



Cincinnati Football Spring Game Press Conference April 15, 2023 | Nippert Stadium

Head Coach Scott Satterfield

Satterfield Opening Statement

"First of all, it was a lot of fun out there today. I want to thank all of the fans for coming out. We had the band and cheerleaders; it was an awesome atmosphere out there for our players. Our guys have put a lot of great work in here since January coming back and basically finished up this semester with a really good scrimmage out here today. I thought it was some really outstanding play on both sides of the ball, we had different playmakers stepping up and making plays. Really in the spring game for a coach you want to come out and a win is keeping our guys healthy. We did that so that's a definite win. The next thing was to not to have sloppy play and for our guys to be able to go out there and make plays and have fun, we were able to do that today. From guys that have been here for a long-time, five-year guys to the guys that just got here, I thought there were plays made all over the field today. It was great competition. That's the one thing that I think our guys did a great job of all spring was a competitive spirit that they had in every drill that we did. You are always excited about that; we are excited about where we are headed as we head into the summer. Our guys will get a little bit of break in May, they will be back here in the middle of May and be ready to go all summer long. They are excited about it. I will tell you a good sign is when we brought it up at the end there, our players wanted to put the ball back down and keep playing on both sides of the ball. That's awesome. You always want them to come back for more, always wanted to keep coming back in the building, getting extra stuff. extra work, extra ball and that's what these guys have right now. We want to continue that and have a great summer."

On the defense starting strong in the first scrimmage period

"I think defensively they have been a little ahead all spring. I still think that as we finished out today; our guys on defense have really picked up that side of the ball well. You think about what we had coming back on the defensive line because it all starts right there with [Dontay] Corleone, Jowon Briggs, while Daniel Grzesiak came in and was the one that made the sack there. He has an extremely high motor all the time, so it starts right there with our defensive line. I think Jack Dingle and Dorian Jones both on the inside have played at a high level at linebacker and then Deshaun Pace at the star position. You think about that front seven and it's a solid front seven, they got a lot of speed, tenacity, they can get after the passer, they can cause problems. I mean, just like on that play there, you are able to get in the backfield and potentially get a strip sack, so that's going enable quarterbacks to have to throw it sooner and

then you will get interception stuff in the backend. Offense certainly started making a few plays down the field. I think we worked tempo stuff today there and got a little bit of a rhythm. I thought that Emory Jones on that one drive came down the field and threw a nice touchdown pass there. I do think there were plays made on both sides. I mean, at the end of the day our first unit of the defense had an impressive spring.”

On all quarterbacks leading touchdown drives

“Absolutely. We track everything that these quarterbacks have been doing, we knew that quarterback race was going to be highly contested. To their credit they have been great, their attitudes have been awesome, they come to work every day. They have tried to inspire each other and help each other, they are coaching each other know, those are things that is going to make them all better. Just like we saw today, the guys came in there, made plays and had fun doing it. [Brady] Drogosh live today was awesome to see. He wanted to be able to come out and he needs that for his development. He is going to really good football player, what he brings to the table, being able to run, the big guy that can run. He has put on 21 pounds since January while he's been here. He's gotten stronger, faster, he is still learning a lot, but it was very impressive to see him out there running around and making plays. That is a highly contested room and you got to take your hat off to those two older guys that have been playing a lot of ball Ben [Bryant] and Emory [Jones]. I really love their competitive spirit and they have been competing, so they have both been really good.”

On what he evaluates from the quarterback performances today

“We obviously tracked and charted everything. We are charting, completion percentage, decision making, any kind of mental errors turnovers, accuracy. We got a rating system for every ball, they throw, so we are charting that. When you go back and look at the body of work, we are going to see kind of how they stand and how they have done. Then you got to take account of all the other things, what kind of leadership skills are they possessing, are they bringing others with them and all those type things that you want in a quarterback, because the quarterback does so much. Not just making plays, but I mean, they obviously help lead your team and rally your team. We are looking at every aspect of it and it is going to be a great battle right now because I think those guys both have been putting on some very good performances throughout the whole spring.”

On balancing the play calling for a different type of quarterback like Emory Jones and Ben Bryant

“Within our offense over the years I have had quarterbacks that can run, I have had players rush for our 1,000 yards, and I have also had guys that really didn't run at all. What we have to do is work with whatever their strengths are and then that is what we are going to try to let them do. When Ben [Bryant] is in the game we are going to do more of keeping him in the pocket and letting him use the live arm that he has, while Emory [Jones] can do a little bit more with his legs and get outside and maybe even more with [Brady] Drogosh or Evan Prater, who are both very athletic. Ultimately it is going to come down to whoever is in the game, and we

will cater the offense more towards that. It is all about what plays you call when they are in the game.”

On what a day like today tells him about the progress of the team over the spring

“It is very exciting to see, even going back to day one when you don’t know who anybody was and try to come in and put in the offense and defense and special teams together. It has been great progress and I have done transitions before, but this is the smoothest I have ever had as a coach. I give credit to our players from day one telling me to give it to them and tell them what to do. They are coming to work every day and putting in the work. For us, we have put in a lot of defense and a lot of offense over the last 15 days and to their credit, they have been able to handle a lot of it. There were some mistakes today, but they looked like they know what they are doing out there. I have been a part of some spring games before and it has been hard to do anything. I give all the credit to our players and our coaching staff here.”

