

Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

SMU Mustangs Preston Stone

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Preston.

Q. The conference has spent a lot of time and effort pushing this conference as the conference of quarterbacks. You're new to the world out here in the ACC. Where do you fit in in the big picture of the high-end quarterbacks here?

PRESTON STONE: I think we fit in just well. The ACC does have a tradition of putting a lot of talented quarterbacks in the NFL. Just off the top of my head, I think of Jameis Winston, Trevor Lawrence, Deshaun Watson.

We're coming into this conference guns ablazing. I think the quarterback room fits perfectly with that.

Q. Was it ever weird to transition from saying, oh, we're talking about the American -- oh, no, I'm actually in the ACC? Is that ever a weird transition in your brain or did that click easily?

PRESTON STONE: I'm pretty hardwired to think ACC at this point (smiling).

Q. You had quite the jump from your freshman year to your sophomore year. Other than the number of games played, what do you attribute the difference that elevation in your game?

PRESTON STONE: I think a couple of things. Comfortability with scheme. One of my favorite things about Coach Lashlee is that he doesn't try to fit you into a certain mold of quarterback that he wants you to be. He allows you to play to your strengths.

We would meet just about every week. He would ask us what are our favorite third down plays, red zone plays, comfortability with scheme.

I think chemistry with our core group of receivers has been

huge as we've progressed from previous years coming into this year.

Q. You are in a huge media market. I'm not sure if everybody is ready for what SMU is about to do. I think you guys are going to take the league by storm and be a forefront team on the national stage. I pegged you as a dark horse to speak as offensive Player of the Year this year. Can you speak on this a little bit.

PRESTON STONE: We couldn't be more excited to compete in the ACC. I think we've always felt and believed that there's not a team in Texas that can compete with us. Now that we're stepping into the ACC, we get the chance to prove that.

Something Coach Lashlee says all the time is that individual accomplishments are going to flow through the team.

I think we have a great culture of guys that have that selfless mentality of we're going to step up to the plate and play for each other each Saturday.

Q. Earlier on ACC Kickoff you mentioned you have the best wide receiver room in the ACC. What makes this wide receiver room amazing? What do you think as a quarterback is important in the relationship between you and your receivers?

PRESTON STONE: Yes, sir. I think the biggest difference I've seen in this off-season compared to last off-season, obviously a lot of our receivers are transfers. The chemistry we've been able to build from year one with those guys to year two has been huge.

I wholeheartedly believe we have two sets of starting receivers. Each guy could go to a different school and be a number one receiver. They have that selfless mentality of we're going to spread the ball around and our main goal ties win games and not chase those individual accomplishments.

Q. You have two brothers that play college football.



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How did you break the news that you were not going to Virginia?

PRESTON STONE: That's a great question. It's funny. When the schedule for next year was released, he said, no one walks into Scott Stadium and comes out alive.

I was like, All right, we'll see No. 36.

That was his number in college (laughter).

I know he had a great time at the University of Virginia playing for Coach Mendenhall. I'm really excited to play against him.

Q. You spent your youth going to SMU games. Now that the complex is nearing completion, what is the feel in the stadium like, that that has come out of the ground and replaced the hill?

PRESTON STONE: The end zone complex is going to be awesome. I definitely enjoyed playing on the hill when I was kid, rolling around, playing football while there was football going on.

But now that we have the end zone complex, thanks to our athletic director and the donors, it's going to be an incredible experience to have one of the premier facilities in the country.

Q. Describe the emotion, the perspective. You're rolling around on the hill as a seven-year-old, all of a sudden you're the quarterback.

PRESTON STONE: It's awesome. There's several games I think about growing up that I look back on. I remember when Baylor came into town and Courtland Sutton was going crazy. I remember when Johnny Manziel tore us up back in 2012.

Now we have a chance to play big-boy football in the ACC. I feel incredibly lucky to be this school's quarterback. That's not something I take lightly.

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