

College Football Playoff

Media Conference

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Georgia Bulldogs

Stetson Bennett

CFP Media Conference



COLLEGE FOOTBALL
PLAYOFF

Q. Stetson, you were pretty outward bound to how you played last week. Kirby was too. (Inaudible) What do you take from it?

STETSON BENNETT: You know, I think I started off the game pretty well. Finished it pretty well. There was a little period in the middle I would like to have some things back, but that's football, and they're a really good team.

You know, they're going to coach you to make mistakes sometimes. So just work to fix that.

Q. What's the difference between preparation, feeling in your stomach this time around in this National Championship game?

STETSON BENNETT: I think the preparation is the same thing. Just day-by-day watch film, keep practicing, respect who TCU is, and just get ready for it.

Q. (Inaudible).

STETSON BENNETT: Oh, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. We'll think about that a little bit later I think.

Q. Stetson, obviously you grew up a fan. (Inaudible) from the outside it seemed like it was a fan base that felt like it was getting so close and getting over the hump. What has it meant to you to help get the program to this spot on this stage (inaudible)?

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, it's funny. You know, it's hard to be a fan while you're in it. I remember when I went into JUCO in 2018. I was so much more fan -- it hurt whenever they lost to LSU like it did when I was a kid again.

While I'm here, it's hard. I do have just an immense amount of respect for Coach Smart, all the guys who are on this team go to work every single day. You sweat together. You bleed together. And it is to create a

program that's like this. Extremely proud of that. Proud to be a part of it.

Q. The fact that this is going to be your final college game. I know you talked about it before, but does it make it a little bit easier to really put extra in on this point?

STETSON BENNETT: I think it's the National Championship. Regardless if I had years left or, you know -- I don't, but it's the National Championship. It's the last one of the year. It's the big one. It's why we were doing this winter workout so hard. It's what we dreamed about it when we were kids. I don't think really me leaving has anything to do with how hard I'm preparing.

Q. You've had some stories over the past few years. One, I heard that you quarantined on a cruise ship. (Inaudible). The milk man. The milk man in. I wanted to ask you about when you did that and how much fun that was for you?

STETSON BENNETT: No, I wasn't on a cruise ship. We did have some guys who were. Mr. Ron was freaking out before we left because it was about to hit. We didn't know how hard it was going to hit, but when we were going to spring break, he said be smart. Maybe not a cruise. I didn't go on a cruise, but...

And then the milk man thing was fun. There was a whole production crew. The director was awesome. All the people on set were awesome. That was really one of the most fun NIL things that I've done.

Q. I have a hypothetical. If 2021 doesn't happen or even (inaudible), are you second year student right now somewhere?

STETSON BENNETT: Oh, if I was, I would probably be a little sad, but no, probably not. I probably would have left and went somewhere else. Who is to say what would happen, but I probably wouldn't be a law student yet. Might be on the way, though. Might be getting there, yeah.

Q. People talk about so much parity in college football, but (inaudible).

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STETSON BENNETT: I think it speaks to our culture more than anything because that's what builds lasting things is the culture and the work that we put in on a daily basis 365 days a year.

It's hard. It's harder to build a program that can last than to build one for a year. So it takes a lot of work, it takes a lot of commitment, it takes a lot of sacrifice, which I think this team has done a really great job of doing.

Q. (Inaudible - question regarding being at repeat championships.)

STETSON BENNETT: It's hard for people to go back and do what got them there, and that's why it takes great leadership like Coach Smart and the coaching staff because we're all college kids, and it's easy for us to lose sight of what's important or what we're trying to go do.

It's hard for a lot of people to see that and then work. And you have good teams every year, man. It's not really up to you always. There's going to be special teams.

Q. How surprised are you that your opponent in the title game is TCU, and they've been fairly off the radar?

STETSON BENNETT: No. You know, I really -- we were all worried about what we were going to do at the beginning of the year. I really didn't know how good any team in the country was going to be until we played them that week really because we were focused on who we are as a team, focused on us getting better, and then whoever we were playing that week, then we would move on to them.

In our building it's always been it's about us. We prepare, and then we go -- we play the opponent that week.

Q. (Inaudible) -- back-to-back National Championships? What has the story been like for you?

STETSON BENNETT: It's been a little surreal. I don't know. It's hard to look at it in its whole entirety. It's a lot easier to break off bite-sized chunks. That's how it all happened. Just day-by-day.

None of it was -- it was planned, but not really. Just do the best that you can each day, and then hopefully that puts you in a position to be somewhere cool one day.

Q. Talking about TCU, what jumps out to you about their team? (Inaudible)

STETSON BENNETT: I think the first thing that jumps out is how passionately they play and the team speed. They're really fast, and they're physical.

They've got a lot of pride. Michigan was talking crap, and they came out and had a bone to pick with the run. You know, they're a really physical team, really fast, and then Max is the heart and soul of that whole team. Met him up in New York. He is a great dude, and he is a great football player.

He runs when he wants -- when he needs to run, but he can throw it. He can throw it all over the board, and he has a great receiver too. So it's going to be a good game.

Q. So as somebody who (inaudible) and someone who has covered sports for a long time as well, what have you learned about -- what did you learn about yourself and you as a player being away from the Division I game and coming back --

STETSON BENNETT: I think it was really important for me to go be the guy somewhere again. Playing football is pretty much the only way you can get better at playing football, right? So to go be in that position where you are the starter, it comes down to you in certain situations. That taught me a lot.

And fighting for a championship over there. You know, we didn't end up winning it, but that -- it always teaches you something.

Sorry. I can't remember the last part.

Q. Just what did you -- just talk about the player side of things. What did you learn about -- piggybacking, what did you learn about yourself during that process knowing that your opportunity to come back here wasn't guaranteed and that you had to fight for every inch?

STETSON BENNETT: Oh, yeah. When I left, I thought it was deuces out forever from UGA. I didn't think I was coming back.

What I learned about myself -- I don't know if I learned anything about myself. I kind of knew when I pulled the trigger that, hey, I'm not here at Georgia just to hang out and be on the team and have some footballs in 30 years. I want to play ball. I want to do what I think I can do.

So went over there and figured out that, hey, I think I'm right. Then they came back and went and attacked it again.

Learning stuff? I don't know. I think I've always had a pretty good idea of who I am, and I guess kind of what I want, what I want to achieve, what I want to go for.

STETSON BENNETT: I can't hear you.

Q. (Inaudible)

STETSON BENNETT: I wouldn't say close. I would say we're boys. I respect him as a player. We had some really cool moments up there just hanging out chatting.

I saw him one night. He was going to see the Christmas tree, and he is a dude. CJ is a dude. Caleb is a dude. Everybody gets so caught up in all these cameras, and we grew up and went to high school and just we're trying to figure it out just like the rest of everybody, you know.

I think it's cool whenever all of us could get together and just kind of realize that about each other. Just normal dudes who can throw a football.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Did he say where we were different?

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a lot of guys who learn from a lot of guys from last year's team.

You know, there are some -- me, Chris, and Nolan and others, who were an integral part of last year's team, but there's a lot of dudes who did not -- who were not a part of it. They were a part of it, but they didn't contribute on the field to it.

I think they've done an outstanding job of learning from those guys, learning from the guys who have played, and I think the leadership on this team is outstanding. Not saying that that's different from last year because it was. But, yeah, I mean, we've got a bunch of different personalities, a bunch of different ways to play football.

As far as exacts, I don't really know, but I would say the personality of this team is a lot different.

Q. (Indiscernible) in some ways it's different. Obviously there's been ups and downs (indiscernible)

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STETSON BENNETT: I wouldn't say we've had that many ups and downs. I would say we probably had more downs last year because we lost to Alabama in the SEC.

We've had some places in some games where we've had to dig ourselves out more so than last year, but we have dug ourselves out. I don't know. It's been a fun season. It's probably been a little bit more interesting season than last year until the end, but it's been a blast.

Q. (Inaudible - question about losing players to the draft)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I think a lot of dudes. I think about our linebacker situation where we lost, what was it, three dudes to the draft in the one position. And, you know, they've all stepped up. You could see it in winter workouts when they were trying to push through and get to the shape where it needs to be.

And then a lot of our DBs, not really stepped up because they've played, but they were probably the most -- the position group that stayed the most similar to last year as far as defense-wise, and so they've really stepped up I think. And we've got Malaki. You all haven't asked me those questions. Just a lot of dudes stepping up.

And then on offense when people go down, people step up. It's just the way it goes.

Q. (Inaudible)

STETSON BENNETT: Probably in the offseason just thinking about the game, working hard, training. Third year in the system, know it, know it pretty well. But not just the system. Starting to understand football more, and then footwork was probably my main concern in the offseason. So I've probably stayed a little bit better there.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I said, "Thank God." It was a big timeout. Then it seemed as if for me the first half and the second half were almost identical except for we didn't start hot in the second half.

But, you know, we came back from 14 points in the first half, and so we were looking at each other, and we were, like, okay, we score, they stop, we score. Right? That's it.

We were determined to go out there and run a great route. Stepped on the dude's toes. Then defense went out there, held them to a field goal, and then we went down and took care of business again.

Q. (Inaudible) Monday night you'll get to do something you have never done before. What is that like? How big of a performance is it to adjust to play where you

and your team haven't played?

STETSON BENNETT: I think we'll go practice there today, so that will probably get all that stuff out of the way, but I think it's the old Hoosiers thing, man. It's, like, ten-foot goal, right, 15 feet to the free-throw line. I think. I don't know. Didn't play much basketball.

It's 100 yards, 53-and-one-third or something like that, 10-yard end zones. That's how it works. We've played a lot of football together. We've been in this moment, so hopefully we can keep our sense of wits about us and just let it be football because that's what it is.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I think just consistency. Consistency in my play, consistency in the message. Good or bad, it's never over. We just have to do what we do.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I think just -- I think their corners are really good. I think that allows them to play -- that frees up everybody else because they trust him out there on that island and just their overall team speed.

They're real fast. They train it a lot, but then they're also really physical. When you have both, that's a dangerous combination. It's going to be a fun game.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Next play. Got to do my job. Give the good balls to the good players, and then just play football. It's not going to happen now. We can't hit a 15-point play. Just have to keep going, keep working, and... yeah.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Well, we just got here yesterday. But, yeah, I say so. Yeah. I mean, coming out to California is cool as hell. Being here with the teammates, my family is out here, you know, but this is a business trip. We have to play a football game, but I think it has been cool for everybody to get out here.

We were on an airplane. I had one of those cool lay down seats, like a full bed. So I liked that. That was a big perk.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah. There's a few teams that

run, I guess, if not that structure, something similar to it. But, you know, this team has been to the National Championship. They do things their own way, and they've got intricacies that -- you know, I'm just kind of talking out of my butt right now, but they're a really good team.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: No, I don't think so, no. No, I haven't thought about it (laughing).

Q. Being here in Los Angeles, do you think (indiscernible) --

STETSON BENNETT: On our team? Oh, I don't know. What's the story line?

But the villain -- I don't know. Who would play a good villain? I think Chris would play a good villain.

Chris, if we had a movie, could you play a villain? Yeah, he could play a villain. Yeah, yeah, yeah (grinning).

Sed is the good guy. Sed is good to the core, yeah.

Q. I know how much this means to you, but what's the chance to win back-to-back titles from where you started until now -- I'm sure you've been thinking about it. How has that sunk in, and what would that mean for you?

STETSON BENNETT: We're trying not to make this game bigger than it is because, you know, it would be hard to handle then, but it would be special. It would be an honor. It would be all those things, but we've got to win this game first.

So I'm not really thinking about story lines or -- I'm trying to avoid all that. I hate to be a buzz kill with quotes, but TCU is really, really good, and kind of got to divert all our attention to that and not really thinking about the other stuff.

Q. The entire football community is affected by Damar Hamlin. What were your initial thoughts?

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I mean, it was scary. I didn't know what to think. Just waiting for more information.

I think he is doing better now, which is really good. But, yeah, it was a freak accident. I still don't know exactly what happened, but super scary. You could see how shaken up all the players were, and so you knew something was different than when somebody else -- when you have seen players on the field in the past. It looked a little bit more



serious, and they called the game.

So it was scary. You know, football is a really dangerous and violent sport, and I'm glad he is doing better.

Q. When you see when he came to that his first words were "did we win," and you see that type of mentality and team, what came to your mind?

STETSON BENNETT: It's team first, and it's just competitor to the core. Special dude. There's a lot of special dudes in football. I think football -- it brings out the best in you. Especially the further down the road you get, the better. You start to see how the game is supposed to be played, especially on the good teams. What it takes to win and the sacrifice and commitment that it takes. That just shows me -- what was it? He was, like, a sixth-round pick or something, and he played the most snaps on defense this whole year?

Q. He started after Micah Hyde --

STETSON BENNETT: He loves football. I hope he recovers well, but, yeah, that was good.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, just their defense -- the structure is a little bit different than usual. Again, they're really fast. They've got really good corners. They're physical.

And, you know, they're really, really well-coached, and they do their jobs. So those teams are always dangerous, and this team especially because, like I said, they've got Max as their leader, and that dude is true to the core and a really good football player.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Maybe once I leave (smiling). But, yeah, we've got good football players, and Coach Monk is a damn good play caller. Maybe.

I think Coach Smart has done a good job of seeing the trend of where college football is going, what needs to happen if we're going to continue to stay relevant and compete for championships. So I think we came into this year thinking that we could be really good on offense, but not knowing. So, you know, kind of thought that we had to go prove ourselves a little bit.

Q. Last season did you consider not coming back? (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: It really wasn't -- I really didn't think about not coming back. I told people I did, but in my head I always knew -- I was, like, how dumb could I be to leave this opportunity that I've got here?

I'm starting quarterback at Georgia. I trust in Coach Smart, trust in our players. We have a lot of guys coming back on offense, and I'm going to get better.

So, yeah, I didn't really think about it that long. I didn't tell people for a little bit, but I had made up my mind.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I mean, I can't remember that.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, yeah. I think it's extremely important. Especially to have a dude as smart as Sed is because he understands what we're trying to do, and he is curious. He tries to learn more. All right, if we do this here, why are we doing this here? So he can anticipate what that play might go to, right?

That's special. He is a leader of the offensive line. He is the leader of this team, and it's -- with all those guys up front, you just feel safe, you know, because they love you, and you love them, and they're a lot bigger than me, so they take all the hits, you know (smiling).

Q. (Inaudible - question about special teams)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I always told them I could do it. I was, like, dude, I could catch that ball. That's all you do. And I held in college -- or not college. Held in high school. I think I held in JUCO.

But, yeah, I was, like, dude, who else -- if I can catch it and put it down, well, if there's a bad snap, who else would you want to have the ball, right? So I've always thought that way.

But, no, Pod didn't want me there for a little bit. I had to do infinity reps just on the sideline after practice catching balls, catching balls from our snapper Payne and Mote, and just putting them down so he could just see me and see it and trust and learn to trust that the ball is going to be there.

So I figured out how mental kickers are, but it's worked out so far.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Really? Yeah, yeah.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I think we would have kids out there, growing up. People sleep over. I mean, you've been out there. You can do what you want.

I don't know. There's something freeing about being out there with all the oak trees and all the land. I don't know. You miss it.

But, yeah, it's special to be here, to be in this situation knowing the past and the background, but, yeah, it's a cool place, isn't it?

