm probably top five on the team (smiling).
We definitely got a lot of guys who can run, especially with
the new guys we brought in.

There's really no dropoff like in talent. So for sure...

**Q. You created that poll, you finished top five, you
didn't quiz anybody?**

ELIJAH ROBERTS: Sure (smiling).

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