

# Southeastern Conference Football Championship Game: Florida vs Alabama

Saturday, December 19, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

## Mohamoud Diabate

Florida Gators

Alabama 52, Florida 46

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Mohamoud, coming in you know that DeVonta Smith and Najee Harris are going to be a two-headed monster. Being out on the field with them, what sort of challenge did they bring?**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: They were a good challenge. Definitely two good players in their own right. They made plays. But we felt like we played a good game.

**Q. What was the game like? Exciting from our perspective.**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: It was definitely something I'll remember forever, a great experience, just growing up in the south, being able to play in the SEC championship game. It was definitely intense out there. At the end of the day it was fun, just playing football, what I love. I enjoyed being out there and doing it with my brothers.

**Q. What is this going to do for the future of the programs? What do the younger guys take from this experience to build on?**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: This is a great lesson for our younger people, especially myself. I say younger people... Being a true sophomore is a good learning experience, being able to play against what they say is the best team in the nation, coming that close. It tells us we just got to keep going, keep pushing, we'll get to where we want to get.

**Q. Najee Harris, him in particular, five touchdowns. What is the challenge of that guy?**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: He's a big guy, but he doesn't move like a big guy. That's what I say is the challenge.



**Q. You guys gave up five touchdowns in the first half, but played better in the second half. What adjustments were made? What mental toughness did you have to have to come back?**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: We feel like we did a good job of stopping them on first and second down. We just couldn't get out of our own way in the first half. Coach Grantham got it straight with us. We got out of our own way in the second half, that's why we played much better.

**Q. Dan was talking about how mentally and physically draining this season has been, not knowing if you were going to play, stopping. Where are you now that the regular season is over in terms of your mental health and body, physical, everything?**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: It's definitely been a long, taxing year. Just like Coach Mullen touched on after the game, we got sent home right before we started spring practice. We didn't get to do that. Every school dealt with that. Every school had a challenging year.

Obviously it was tough on our bodies because we couldn't have a full strength and conditioning cycle. We're made for that. Our coaches and the staff at the University of Florida are great. They enabled us to be able to handle the situations the best we could. That allowed us to play to the best of our ability this year.

Overall we wanted to play, that's what we love to do. We're not going to say we shouldn't have played, shouldn't have done that. We're happy we played. Whatever our bodies feel like, our brains feel like, that's what we're ready to sacrifice for this game.

**Q. What was your experience here? What was it like to play in this stadium? How hungry are you to get back?**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: It really makes you starve, just sitting here, just thinking about the game, you want to get back to work, go back to work with your brothers. You want to get back on task because we want to get here. Every year when we start the year, our goal is to get here.



We got here this year. Our goal is to continue moving forward.

Last year we weren't here. This year we got here. Next year we plan on getting here and finishing the job.

**Q. There were a couple stops in the first half, then a penalty. Are those the little things that have to be fixed?**

MOHAMOUD DIABATE: Yeah, definitely. Just myself as a person who is emerging as a leader, I take that on myself to lead the guys in the right way, hold myself to that standard where I can't let those things happen. Therefore, my teammates won't let those things happen.

It all comes from leadership, people demanding the right things in practice every day. Seeing those things happen, it makes you more urgent to get things fixed and get things correct, not to think, it's okay. No, it's not okay.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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