On what spring games have turned into now and how much you can learn

“For us, we didn’t split up into teams like I have done in the past. I haven’t done it very much because I believe we become better as a team when we stick with our units we have like, offense and defense and one versus one and two versus two. When we do this, we let those guys go out and compete and get better with each other. We are going to go back and learn a lot from this as there were no coaches on the field, as opposed to practice when the coach stands behind the player and helps them out. We had a really good atmosphere today and it was good for them to experience that and learn from it.”

On freshman wide receiver Barry Jackson’s performance today

“Barry [Jackson] to me, from day one to day fifteen is the most improved player this spring. He just got here in January and is a true freshman. He is supposed to be getting ready for prom and he’s out here catching touchdowns. He has had to get a lot of reps from the slot route and he is out there getting it done. I would say the last couple of practices he has really started to get it and he had an amazing catch on the sideline with defensive backs all around him. He has really grown up a lot in such a short period of time and he will certainly be a guy that we will be able to use in the fall. We were not sure at first early in the spring, but he is going to make us play him, which is what you want and it is awesome.”

On the different position groups after spring game

“We are going to bring our guys in next week and have one on one meetings with position coaches with the players and really talk about strengths and weaknesses how they have done and what they could do better to come up with a plan as we head throughout the summer on what they could work on. There are going to be conversations with players on where you see yourself at right now whether that is going to be a Bearcat or going somewhere else to play. As a coach I want to do what is best for Cincinnati Bearcat football first and foremost. If a player doesn’t see himself in the mix playing here, we will help him go somewhere else. I want guys

that want to be here that are fully bought in and come to help us win a Big 12 Championship because that's what it's all about. We will have those conversations this coming week before they have their exams the following week. This is always a nervous time for coaches cause today is the first day the portal is open. There have been some names that have flashed across there, so that remains to be seen who is going to be here."

On the running back performances today

"Obviously go back and watch the film and see. The guys ran hard and that's what you are going to need against a good defensive front. There are a lot of those guys that can catch the ball out of the backfield. We will be able to utilize those talents. As of right now we feel good that we can rotate some running backs in there. There isn't one guy that has separated himself amongst the rest. I think it would be by committee if we had to play a game today. I do think there are going to get opportunities to carry the football. Whoever is going to rise to the occasion he will be the guy. If a guy has the hot hand, he will be the guy. We are pulling for all of them each of them has their own talents that stand out and will see who emerges once we get to August."

On what he's looking for in running back number one

"You got to have a plan and know what to do whether its guys going the wrong way. I think more than anything it's the vision in our zone scheme. You need to be able to see the cuts and have vision and balance. If you got the vision and you can get through. When a guy comes in tackle you got be able use your legs and that arm on the ground. We tell our backs will get you to the safety now it's up to you to make them miss you. Today we got them to the safety and they got knocked down. When I have had the special ones, they make the safety miss and go get the huge yards. We are always looking for those type, but I think we have some solid backs here that can move the chains.

On senior defensive lineman Jowon Briggs

"He is getting better in that outside role on the defensive line. I think he can certainly help us with his power and speed with tenacity at that position. He is going to continue to get better. One of things that we pride ourselves on is the continued development of those guys. We are going to work on that in meetings and all summer long. Our coaches will be around all summer to critique everything. Defensively, we need to be aggressive in the backfield and create those turnovers, sacks, and negative plays that win football games. We will continue to press on that."

Redshirt senior quarterback Ben Bryant

On if defense has challenged the offense and him throughout the spring

“Yes, the defense definitely has. They play a lot of press man coverage and that is difficult with our receiving core being low right now and they are tired out there. The defensive line is a big challenge for our offensive line, but it is fun competing against them every day and getting better.”

On the addition of redshirt senior Emory Jones to the quarterback room

“It has been awesome. I think he and I can relate on a lot of different things, especially what we have been through. He has played a lot of football and I have played a lot of football. I think that it shows in the way he approaches the game, and how he acts on and off the field. He has been a great addition to the room, and I am happy that he is here.”

On the importance of the spring game for the quarterback competition

“I think it matters to a certain extent. We have had a whole spring that is going to be evaluated. I think this is the biggest test of what an actual game is going to be like with a little more pressure, people-watching kind of that game mentality. I think it is important, but I also think there is a lot of film and spring ball that has led to today, but today is still important.”

Redshirt senior quarterback Emory Jones

On what he has seen out of redshirt junior tight end Payten Singletary

“He’s another guy from Georgia and I actually played him in high school. He has been working his butt off this whole offseason and he is coming together really well. He had a couple of really good catches today and he is going to do that every game.”

On the ongoing quarterback battle and the quarterback group

“Yeah, this is probably one of the best quarterback rooms I have ever been in. The other guys have been together for a while but my personality fits in really well. Ben [Bryant] and I are both sixth-year guys so we have seen a lot in our time. We all just go out there and try to compete every day and help each other out. We both have the same experience and speak the same language. It is coming together really well.”

On his spring performance

“I think it was all right. This year I had some time to get to know some of the guys coming in and that's good. I am just trying to get better every day and go out there and compete.”