

University of Florida Football Media Conference

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Savannah Bailey Press Conference



Q. Where does this apply? Where do you see -- we're all about the football. You're in the season.

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Uh-huh.

Q. Where do you see the efforts that you make applying to like performance or practice or recovery or any of the things that are really important to a season?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, I mean, I heard a lot of questions asking about energy and leadership and maturity and adjustments and those kind of things, and all of that comes with knowing who you are, what you're capable of, and being able to communicate and share that amongst the team.

So that's Gatormade's hand in the season, right? While we don't have the result we want, this is still the growth process of young men. There are still people now going through adversity, having to handle and adjust to that, and go about life and really push forward.

That's all life is, is a series of transitions and how you handle them. That's what we equip them to be able to do.

Q. (Regarding social media.)

SAVANNAH BAILEY: So I've worked with college students for about ten years now, formally at Clemson for about six years in a similar role. For me the change has always been very consistent, but you're right, it's the external pressures that have really heightened.

Very intensely scrutinize our guys for the 12 days they think they know them. Imagine being with them 365 and seeing that full growth process and what it looks like for them to become their own person, be able to apply that in game and out of.

When I think about the demands and needs, people say, how has NIL changed your life? Well, it's always been important. Their financial freedom has always been important and their character and ability to perform in any

space and context has always been important.

Maybe now it's just important to the public that doesn't get to interact with them every day.

Q. Any kind of effort to expand Gatormade into the other sports?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: We already do that. Traditionally with other universities we have an overall student-athlete development department, and they service all our Olympic sports. So all the other 500 athletes we have. When you think about a football roster we have about 120, which is the size of about six different Olympic sports teams.

That's why we have the specialization.

But it's one of those we share in communication every single week. Who is our corporate contacts? What are doing, working on? What are the trends, the learning outcomes, all those things. While we get to sometimes be the Guinea pig or the trendsetter for something, that's the influence of football.

That doesn't mean it doesn't directly impact other sports. When we had our trip to Nike I took ten of my guys and six women athletes. Not just football. How do you spread the wealth and just the imprint of being a Florida Gator.

Q. On social media, I guess as it pertains to what's going on right now -- I don't mean to suggest you're a therapist necessarily.

SAVANNAH BAILEY: That's okay. Armchair one.

Q. Do you have an approach to helping these players when things get loud or coaches when things get loud from the outside?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Absolutely. I think that's part of the proximity piece. When asked why is Gatormade specific to football. We are at every meal, practice, team meetings, all that stuff. I see what you're going through. I see how you carry it on your shoulders. And, hey, I didn't make that play or whatever else.

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How do you provide that sense of encouragement or even that space just to process it. Maybe they don't want to talk at all and just sit somewhere for a second and collect their thoughts. I think that's something that's wildly underrated. Do you create the environment where someone feels comfortable enough to process what they have just gone through, maybe come up with some solutions, or even just be back to being a person. They're going to be a person a lot longer than they're a player. How do we make sure that comes first.

Q. How has NIL affected the pressures the last couple years, that spectre of wanting to build your brand?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, I think if anything it just adds a little bit more heightened awareness to what it is you put out in the world. It's always been important to folks like me, but at this point it becomes a heightened one for companies and for people to really see the value and the impact that sports has.

If anything they're getting to conduct themselves as businessmen, right? They're going into contracts and selling themselves and providing their platform. They have to do so in a professional way. If not, you can get fired.

Like it's the real world context. To me, if anything it provides the application to what it is we've always been teaching.

Q. Does seem like it's something additional on their plate.

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, that's a personal choice. You'll see some guys really engaged in that space and some that aren't. I don't think there is a right or wrong answer to that. NIL is just an opportunity and it's a matter of which one are you going to take. There is also an opportunity to get better at everything every day. We all have the same 24 hours. How do you spend it.

It's for us to help them to digest that. What is your priority. How do we more effectively manage our time and exhibit the maturity and we can do all these things and do it well.

Q. (No microphone.) (Regarding being here, knowing the lay of the land and players being familiar.)

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, first year is drinking from a fire hydrant. It was new place, new everything. I wanted to come in and institute stuff immediately, but also realizing without the relationship piece whatever you're trying to build is going to fall flat.

I got to take that valuable step back and say, okay, how do I make sure they understand what this is and who it's for. It's for them. That's the purpose. So in the second year you're going in with a lot more buy-in, a lot more trust, student feedback. You get to create more customized, personal anything what we're doing.

The stuff we have planned for spring 2024 is based off of feedback from this team, the guys that will be on the trips and doing those things. It feels a little bit more built in. Again, it's for them, by them. That's the whole point, the ownership piece there.

Q. What are some of the I guess most (indiscernible) outside of the trips and events.

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Right, the stuff that makes the stories, the trips and all those things, are big pieces, right? That's the application of all the things we teach every single day.

