

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Monroe Freeling

Draft Day Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Monroe.

Q. How much sleep did you get last night?

MONROE FREELING: That's irrelevant. No, just kidding (laughter).

I don't know, maybe like four hours, five. Couldn't tell you.

Q. Have you got any feedback from how you ended your draft call last night?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, I don't know if you heard actually, but I saw in the media that I did actually end up getting that on the call. That was funny.

He said every single draft he's had, no one's done that. I guess that's a first, right (smiling)?

Q. How was today? Did you feel the love back when you got here?

MONROE FREELING: No, I really did. It was really awesome. I keep on saying like I'm home. My brothers are telling not to say it now because I've been saying it so much.

It really feels like home. It feels like I was meant to be here. There was a path. It was a define intervention to get here, so...

Q. From a football perspective, you're known obviously for your athleticism. Do you have a favorite pull or spring block from your career?

MONROE FREELING: Really, I had like a backside combo against Ole Miss my last year. That was my favorite block I've ever had I think. It was a combo block. It was really awesome. I love watching the film.

I'm like, yeah, it felt so good in game two. Especially as an offensive lineman, having your running back hit it off of you

feels good.

Q. Have you heard from any of your new teammates?

MONROE FREELING: I have. I got a couple texts from different players. I FaceTimed Trevor actually afterward. He was at Georgia with me. Also got a text from Bryce, (indiscernible), a couple different guys. I did.

Q. What did Bryce say?

MONROE FREELING: He was just like, Let's go. Excited to work together.

I was like, Yeah, let's get after it. I'm really excited. I'm excited to play ball now. The process is over.

Q. You mentioned last night about getting your pad level down a little bit. Was that something you had to work on?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, I think it was just different. I guess they're different quarterbacks obviously. He'll probably have a much better time than Gunner had.

I know that playing with pad level is a good thing kind of in any way. I guess you can play too low, but it definitely helps, especially 'cause defenders can't get under you if you're playing lower, so...

Q. How many reps did you have? How much comfortability did you get at right tackle prior to starting left tackle?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, I was a swing tackle pretty much my first two years. I was getting experience at both. My sophomore year I was primarily a swing tackle. Like, I was getting in every third series, just kind of switching in the middle of a series. Didn't really matter.

I was getting good experience. I probably have like 300 snaps or something at right tackle, 1,600 at left. Definitely a big difference, but I'm comfortable wherever.

Q. Is there a player or players that you watch maybe at

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the college or pro level that you see yourself as or imitate parts of their game?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, I mean, I want to build up my own bag. I want to identify myself as just a singular person.

I like watching Andrew Thomas, a Georgia grad. He has really clean sets, really consistent with everything. I want to be like Penei Sewell in the run game. I always say that. I grew up watching him as an Oregon fan. Kind of seeing him develop, how dominant he is in the run game, I want to apply it to my game, too.

Q. You mentioned getting connected with Coach Gilbert. What set off the interaction with him?

MONROE FREELING: We were really chopping it up. We had a some Zoom calls. Just seeing him at pro day. He grabbed me, we talked a little bit. He ended up running the drills. We got along really well. I'm really glad I ended up actually being here. He told me when I walked in this morning, he was like, Yeah, I did not think we were going to get to two.

He is super psyched and I am super psyched, so it's awesome.

Q. You talked last night about being thrown into playing offensive line as a young kid. When did that start? At what point did you realize you were pretty good?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, for as long as I can remember, I mean, they had the weight limit. I think I was just right over it. What if I should just drop five pounds so I can carry the ball or something? Never happened (laughter).

Definitely on the offensive line, you got to grow to love it. I don't really think you can play offensive line if you don't love it. At the end of the day you're playing 75 snaps a game. Really only getting noticed when you mess up. It's like you got to take the responsibility of the just kind of give it your all.

Q. Never thrown the ball to you?

MONROE FREELING: Believe it or not, I was a quarterback when I was playing flag football in elementary school. My brothers aren't going to give me the credit for it, but I was definitely dicing it up when I was in elementary.

Q. What do you remember about playing on the offensive line?

MONROE FREELING: Just kind of playing as a unit. You get to play with five guys. It's not just one guy. Five guys can make the play. You might not get all the credit, like said. You can turn to your other four offensive linemen and be like, Yeah, we did that, we made that play happen, we opened that hole, we protected the quarterback long enough, all those things.

Q. Also mentioned growing up with your brothers, being in an athletic household. What was it like growing up and having to compete?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, my mom's been saying it all day, it's like a frat house, as you can imagine. Just chirps all the time, bullying all the time. I'd say them bullying me is what got me here. They're still going to claim that. Like, Yeah, we did this. We did this, right (laughter).

It was an awesome household. Competition. Whenever I go back home, we'll hop back on PGA or something, compete on that, golf. I'm going to catch up. My brother thinks I have a long time till I get there. I'm definitely going to catch up soon. He has no idea.

Q. Did you not know about the 'keep pounding' mantra or something you didn't hear?

MONROE FREELING: I thought he said 'keep bounding', because at pro day I was with Coach Gilbert. I messed up the drill once or twice. I was thinking that I was like, Oh, dude, they still remember the drill.

