

# University of Florida Football Media Conference

Monday, November 4, 2024

Gainesville, Florida, USA

## Hayden Hansen

Press Conference



**Q. Seeing DJ going down on Saturday did it take a little bit of the wind out of the sails even though you tried to rally around Aidan?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: It's unfortunate knowing how hard everybody in this program works and plays. It's tough to see guys like that go down.

Obviously just happened to Graham not long ago, and seeing DJ in had that same spot, it's frustrating. In this league, as tough as it is, you have to have the "next man up" mentality. That's what we prepare for in practice every day day in and day out.

**Q. What was it like seeing Aidan's progress over the last, what, not even two months since he's been able to take reps in practice? What have you seen out of him?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: It's crazy. He plays fearless. He came from Yale as a true freshman. He didn't get any playing time there. He comes here to the SEC, and he finds himself in the Florida-Georgia game.

He stepped up, man. He was put some in the spotlight. I can't even imagine what was going through that guy's head. I have a lot of respect for him. He left it all out on the field. We're going to rally around him this week and go out there and compete.

**Q. Bill said there was a lot of players in for meetings yesterday. How do you sense you are holding together through thrash of injuries and so forth and knowing the disappointment of the Georgia game as hard as you guys have played?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: I feel like the frustrating part throughout the season is we have proven over and over again that we can hang with the best of the best. We consistently come up a little short. We have to finish.

I think Napier said it best. I felt like in that locker room -- I've been here for three years, and this is the first year

where there was complete belief we can go out there and play with that team. I think it showed, and I think we fought over and over again.

I think a lot of these meetings that were going on today are just players getting on the same page, taking the younger guys that are going to have bigger roles under their wings. I feel fairly confident. This team has always had depth. I think everyone knows that. I'm excited to see some of the new guys that get their chance. It's going to be fun to watch.

**Q. Going back to your home state. A lot of family and friends. What are the emotions going to be like?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: I can't wait. It's my first time going back to Texas playing. I have a little chip on my shoulder. I'm going to have a lot of family I haven't seen in a while down there, so I'm going to play my butt off for them.

**Q. Were you a Texas fan? Can you tell the fans about the whole "hook 'em" experience and all that kind of stuff?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: I wasn't a Texas fan growing up, but I do know about Texas fans, and they are crazy, man. I know you saw some of the clips of trash being thrown on the field. That's not even the half of it. I mean, they're pretty crazy down there, but I would love nothing more than to go in there and get a win.

**Q. You talked about the new guys getting their chance. What's the injury situation been like? Is it just stunning to see this many guys go down and filling up the training room?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Yeah, you never want to see injuries happen, especially the number we have now. We have the best trainers in the world, so they're going to go in there and get their bodies straight.

I mean, you always have to prepare. One day like Clay Millen, for example. One day you're not even thinking you're going to play, and then all of a sudden you're up. You're the second man up, or who knows what's going to

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

happen this week? You just always have to stay ready in this league.

**Q. You were a quarterback in high school. You're not pushing for any reps in practice?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: I can see myself being the emergency QB3 this week. Put me in there; I'll let it fly. So we'll see. I would love nothing more than that.

**Q. The confidence, fearlessness standpoint from Aidan, what stands out to you about his game? What does he do well? I know Saturday's performance wasn't what he desired it to be, but what impresses you about what he's able to do?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Yeah, he always keeps a calm, cool composure. That's what I respect about him the most. He looks comfortable in the pocket.

In my opinion I think he's a true pocket passer. He's going to stand back there as long as he can and deliver accurate throws. When he needs to use his legs, he can.

It's just been crazy. I've seen how much he's developed in such a short time, and my confidence has only grown watching him get thrown into that game and not cracking under pressure. That's not for everybody now, you know? I was proud of him.

**Q. What's your ticket demand this week?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: I've been scavenging around the locker room getting a lot of tickets. I'm at about 50 right now.

**Q. Is that enough? Is 50 going to do it?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Hopefully. I'm going to see. I'm going to guess maybe 65 will be the max.

**Q. Who is going to get to see who doesn't normally get to see you?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: I have family down in San Antonio that I haven't got to see a lot because you miss Thanksgiving and stuff here. I'm going to get to see them. A lot of my friends and boys that are at college, like A&M, they're all spread out, they're all going to come together. Obviously my parents, my sister. Yeah, it's going to be a really fun time, and I'm really excited to see all those people.

**Q. Does Aidan's intelligence level, does it stand out in some way to you? He went to Yale. I know this isn't a**

**chop liver school, but Yale, getting into a school like that is extremely difficult.**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Yeah.

**Q. Do you notice it? Is he kind of a brain?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: When I was in high school, Yale was recruiting me. That whole recruiting process was interesting. They're a little different from everyone else. They can do different things. They expected different things. They were more GPA first and stuff like that.

Just knowing that he went through all that, checked all their boxes in the classroom and stuff, you've got to be bright. I mean, talking to him, I'm not in their meeting room and what not, but he picked this playbook up pretty fast. My true freshman year, that was a big reason why I redshirted because I wasn't confident enough to go out there and execute over and over again. Him being a quarterback true freshman coming in here and picking it up that fast and being able to play, I think that speaks levels to his intelligence.

**Q. Does he sit in the locker room reading French poetry or --**

HAYDEN HANSEN: (Laughing) I don't think I've ever seen him read anything, but to each their own.

**Q. Was it ever serious going to Yale or not?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: I was until I figured out you can't get like a sports scholarship. You would have to pay, and that was out of my budget, so yeah.

