

# Southeastern Conference Football Championship Game: Georgia vs Alabama

Monday, November 29, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

## Georgia Bulldogs

## Stetson Bennett

### Workout Day Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Stetson, while we wait on questions, please give us your general thoughts on the upcoming game against Alabama.

STETSON BENNETT: Just excitement. Excited for a challenge from a great and worthy opponent. Excited to see how our team will prepare this week. Excited for the bright lights that the SEC brings and excited to compete for a championship, which is why you come to a school like Alabama and Georgia. Just ready to go.

**Q. Stetson, if you go back to last year's game in Tuscaloosa, where do you think you've kind of grown and matured the most? What part of your game?**

STETSON BENNETT: Just the understanding, more understanding of football and what a game takes to win. Knowing that individual plays are hard to win a game but they're very easily lost. That's where most games, especially at the college level, are won and lost is by losing them, not by individual plays winning them.

So not pressing and trusting everybody else on our team and defense and offense and knowing that I don't have to go out there and win the game on an individual play. It's okay to throw the ball away or run and get two or three yards. And just not to press.

**Q. Just out of curiosity, given what everybody's been through with COVID and just what a wild year it's been for Georgia at the quarterback position, does that game seem like it was a year and a month ago, or does it seem further than that? I was just curious because that seems like a long time ago for you given everything you all have been through.**

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah. I mean, I guess it does seem like a long time. I wish I was smarter and could



remember it better, but it was a long time ago. Everything that's happened between now and then has kind of amplified that distance, I guess. Yeah, I guess it does seem like a long time ago.

**Q. Georgia and Alabama have shared three opponents this year. The outcomes of those games have been vastly different on Georgia's side compared to Alabama. Is that something you guys look at when preparing for this game? How does Alabama stack up, do you feel, compared to those teams that you guys have shared common opponents with?**

STETSON BENNETT: Well, to be honest with you, I don't know who we've played besides the permanent. I don't know the scores of those games or anything like that. That doesn't really affect how we're going to prepare for the games.

Football is such a crazy sport, and there's so many different aspects that go into an individual game that determine a score or anything like that. It really has no basis for how a future game's going to go. Everybody in this league has great players, especially in college ball. Different teams come out different weeks, not just us or Alabama, but the teams we've played. So you don't put any relevance on those scores or anything like that.

Whatever they are, whether they've outscored them by more or we have, I don't know. But, no, we have too much respect for who Alabama is this year as a team to allow ourselves to do that. We're going to keep approaching this game like we have been every other game, and that's with the utmost respect for the opponent and to be able to execute our jobs to the best of our ability.

**Q. We know you're so experienced just in college football in general and in this system with Kirby, but at the beginning of the season, you didn't think, we didn't think that you'd be starting the SEC Championship Game as the No. 1 team in the country. If you could go back to week 1 versus Clemson, what would you tell yourself?**

STETSON BENNETT: I don't even know. If I could tell



myself one thing, I'd tell myself that I'd be in this position, and I think that would make me smile. Other than that, I don't know. I think I did a good job of focusing on the fact that I can control the controllables and I can't control the uncontrollables. So I'd just tell myself to keep on keeping on.

Other than that, I don't know. Maybe don't throw those two balls against Florida. I'd probably tell myself that. Other than that, I don't really know.

**Q. What's most different for you kind of between the ears as you go into this game before the season started?**

STETSON BENNETT: Going into this game versus what?

**Q. Versus when the season started. What's changed for you mentally?**

STETSON BENNETT: Well, you want to say that you prepare every week whether you're the starter or not, but not really the case. I don't know, I'd say that. Just the fact that I am the starting quarterback, and with that comes a different level of responsibility, different level of expectations. And just being able to handle all those, knowing what's important and what's not, not cluttering your mind, and just being prepared for a battle.

**Q. Stetson, you and J.T. have traded being the starting quarterback over the last 20-something games. One's starting, and then the other one's starting, and then one's starting and the other one's starting. I think that's what trade means. Nevertheless, how has there not been any jealousy between the two of you all this time?**

STETSON BENNETT: I think that's a good question. I think it comes from just a confidence of both of ourselves that comes from within. Both of us know that we're both really good players. And I think a lot of resentment and all that stuff comes from jealousy.

Obviously, we both want to be the starting quarterback, but we also know that what's important is the team. And we know that, regardless of who has been starting in the past or in the future or any of that stuff, if we flash those feelings or begin to try to undermine the other person, first of all, it's not going to work because we don't make those decisions. Second of all, it's going to negatively affect the team.

Both of us understand that we're in this spot today, not because of us, but because of what the University of Georgia is, what the SEC is, what football in general is, and I think we have a respect and reverence for all of those

things that allows us to see that it's bigger than us and ourselves. When you look at it that way, you kind of have a lesser opinion of yourself and a lower importance that would maybe allow you to be jealous and to hate the other one or do snide things and all that stuff.

So I think both of us have a pretty good understanding of that and I guess life in general.

**Q. Stetson, I just wanted to ask you, your story's been quite a journey, from coming out kind of a lower ranked guy, not a lot of scholarship opportunities. You walk on to Georgia. You go the JuCo route, end up transferring back with a scholarship, win the job. Then the off-season happens, it looks like it's J.T., it's you. I guess throughout this whole journey what's been the coolest part for you? Has it been winning this job? Has it been winning the scholarship? Has it been overcoming people's perceptions of you? For you, I guess, what's been kind of a standout moment?**

STETSON BENNETT: There's a million ways to answer that, and there's a million different things that have been awesome. I'm the luckiest guy in the world. I think just the coolest thing, if you just break it down, is just being able to play football. I love the game. I love the sport. I love what it allows communities and people and all those things, it allows all of them to do, to come together and be a part of something bigger than themselves.

It teaches them about life. Allows little kids from rec ball on to be part of a team, which is so important, I believe. It allows them to get tougher. It allows them to see that there's ups and downs.

So the coolest thing for me is I come from a high school that I think there was one other guy who went to play college ball, and he went to play D-III ball in Vermont. I've always expected to play ball because I've always had a high confidence in my abilities, but when you start asking about what's the coolest moment of this journey, maybe I'll have a different answer in ten years when I'm looking back, but right now I'm focused on playing football.

And I think I'm the luckiest guy in the world to be able to do that and to be able to do it at an institution that is as fine as the University of Georgia.

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