It's Stephen Alli pulling aside one of the wide receivers who had Billy G as his coach. Hey, when he's saying this, this is what we're talking about here. Who can break some of that stuff down. Diane Lebon helping folks get ready for Gator Walk, because that's her passion. How do we make sure you feel will most confident and at your best.

To me just hanging out at the nutrition bar and saying like, what are we putting in our bodies today? How are you feeling? What do you need energy for? Why do you not have energy? Digging deep into some of those layers.

I think it's always those things. The daily stuff. Not the big things but always little ones.

Q. How much of your day is spent on NIL and getting NIL money in?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Zero. That's not my role. (Smiling.)

Q. (Indiscernible.)

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Do this?

Q. Yeah.

SAVANNAH BAILEY: I think a lot of folks have something available. Traditionally it's been someone who is typically a former player that serves in a mentorship role. This is one where you are focused on having and educator at the helm and then other players and resources available. How do you mix all these things together.

When I think of competitive or comparable programs,



probably about five. Like Coach said, I'm looking to be the best.

Q. What's it say about Billy? He comes in here and talks about everybody is upset when the team loses and is critical. You saw the press conference. What's it say about his approach as to building a team, a program, that he puts so much emphasis on this?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, this is the part when you ask about, oh, how are you going to respond. That comes from an internal force that you have for yourself. What motivates you. Who are you as a person. What is that identity.

All the questions you're asking come from the things at that Gatorade helps you establish and peel away and help them understand.

So when I think of how he prioritizes it, he told me, hey, I went after you. I specifically brought you here to help create this. Then I have the privilege of bringing in other people to help mold it into something that's always going to serve the players and our alumni.

Q. ...reached out to you in the past.

SAVANNAH BAILEY: A lot have. A lot of. For me I never mind sharing because you can try it, you can do it, but I think it's always about the people that do it. By the time you're doing one thing, we're doing another, right?

It is a competitive edge. It's not a recruiting ploy. It's one of those while we get to establish those relationships then, my main concern is anyone that's a Gator will be a Gator, has been a Gator, you're going to get some of Gatorade.

Q. (Regarding trendsetting.)

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, absolutely. And for me like the more opportunities people have the better. The same way you want to play in the SEC because you want to play against the best competition, I want to compete against the best in what I do. Come on, let's do it. Bring it on.

Q. (No microphone.) Where did you get your passion?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, so I was a first gen student. Didn't have a lot of help navigating some of these spaces, and I think a lot of our guys go through the same thing. I've always been surrounded by men my whole life, and prior to working in football I worked for fraternities in membership develop, so groups of men struggling to find their identity within those large groups and how do you help them figure that stuff out.

Coming from the perspective of a woman, the perspective of an educator, you get to add a little bit different flavor to it. It's not just, hey, this was my experience and I expect you to have the same one.

It's the opposite. I wasn't the student that had to go to practice and do all these things. I got to do internships and everything else, so in the real world I'm trying to kick your butt when we're going after the same thing. How do you make sure they're equally prepared and equitably giving those resources.

Q. (Regarding being a trailblazer.) Who do you look to see what's next?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, all the time. It's what corporate resources are there. What are other colleges doing. What's the league doing. What are folks in sport and out of sport doing when it comes to player development.

For me it's how do you get better teaching methods into the teaching rooms, more buy-in and participation and feedback and empowering opportunities. How do you study college student development and brain development. These are 18 to 22 year old men. We're still going through a lot of processes here.

For me it's anything and everything that I can pull from. I mean, I'm a lifelong learner and advocate of that, and I want that for any of our guys. What can you find out to make sure you're more aware of who you are, what you want, and how you're going to get there.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

SAVANNAH BAILEY: That's right. Doctor Stephen Alli. So we are talking about an alum that maximized all of his resources. This is a person that had his playing career, didn't turn out the way he wanted it to, so then what do you do from there. You pivot into something else. You figure it out. That's what he did.

Probably didn't have as much guidance as he would've wanted and that is something we can provide now. For me this is a person who's really personable, cares, has the degrees and the backing. Above all these things, he is someone who is a Gator.

I think that's something that I can never be remiss about. I didn't graduate from here. I don't know all the ins and outs. Do I want that for every single person? Absolutely. I want someone to be able to say being a Gator made me the man that I am today. That's why the program is called

what it's called. Stephen is a living example of that. Brandon Spikes, Mike Peterson, those folks show what it is to put all those pieces together.

Q. From an ex-player perspective of that, how does that resonate with the current players in terms of understanding the pressures?

SAVANNAH BAILEY: Yeah, so definitely swamp alumni. That is just part of something you did. That would be saying like my last job I was an ex-educator. No. It's just part of one of your experiences. So this is someone who has lived and breathed and done everything they've done, and then some, right? So to me that's an invaluable perspective, one that I can't provide. One that I have to be particularly cognizant of that they value. How did I bring that to them?

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