**Q. You said they ask you different questions. Did anything stand out?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Yeah, some of what they were talking to me about was how they would like to look at your body. They do these blood tests and have these machines that read different parts of your body and stuff like that about what side you strain with more and stuff like that. It was just stuff like that I had never heard before. It was pretty cool, and they were talking about the academic side and everything else.

Princeton was the same way. I talked to Princeton I think junior year, but it was really unique down there. It's really cool people. Even Joey, like Joey -- you are speaking of French poetry. I have seen Joey -- he writes in his journal almost every day. He goes and meditates bare foot on the field. So, yeah, the guys that come from there, they're sharp for sure.

**Q. Going back to the pregame Florida-Georgia, what specifically -- you said this was the first time you really felt like you guys could compete with them. What specifically was being said, or what was the attitude, mindset? Can you just take me back to that a little bit?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: These past three weeks -- I mean, I know we didn't get the result we wanted to in Tennessee. We came up a little short, but I think that was the turning point. Obviously we came off a win against Mississippi State too, but we were expected to do that.

We go into -- they were probably 7 at the time going into their place, one of the loudest stadiums I've ever been in. There's no moral victories, but we should have won. Didn't, but we took what we needed to from that game.

Went played condition Ken. Gave them all we had. Almost put 50 on them. We saw how they played Georgia. I think that gave us even extra hope. Going into that game I just think the way we practice, it's so physical. It's just over and over. Even to this point in the season it's physical. It's a fight in the trenches for Tuesday and Wednesdays.

I think that just rolls over into Georgia. We were watching film on their front seven and stuff. Listen, I go toe to toe, head-to-head with Jack Pyburn every single day. There's not going to be an end in this country that hits me harder than that dude does. I promise you that.

**Q. Do you take that mindset into Texas? Obviously another top-5 ranked team. It's going to be pretty hostile environment. How do you guys take that we believe we can win, us against the world mentality?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: It just kind of goes back to "spot the ball." All the media can talk. The rankings can talk. Spot the ball, and let's find out. Why not us? Why can't we be the top-5 team?

I think we go in there, we play Georgia, play Tennessee, and we're going to get the result we want. We have to clean up these little things. We have to raise our play for Aidan. Tight ends, the receivers, the running backs, the O-line, the defense, we all have to come up and help Aidan out. We're going to take that with a lot of pride.

**Q. Does that say a lot about where the program is at under Coach Napier going into year four?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: We're playing for him, and that's one thing that I have kind of seen misconceptions of. This locker room is playing for him and playing hard. There's

belief still. There's belief. We're going to go out and try to win out, get bowl eligible, win the bowl game, and carry over this big momentum into next season.

I mean, I think there's been huge strides since the first two years, so...

**Q. Was there any particular turning point this coming season when you guys just decided things had to click, when talking about the attitude of wanting to win out? Is there any particular moment, game, practice, week where things just clicked for you guys?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Yeah, for sure. I would say it started the first bye week. The first bye week Napier divided up the whole team into orange and blue team, and for that whole bye week we just competed every day. It was a points system. Losers ran at the end. It was just fun.

We forgot about all the narrative. We forgot about how we started the season. We just came together and competed. All we cared about was winning for our team. That was kind of the emphasis.

Then the second bye week we did it again. I was just, like, you know, we're having fun. We're going to go out there and play like this. Play stress-free. Ever since then is we've just proven it to ourselves that we can hang with the best of the best.

We're going to be a dangerous team moving forward.

**Q. You said Jack Pyburn, he talked to us last week. I was joking with how big his neck is. The guy definitely looks the part. What is his mentality? Have you seen a guy with a motor like him? He seems to kind of raise the level of defense a little bit in terms of effort?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Yeah, that guy I have not seen a motor like him. He's just -- he's different. He's a hard worker. He's going to give it all for his team. He was just waiting for that green light. When he got the starting spot, he took off with it.

I'm proud of him. I came in with him. I used to be his roommate when we first got here. I've seen the growth too. Obviously he was one of those guys that went down last year with an ACL, and that was unfortunate to see, but that was probably one of the quickest turnarounds I've ever seen with an ACL injury. That's how bad he wanted to come back.

Just him coming back, seeing him excel now, I'm proud of him.

**Q. One year tomorrow that he injured it.**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Really? Really? That's insane.

**Q. November 5th I think.**

HAYDEN HANSEN: That's insane.

**Q. Might have been the 4th actually. It was one year ago today.**

HAYDEN HANSEN: That's insane, man.

**Q. I think he has almost 50 tackles.**

HAYDEN HANSEN: The guy is going to give it his all, that's for sure.

**Q. 24 hours ago people were saying DJ Lagway is probably on the shelf for the rest of the season, and then Bill came in and said, There's a chance. When did you all hear that he might be up, and when you first saw that injury, did you think, uh-oh, you know, he's gone? Did that sort of lift up the team at all knowing maybe he might come in back, and how surprised are you to get that given what was going on Saturday?**

HAYDEN HANSEN: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, seeing him go down, it was kind of just like a punch to the chest. I know about as much as you know right now, but knowing that there's a chance he comes back, it excites me. He's a great player. I've never seen a deep ball like that guy.

He's going to be very special whenever he does come back, but yeah, God speed, I hope he comes back fully healthy. We would love to have him back this year. If not, we're going to rally around Aidan or Clay or whoever it is, and we're going to win some games.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports