

Thompson, Cann share bond of football, faith

By [Matt Connolly](#)

matthew.connolly@shj.com

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Dylan Thompson and A.J. Cann were close friends and roommates before this summer, but their friendship reached a new level in July when the two spent 10 days in Israel helping run football camps and sharing their Christian faith.

The fifth-year seniors are inseparable away from the football field, whether it's playing video games or enjoying a meal together. When USC had a little down time this summer, South Carolina's starting quarterback and preseason All-SEC offensive lineman used the opportunity to learn about another culture and help others learn about football.

"We took that trip together and that gave us a chance even more to grow as friends and as brothers. We took that trip and we learned so many different things, and I thought it was great for us," Cann said. "It was crazy witnessing the life they live up there. It's different. They don't have a lot of the opportunities that we have here in the United States."

Thompson, who will lead South Carolina into its showdown with No. 6 Georgia on Saturday, said he did not realize how important football is to people all over the world before spending a week and a half in Israel. He has a constant reminder now of just how much it means.

"I've still got a bracelet on that a kid gave me in Israel that was training in the military, just like, 'I watch every game you guys play,'" Thompson said. "For that to be that big of a deal to those guys was cool. It was just a really neat thing to be able to experience that across the world."

The former Boiling Springs star added that it is great to have someone like Cann that he is so close to as a teammate, whether they're on the field or off it.

"It's like a family. If I go home he's usually going home with me. If his family's in town and we eat we're all eating together," Thompson said. "It's really neat to have it bigger than football, and I think that matters in life, to have people that are for you all the time."

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