



**National Signing Day Press Conference  
December 20, 2023 | Fifth Third Arena**

**Head Coach Scott Satterfield**

***Opening Statement***

"I'm glad today's finally here. Recruiting has been a long journey this past season. When you think about all these high school players, we started off with over 1000 of them back when we first got here trying to recruit this class and to get narrowed down to this group right here is special. We have 21 High School recruits who are going to come in and be part of our family now. We're extremely excited about that. We have several players from the state of Ohio. We want to start right here in the city of Cincinnati and work within that three to four-hour radius all the way up through our state. We are really proud of this state of how good the high school football is and how great the high school coaches do. They do an absolutely great job, some of the best in the country, in coaching their players in high school and developing them. When they when they get to college they're ready to go. They've been coached hard, and you like what you're going to get when they come to your program. I'm excited also because it's been a lot of hard work that's been put in. Starting with our recruiting department, Zack Grant, and those guys that are in there. They do a fabulous job. They have been tirelessly working all year, not only in identifying talent but also in communication. I mean, Cass [Simmons] has done great, Carter [Wilson] Jack [Griffith], and all those people. Caroline [Tart] putting together all the visits that are on campus. So many great things that they did, and our coaches worked their butt off to try to put this class together. The thing we wanted to set out to find in the class was number one, obviously good players, but more importantly for me great men. Character was one of the hot priorities when you think about this class and what we're bringing in here. These are some outstanding young people with great families. We got to know them over that period of basically a year and we're so excited about getting them here and 10 of them are coming early. So we'll have 10 guys in January, that will be early enrollees, which is almost half your class, which is really, really great. We're excited about getting those guys in and to start working early. The transfers will be here as well, and right now are we are sitting at eight that will be here early. We're not done with that, either. When it opens back up on January 3, I believe we'll be able to host some more to try to get some more in here before the semester starts in January. So we'll continue to work on that throughout the holiday break to get more guys in here. Again, I am just excited about this group and excited to get them here."

***On where on the priority list are kids who come from winning programs***

"It certainly is an added bonus. You never know when you're recruiting them how good their team may or may not be, but it is awesome to see Dakarai Anderson leading Perry [High School] to its first state. He's such a great leader for their team and a playmaker. We didn't know that coming into it, but we know he's a great person, and to be able to see that happen was awesome. You know several others

that won state championships, and for a lot of these guys, they were captains of their team. Those are the kind of players we're looking to find, guys with leadership characteristics. We want to surround everybody in our locker room with those types of people."

***On Samaj Jones being the lone quarterback in the 2024 freshman class.***

"Samaj [Jones] was a guy we recruited heavily when we were in Louisville and continued that relationship once we got to Cincinnati. Then, he was able to come down with him and his mom several times and came to two or three games in the fall. I think early on, we saw him in camp about two years ago and loved the way he threw through the football. He can run, at that time, I think he was a four-six guy, and he was probably close to 195 at that point in time, so he had good size. He could run, he could throw what really sold us in camp was that the ball jumped off his hand. We have been tracking him, and coach [Pete] Thomas went and watched him play in the playoffs over the last couple of weeks. They ended up winning the state championship, and in the state championship game, he was 14-17 with a couple of touchdowns in the air and rushed for 125 yards and a few more touchdowns. So he's that kind of dual-threat that we like, he's a solid build guy. He's not extremely tall, but he's put together, so we love the versatility and the playmaking ability. He's very knowledgeable in football, and we're so glad to get him and then, quite honestly, to be able to get him early. The things he had to do on his part to be able to come in here early. That's huge. You're thinking about the guys we got coming in at quarterback room it's going to be a great competition this spring. Essentially, you have all your guys here who'll be competing in the spring, and then we'll see how that comes out. But that's going to be a great competition between a bunch of great quarterbacks."

***On why he likes bring guys like Dakarai Anderson and Kale Woodburn into the wide receiver room***

"I think for us in our offense, you want those guys that are quick, but also have some speed. Dakarai is very solid and put together, built like a Braden Smith. Kale's not as big, but has some juice, he can go. So, I think for that position we do so much as far as motions, the jet sweeps, the fly motions, but also we want those guys to be able to knock the top off down the middle of the field. So, to be able to have those two guys that come in here and really give us some more options. We like what we have coming back with some of the guys on our team now with AT [Aaron Turner] and Barry Jackson coming back to play similar positions. It gives you a lot of guys where you can do a lot more with that position with those types of athletes."

***On adding a lot of athleticism and speed to the skill position groups***

"We certainly want to get some more speed. I think speed is the name of the game, at any position that you have. The other thing that we looked to address is also adding some length, you think about Gavin Grover and [Devyn] Zahursky at tight end who is a Big 12 looking tight end and to be able to bring in players that have some great size who also have good and soft hands. You think about some of the DB's like Zaravion Johnson who's 6'3" you get some more length right there. Willie Goodwyn's 6'1". Those corners that are going to have a little bit more length, like some of the guys we've had here in the past, you love to be able to have that, but also that athleticism and speed. We're really excited about Maraquaze Parker. He's a guy who has great size and is quick twitch. He came to camp for us last year and really put on a show, he got coached hard by coach Stew [Walter Stewart]. But at that size being able to move like he does we're excited about getting him as well. So, there's a lot of things in this class

that we're excited about with the speed, the size and really addressing a lot of the needs that we had on his team that we need to continue to build out."

***On how it helps to mention how guys like Sauce Gardner and Coby Bryant have come through this program in recruiting***

"We certainly use those guys that have played here, that had great careers here, that have gone on to be one of some of the top DB'S in the National Football League. Coach [Kerry] Coombs has been a guy who's coached first-rounders, he's coached in NFL, he's seen what it takes to get those guys to that next level. He did a great job recruiting these guys. These guys have a lot of promise, obviously, we wouldn't have signed him if they didn't. Now it's up to them and us to continue to develop them. They do have the traits that we feel it takes to be a very successful defensive back, but now at this point, how much stronger and faster can you get, with the size that you have, to be able to come in here and have a huge impact in the defensive back room."

***On cornerback Daniel James***

"Number one, awesome family, awesome kid. He's really what you're looking for character-wise. He comes from a really good high school program [McEachern High School]. It's like a small college. These are guys competing at a high level just within their school, as well as the teams they're playing. But very athletic. He's a guy who ran track, one of the one of the better track runners in the state of Georgia. And you take that athleticism with his size and the way he can move and flip his hips. We feel like he's a really good player that has versatility. He's a guy who can play corner, safety and nickel. There's a lot of things he can do with that versatility, size and speed, so he'll be one we can't wait for him to get here, so we can start looking at him and figuring out where we exactly want to use him."

***On quarterback Brendan Sorsby***

"We were imperative to get him signed quickly. You think about all the stuff that's been going on the last two weeks with quarterbacks it's been crazy to see. Particularly some of the guys that jumped into portal, starters and other players that have played a lot of football. What we loved about him was the fact that he was young. He hasn't played a lot of football, but he did start the last half of the season [at Indiana] and did some really good things. We like the fact that he's a big player. He's 6'3" 230 pounds so he has great size. He's not easily swayed in the pocket. He's going to be able to stand strong in that pocket and still make those throws that you have to make down the field, and sometimes he's getting hit. He showed that ability on film. Also at that size, he's shown the ability to get out of trouble and run the football. He's not a Malik Cunningham type runner that we had at Louisville that can really fly, but he's a powerful runner that is able to get first downs and touchdowns, he showed that as well. And then the fact that he does have a year left to play was huge for us because of the time and effort you put into somebody in the spring, summer and fall, you'd like to be able to get that back a little longer. For him it's just about coming in here competing with the other guys that we have, Brady Lichtenberg and Brady Drogosh and Samaj Jones. All these guys are going to be competing this spring, I think it's going to be a fun room to watch."

***On getting running back Evan Pryor and Kye Stokes from Ohio State"***

"Pryor is a guy who had an injury two years ago and really came back this year and was healthy, but I think the second year after an injury like that is when you really can excel, you're back to your old self. If

you go back and watch Evans High School stuff it's tremendous. He was one of the best backs in the country coming out. So, I think he'll be a great addition to go along with Corey [Kiner]. Corey is that bruiser. He's going to get you tough yards and really grind out those first downs. Evans is a guy who can catch the ball in the backfield really well, but also gives you a little bit more shiftiness. To me, they're a great one-two punch. So, he'll certainly be a guy that we'll anticipate getting right in the mix. Kye Stokes is an exceptional athlete. I think Coach Niko [Palazeti] who was there [at Ohio State] speaks very highly of him and when he came in on his visit, I was trying to tell my wife about how pleasant he was to be around, an outstanding young man. That's what you want to be having in your locker room. He's 6'1" 200 pounds and can run and jump, but also a great person. We're excited about getting him. Certainly, we need help in a secondary and that's one of the reasons why he wanted to come be a part of this is because he knows he's got an opportunity to come in and have great significance right from the start."

#### ***On importance of eligibility years remaining on transfers***

"It is important the way we targeted all these guys with what you're putting into them in the spring and summer. We're going to get back at least another year for most of these guys. I believe that's a great way to see how you can continue to grow your program. This also enables us to continue to sign high school players and develop them from freshman year on and you don't have to go get 20 to 25 transfers every year and I think to be able to have these guys back for multiple years helps ensure that."

#### ***On defensive end transfers and importance of getting to the quarterback***

"George [Gumbs Jr.] is a guy who I believe his best football is certainly ahead of him. He was a guy who just started D-Line last year but has great twitch and speed and length coming off the edge. He's got a huge upside. He has a motor as well and he doesn't stop. He is one of those guys that's going to chase the ball every day at practice and, obviously in the games and that's going to be awesome. We needed to have some more players to have good length and speed and I believe we addressed that. Mikah [Coleman] is six foot five and weighs 255 and has the size and speed coming off the edge. One of the things that we wanted to have is to get players like this to help guys like Dontay [Corleone] and help free those guys up a little bit more so we can get more pressure on the quarterback."