Q. Is it tough to be back here (indiscernible) --

STETSON BENNETT: No, I just dreamed of playing, I guess, which is probably why I'm up here, honestly.

But, no, I did send a video. We've got a group message with some of the walk-ones from 2017. And I was, like -- I sent them a video of my little lay-out bed that I had on the plane, and I was, like, dude, we couldn't sniff these seats back in '17. Now I'm all the way up there. They're all, like, heck ya. Makes me happy, so that was cool.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I just had my laptop with the film. I had a little notepad. I had a gallon of water, and I just had this bed that could recline all the way down. It was really cool.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: It makes me happy. You know, there are some times where you have tried, I think, and I made you miss. Have you not tried?

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: (Laughing).

Q. You have never made me miss.

STETSON BENNETT: On purpose. You know, I feel like I can still move around thanks to you and Jalen pulling off and not hitting me, and thank you for that.

Q. I got you. My last question, Stetson, I'm going to miss you.

STETSON BENNETT: Well, thank you.

Q. Even after this, what's the best place to eat in Athens?

STETSON BENNETT: What do you want?

Q. We're having a nice sunny day. It's a Sunday after a Saturday night. We are going out downtown.

STETSON BENNETT: Lunch spot I think you've got to go to -- you have to go get Marker 7 over there in Five Points.

Q. Have you had the grouper nuggets?

STETSON BENNETT: I have the grouper nuggets. I get the black and shrimp tacos with some french fries and ketchup.

Q. Marker 7 and fish tacos?

STETSON BENNETT: No, shrimp (smiling). Maybe I did say fish. Who knows?

Q. A hard-hitting journalist in here.

STETSON BENNETT: I'm sorry you have to follow that up.

Q. I am too. You're qualified to speak on this. How do you define the (inaudible) --

STETSON BENNETT: I don't know. I remember being in high school, and we were trying to -- it was senior year of baseball or maybe junior. I can't remember. You know, trying to get guys fired up.

And I was sitting there thinking, and we were watching this "Rocky" movie, and I was, like, "Rocky" is really cool. But, no, it was "Miracle." It was "Miracle," sorry. "Miracle," that is the greatest sports movie of all time. Saying that without thinking. But I was, like, but Russia won for 30 years. So I think that's the dynasty.

Q. (Inaudible)

STETSON BENNETT: I think you have to do more than two, probably. People can forget about two. Especially two back-to-back. They can make excuses for that, but as far as a dynasty I wouldn't say championships. But, no, I would say it's got to span a decade of dominance probably.

Q. Stetson, second time playing here for a national Championship, man, but how do you guys -- to get to this point what would it mean for you to finish your career in rarefied air? Not a lot of quarterbacks and team are able to do it for a second team.

STETSON BENNETT: It would be super cool. This is what we set out to do this year. You know, there was a lot of people who doubted us, a lot of people who -- I know people are going to be, like, no, we didn't. No, yeah, you did.

Maybe not doubted us as far as unranked doubted us, but it wasn't -- there wasn't a consensus, and it seems as if people have forgotten that storyline and forgotten what this team has done as a collective.

We fought through that and heard all the doubters. We're talking about 15 draft picks lost to the draft and a lot of those guys are over on defense and even on offense that heard that, you know. So we took it week-by-week, and now we're here. I think that's really special.

Q. Obviously, you have multiple guys that can step up in multiple games. It's an unselfish unit. It can be a couple of tight ends, a couple of receivers. How do you make sure that that mindset stays the same throughout the season?

STETSON BENNETT: Well, I don't think -- well, throughout the season -- I don't know. I don't think we ever really had to do that. Winning helps with that. When you start losing, that's when you start...

But we never really had any issue with that. You know, I think it started a little bit last year. I think we were kind of sort of that way, and more so this year just spreading it out.

But, yeah, the dudes on this team love each other. You know, when I say they love each other, we'll be a part of this team forever, and we'll make trips and go all over the place and hang out and talk about the glory days, but it's easy to be unselfish whenever you are looking out for your brother and you know he is a damn good football player too, right?

