

Tulane football season kicks off with national media day

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Tulane offensive lineman Chris Taylor, left, head-football coach Willie Fritz, center, and defensive lineman Tanel Smart, right, represent the Green Wave at the 2016 American Athletic Conference Football Summer Kickoff (Aug. 1-2) in Newport, Rhode Island. (Photo by Roger Dunaway)

Conference media days are the first official signal that college football is on the horizon and preparations for the upcoming season are about to begin. (See video below)

Tulane University first-year head coach Willie Fritz and the senior duo of defensive lineman Tanel Smart and offensive lineman Chris Taylor represented the Green

Wave at the 2016 American Athletic Conference Football Summer Kickoff, Aug. 1-2, in Newport, Rhode Island.

Coaches and student-athletes spent Monday afternoon with television and other media entities before the night's main event: the annual New England-style clambake.

"This is the first time I have been to Rhode Island, and it's a beautiful area for our media day," Fritz said. "I've been in a lot of different venues for media days but this place is incredible. Chris and Tanzel have been in the program for four years and have worked very hard. They each received preseason accolades so I wanted to reward them with a trip to media day."

On Tuesday morning, Fritz was part of a coaches' roundtable discussion on national and conference-wide football matters. The trio concluded the event by meeting with members of the print media.

"I enjoyed the media day experience and representing Tulane at this event was a blessing," Smart said. "Rhode Island is a beautiful state, and I hope to come back and visit. The clam bake was exceptional and it was great to see some of the guys we will play against."

"The entire media day experience was great from the scenery of the island to the food and the media was nice," Taylor said. "The seafood at the clam bake was amazing. We received many of the same questions from the media about our team and new head coach. It was also great seeing some of the other players in our league."