

Southeastern Conference Football Championship Game: Florida vs Alabama

Monday, December 14, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Mac Jones

Alabama Crimson Tide

THE MODERATOR: We will continue with Alabama's Mac Jones.

Mac, please take a moment to comment on the team as you enter the SEC championship game against Florida.

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, obviously this is a championship game. This is why players come to Alabama and players go to Florida, is to play in games like this.

Just really looking forward to going against a really good team this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for Mac Jones.

Q. After you get back to Tuscaloosa Saturday, you were able to walk and get your degree. How cool was that to share with your teammates after a win?

MAC JONES: Yeah, it was definitely a cool experience, just a big shout out to Alabama for getting all that done, to play a game, be back for graduation.

Obviously we all got to kind of walk together one after another. Just being able to be there and watch some of my teammates graduate was really cool. Definitely a great experience.

Q. What makes this offense so special, if you had to just pick one thing, one theme?

MAC JONES: I think it's just everybody, honestly. Obviously have a great offensive line. It starts with those guys up front. They've done a great job all year of being prepared in the games, picking up different pressures, obviously doing a good job in the run game.

We obviously have two really good runningbacks, even some younger runningbacks that have helped out. Then



the wide receivers make plays every week. It just makes everything a lot easier. Obviously tight ends, too.

It takes the whole unit. It's not just one guy. We've done a good job preparing. Our coaches have done a good job getting us ready.

Q. Nick Saban last night talked about Kyle Trask, about how he had a tough road coming up like you have. What do you think about his story? Do you see similarities in the patience and persistence you two showed to get to this point?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I definitely have a lot of respect for Kyle, for how he's handled his situation, too. I think all that's just a personal decision to stay, develop personally. That's kind of how I looked at it. Eventually we both got our chance to help out our teams.

Obviously Kyle has done a great job all year long. In the past year and a half, he's played great football, has been a great player. I definitely look up to him as a person that's one of the best quarterbacks in the nation.

Q. Are you pumped for the matchup with him?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, it's a matchup against two great teams with two great quarterbacks. He'll probably tell you the same thing: it's about everybody else, it's not just about the quarterbacks.

Q. Pat talked about being a Florida native, rooting for Tim Tebow growing up. Did you pull for the Gators growing up? What do you remember of the 2008, 2009 Alabama-Florida games?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I definitely was close to the University of Florida growing up. I always watched them on TV. Really was just a big Tebow fan when he was in high school, just down the road. I got a chance to watch him in high school, obviously in college.

Obviously that's kind of when I was growing up, you just root for the team that's closest to you. Obviously they had a great run in the beginning of the 2000s, all that. It was



fun to be able to watch.

Q. Yesterday Dan Mullen was talking about you. He said that he does a great job managing the offense, which is identical to what Bo Nix said going into the Iron Bowl, something that DeVonta Smith said you used as bulletin board material. What is offensive to you about being called a game manager?

MAC JONES: Nothing is really offensive. I mean, Coach Saban would probably say the same thing about me. I try to manage the game. It's kind of like I'll do that. Obviously have a lot of great players around me. That's my job, just get them the ball, try to hold onto the ball, not give the other team the ball.

There's a lot of great players on my team that make me look a lot better than I am. That's probably a good, accurate description of what type of quarterback I am.

Q. What do you remember about going to the mall, waiting on line to see Tim Tebow, get your picture taken with him?

MAC JONES: That was a long time ago. I definitely remember sitting there in line, just getting a chance to take a picture with him, then him signing the picture with me and my family. I think we still have it somewhere at the house.

It was just a cool experience. Obviously Tim is a great player, but he also did a lot of great things off the field. I just looked up to him when I was younger.

Q. Were you nervous to meet him?

MAC JONES: Yeah, probably (laughter). I would assume so. Obviously, like I said, I look up to him now. I looked up to him back then. Just really a great guy. To be able to meet him then was really cool.

Q. How good a job has this team done to be able to maintain that high level of play 10 Saturdays this year? Hard to do.

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, we kind of set that goal to just take it week by week. We knew there were going to be a bunch of bumps and roadblocks along the way. We definitely handled it well, from the coaches, players, whole organization. Kind of took it week by week. By the end of the regular season, we look up and we're undefeated.

At this point it doesn't really matter, that stuff doesn't matter. We try to just win each game each week. It starts with this week. At this point we have to win all the games we play in. It's just kind of the mindset we kind of set.

Q. Do y'all hear much from Saban, fans, about the 2009 team? Says a lot about how hard it really is. Only Coach Saban team to go undefeated.

MAC JONES: Yeah, we hear about it, I guess. It guess it goes back to how they did it, and that's just focusing on each play, playing one play at a time. Obviously we have a great team and we fought through a lot of adversity this year. I feel like that's definitely going to help us.

I mean, none of that stuff matters in the past. We just have to focus on each day.

Q. There's certainly a lot of guys who make use of the transfer portal now. This game Saturday is featuring two quarterbacks that could have done that. What does it take to stick it out and ignore that temptation of trying to find greener grass somewhere else?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, I always say it's a personal decision. I think I obviously decided to stick it out and try to just get better to help my team eventually. I think a lot of quarterbacks did that, including Kyle as a great example.

But at the end of the day, I mean, you make a choice for yourself and your family. There's a lot that goes into it. But, yeah, I don't really have anything else to say about that.

Q. Back to the Tebow stuff. That offense with him was unbelievable. The Gators have not had great offenses in a long time. Do you see some similarities with this group and maybe that group in terms of the explosiveness and talent all over the field?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, I think it just goes back to those are two great schools, in Florida and Alabama. They have a bunch of great players and good coaches.

We prepare really hard. You watch a team like that back then, see how great they were, you try and make similarities. But really each team is its own team. Football has kind of evolved a little bit.

Growing up watching those type of teams is awesome because you just got to learn the example of good college football.

Q. What has Sark unlocked with you? What have you enjoyed about working with him these last few years?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, Sark has done a great job. Coming in, too, as a starter and stuff, he got me prepared, coaching me really hard to be where I want to be.



Obviously from a scheme standpoint, he's the best in the country at creating a good scheme and getting the ball to players that we want to get the ball to.

I just kind of try and see through the same lens as him. We always meet and talk about plays that we like together, things like that, so we're always on the same page.

But it's been a great blessing to have him around, for him to help the entire offense get better, not just myself.

Q. Is he a guy who gets fiery with you or does he communicate on a level that it's more instructional, like a professor-type thing?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, a little bit of both. I think it's more professional, like he knows that I just want to play a lot of football. We kind of see through the same lens. We just try to stay calm on game day. Hey, what did you see out there? I saw them playing this. We just talk it through. That's when we operate at our best.

At the same time he's really competitive, I'm really competitive. We both during practice have to work through all the things we have for the game plan, take things out that we maybe not like, add things that we do.

The communication has been great. We're just looking forward to continuing that this week.

Q. What does the Auburn game last year mean at the time? Does it mean anything to you now being the only game you lost as a starter?

MAC JONES: Yeah, that was definitely a good learning experience. First game kind of get in there playing, had a big game like that when I didn't have a lot of experience at the time.

I definitely look back on it and thank my teammates for having my back, all the coaches for believing in me. I definitely didn't perform to the standard I wanted to.

I kind of just use that as an example, a reminder, that you just have to prepare really hard and go in there and play your heart out. Whatever happens happens. I kind of just use that as an example. Obviously that was a long time ago.

THE MODERATOR: That's all the questions for you. Thank you.

MAC JONES: Thank you.