I was probably overthinking it in the moment. I was like 'keep bounding'. I was like, is he talking about the drill (smiling)?

Now I'm here, he said 'keep pounding'. Okay, I get it now. A little bit of a confusion at first.

Q. When you mentioned your position, people want to bring up the negatives. You had a struggle in the Notre Dame game. I think you might have been playing hurt. Only reason I ask, what did you learn from that game? Were you, in fact, playing injured that day?

MONROE FREELING: No, I didn't know. I learned actually after the game that I was injured, but I didn't really see it as an excuse for my performance.

I kind of just learned I had a lot to grow, a lot to work on. Kind of going from that into labrum surgery, you get more on the mental side, just realizing if I really want to come out this year, like I did, I was going to take a lot more work.

I really put my head down and started grinding. It was really tough, I'd say, being injured, coming off such a bad performance in my book. Even if it was only three plays, it's the only three plays that people care about.

No, it was definitely a little tough. I think it built me stronger. My mentality, my next-play mentality, really has grown a lot. Carrying that into the league I think is going to be good for me.

Q. The way the offensive line coaches were, Coach Gilbert, works almost exclusively with tackles. He's probably going to be really hands on. How much can that help when you get that individual attention and you get to be molded?

MONROE FREELING: I think it's really important to especially get that one-on-one time. I think you can have, like, individual periods. At least in Georgia we had individual periods.

It's hard to get hands-on work when you got so many guys. Now that I can get some hands-on experience, it will kind of slow it down. I think it will allow me to get like the inches, the margins and the details all of that. It will be a lot better just because it's a little slowed down.

Q. How do you approach coming into a professional setting where there are established (indiscernible)?

MONROE FREELING: Be an apprentice. I'm going to go learn from them. They've been there, they've done it. Who am I to come in here and act like I've done everything? I haven't done anything.

I'm going to come in there and learn from them and compete. It a good experience. I think, yeah, I'm going to be an apprentice. That's all I'm going to say.

Q. You talk about football, your love for the game. When you are not playing football, who are you away from the field?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, sometimes I like just to donate golf balls to the water in club courses (smiling). Other times in the woods.

For the most part I just kind of I like cooking a little bit. I don't know if you've seen my Instagram page. I made two trap cooking videos. It was all right (laughter).

Q. Trap cooking?

MONROE FREELING: They weren't great. Yeah, no, I do

a couple different things away from the field. Really I just like to play ball, cook some food, play some golf, yeah. That's what I got.

Q. What is trap cooking?

MONROE FREELING: I was just saying like the videos weren't the best quality type of thing, no. I'm not going out there, like picking up road kill and stuff (laughter).

Q. What is your favorite food to cook?

MONROE FREELING: Really like any meat. I made some Philly cheese steaks. You can ask my family. They said they were like a 9 or something like that, 9.4. They were really good. I want to start expanding my bag, just like my football bag.

Cooking whatever I can, whenever I can. Yeah, pretty much anything.

Q. When did you start playing golf?

MONROE FREELING: Like the last, what, two years. I think I got my first set of clubs in May of '24. Then I really couldn't play that whole spring because I got labrum, so... Probably played less than 25 rounds of golf in my life. I'm going to be on an upward curve, don't worry.

Q. If you had to describe yourself to Panther fans...

MONROE FREELING: Might seem a little silly up here. When I get on the football field, it's going to be all. I'm on there, I'm going to give it all I got every single time. I'm going to bring that fire.

That's why I came. I'm carrying it from Georgia. I think that's what you get drafting the Dawgs. We have that energy. We've been through the gulag at practice. I'm going to bring it every single day.

Q. (No microphone.)

MONROE FREELING: There is a lot of stuff going on. It's slowly starting to get to me. I feel like once I have some time to kind of sit down and process it, it's going to hit me.

Who knows, maybe the tears will start flying then. I don't know.

Q. You have a connection through Chad Grier to Ickey. What has Chad told you about Ickey? Had you met him prior to today?

MONROE FREELING: Yeah, I mean, very brief



connection. He was there my freshman year of high school. He kind of got me on this whole path to even be playing college football, now professional football.

I invited him to my draft party. Man, it would be crazy if I ended up there because Grier just signed there. Whenever I got actually drafted, it was kind of surreal.

Yeah, no, not a whole huge connection with him. I'm definitely good to have an ally here already, along with my Panther Nation. Is that what you guys call this? Is that the name?

Q. Rookies are known for having to go out and get snacks for the offensive line room, whatever. Now that you're cooking, you want to save some cash, are you going to cook for your teammates?

MONROE FREELING: Sure. Hopefully not hate on me, though. I saw the snack room. Apparently it's empty. I'm going to put them onto some new snacks. I promise you as an offensive lineman, I know the best snacks.

Q. What are the best snacks?

MONROE FREELING: I don't know if you've had them. The Trader Joe's taquies. Their version of taquies are unbelievable. It's almost like a real (indiscernible) when I eat a bag of them. I have to keep them away from them or else it's going to be a problem.

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