#### ***On importance of offensive line signees***

"The portal does not have many linemen in there and if they do go in, they usually have some years left then they are highly sought after. I believe it is huge when you are able to homegrown your offensive line because it is a developmental position. We are taking guys with some great length. We are going to bring them in and let Coach Nic [Cardwell] and his staff go to work and put on the great weight and size that they need to have in order to compete at a high level. These guys have huge potential. They are about six foot seven and are good guys with good length that are able to tackle. Tackle is probably one of the hardest positions to recruit in football and to get quality young men that have the tenacity to get after it. We are going to put the weight on them, and they have a great frame to be able to put weight on there and we're hoping they'll develop into being our starting tackles for years to come."

***On College Football Playoff expanding and helping teams build their way up***

“Well, I think it's a little too early to see the impact because we haven't done it yet, but I believe we all know in the back of our minds that there's going to be more opportunity and more chances to get into that final 12 to be able to play for it all. I think this is a great thing. There are a lot more schools now that have the opportunity to get into the playoffs now. Now you can afford to lose once, maybe even twice and still be in that final 12. I love the opportunity that it gives all the programs and a program like ours to be able to get in if you have a special year.”

***On STAR position and where Jiquan [Sanks] fits in***

“Jiquan [Sanks] is a great leader. He is a great leader in his high school and went to an outstanding high school. It is a very competitive school there. He is one of the guys in the backfield that can make all the calls and he can direct people. He is a very smart football player and has good size, not as much length, maybe as some of these other Defensive Backs that we have, but he brings a very physical presence. He will stick his head in there and make some great tackles, but I love his leadership and I love the way he handles himself on a daily basis. He will certainly be that guy that can stop the run but also defend the pass at that star position.”

***On freshman and plans for redshirting or getting them ready quicker***

“I think we will be surprised because I always am. When you bring in a class like this there's certain guys in this class that maybe need to develop a little bit but then when they get here, you decide that they are going to play. That is one of the fun things for coaches to be able to bring these guys in, particularly now, and we have ten of them that will be here in the spring. In the summertime, we'll get to see the rest of those guys. I feel like the days of everybody redshirting are done. I feel like there's going to be a bunch of these guys that will be playing for us next year. We don't know who they are and it's hard to say as we sit here today, but there will be some guys out of this bunch right here that will play. Some of these will certainly be on special teams and also out of their positions that we recruited them to play and get some great valuable time. I believe a lot of it depends on how quickly they learn our stuff. That's why I believe the ten guys coming in now will have an upper edge on that because they'll get to go through spring and make some mistakes and then grow from that.”

***On Linebacker room and additions of Montay [Weedon] and Simeon [Coleman]***

“The physical aspect they bring is huge to me. There are some big hits that they have made. Simeon [Coleman] has taken heads off and some of it looks illegal. He is hitting them so hard that their helmets are flying. One of the things about Simeon [Coleman] is that he has got one of the greatest smiles you'll see. He's like a teddy bear but then something switches when he puts the pads on and goes on the field and just starts hitting people and so I love how physical he is. I love that both linebackers can move and are physical and, in this day, and age, you got to be able to have backers that are able to fill the gaps, but you have to have backers that can also run, especially in this conference. We think about the quarterbacks that can run in this league and the running backs are really good so you got to have versatile linebackers that can run side to side, as well as have a good physical presence to be able to plug gaps and we feel like both of these guys were able to do that.”

***On team leaders' reactions to this whole process and how motivated they are***

“They are excited about adding guys to our roster. If you think about the transfers that are coming in, we had several of our guys have a press conference the last time we were in here. They were either eating dinner or hanging out with the transfers. They were with them, and they signed off on them. We are not taking any of these guys unless our leaders say yes. This just tells you how much they're involved in this football team and how much they care. They are coming back to play another year, but we're going to add to this and help us be very competitive when we go out on the football field with the kind of guys that are like us. They are excited and pumped. They are ready to get back and go to work. Dontay [Corleone] and Corey [Kiner] were just in my office after they finished working out today. We are basically on break right now and they're just over here working out. They are eager and they're hungry to get back here in January and start going back to work.”

***On high school recruiting and how much it has changed recently***

“This is a really good point in terms of recruiting. Everything is sped up so much in recruiting because you're basically recruiting off of sophomore and junior film. You don't want the guys that peak as a sophomore. You want these guys to continue to get better and better each and every year and continue to develop. You don't want guys that are tapped out by the time they get to college. We watched all these senior tapes, and most of them were committed early, but we still go back, and we watch their tape, and we talk to them all the time. We critique and tell them you need to do this better, or you need to be working on this right here or whatever. We are coaching them already and they are not even here yet. I do think high school senior films are very valuable films because you can tell exactly where they are and where they're trending. Unfortunately, we don't have the luxury to wait for that anymore. If we waited until senior film, and we start trying to get some guys then they're all going to be committed and it's going to be hard to get them and so you have to go early. You have to have outstanding people to be able to do that because they have to identify and see and learn and grow and all the things that it takes to be a really good college player at an early level when we think about sophomore and junior film. Our guys have done a great job and I really appreciate all their hard work to be able to put this great class together and I can't wait to get started.”