Q. TCU has that 3-3-5. What challenges do they present as an offense?

STETSON BENNETT: I think it's that. I think it's a different defense. It seems like there's 50 players sometimes on the field, right? And they flow really hard. They're really fast. They're really physical, and so when you have a fast, physical, disciplined football team, you usually are doing pretty good.

Q. Last week your music taste got called into question. You had a Death Row Records shirt underneath. Do we have anything underneath, or did last week kind of --

STETSON BENNETT: I just have Georgia on today. What was the actual question? Sorry.

Q. I just wanted to make sure you didn't have the Death Row Records. We're in California.

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, that wasn't planned last week, so that's why I think it was so cool. I couldn't plan something.

But, no, yeah, I think I've been listening to a lot of it The Mamas & The Papas "California Dreaming" a lot. I think that's my new favorite song right now actually.

Q. (Inaudible)

STETSON BENNETT: I don't know. I hadn't really thought about that one.

Q. (Inaudible)

STETSON BENNETT: No, I don't think so.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I would say there's probably a little less nerves, but not because of, you know, a less, you know, importance of a game. Probably just because I've been here before, right? We've been here before. We know what the deal is. There's no really unexpected.

There will be butterflies plenty on Monday, but just leading up to it, kind of just knowing that it is -- it's not another football game, but it is. Just follow that, do that, and we'll be good.

Q. You've been here back-to-back years. What's the biggest difference from you from last year to this year?

STETSON BENNETT: In what way?

Q. In term of the championship.

STETSON BENNETT: As far as the whole season? Sorry, I --

Q. The whole experience. What's the mindset having been here before?

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I think it's are probably a little bit more sense of calm. More sense of, all right, this is what we did, this is how we do it, this is what we're going to do.

And then as much as I love Indy, this is Los Angeles, so



there are a little bit more distractions. Weather is going to be a little bit better.

But, you know, the season is different. I think it's a completely different team. I think Coach Smart has hit on that. I think everything is. The trip to here, everybody's expectations coming in, during the season, and then capping it off in L.A. This is pretty cool.

Q. Talking about it being a different team, you guys had first round draft picks all over the place. Who is the unsung hero?

STETSON BENNETT: Unsung hero. I'd say -- I'd say, you know, Kamar is really good football player. I don't hear very many people talking about him, and he is a bulldog. I can't remember when he came in, but when he came in, I was, like, that dude is good. That dude is really good.

He is, and he is tough as nails are. He is gritty. He is a damn good football player.

Q. Stetson, we polled six of your teammates and we got four nos and yeses. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I don't know. I would have to hear their reason. Who was it?

Q. The two yeses were Jalen Carter and (indiscernible). Brock Bowers gave an emphatic no.

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, Brock -- who are the other three?

Q. Tate gave a firm no. Nolan is a firm no.

STETSON BENNETT: Oh! That's shocking. Who is the last one?

Q. Totally blanking.

STETSON BENNETT: 88? He said yes?

Q. 88.

STETSON BENNETT: The other 88. Goede, Ryland. Damn tight ends. No, but listen to Jalen and (indiscernible). Thank you.

Q. (Indiscernible) -- when you can actually get into a game prep and play in this game and play in moments like on this stage, the reason that you wanted -- (indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, that's why you do it, right?

And I think it's important to realize that when you are there are because I think -- and I've been guilty of it even this year. You know, getting somewhere that you were working to get but then not really realizing it.

And that's good, and it's bad, and whatever, but this is why we're here. This is why we do this. This is why -- Monk has this great thing. We work 360-something days for, like, 12 in the regular season. Right? For 12. Like, 12 three-hour little games, right? We bust our a ass for a whole year to do that. This one is the big one. This is the hang it in the rafters forever, right? It's special.

Q. What does it feel like right now for that one three-hour game?

STETSON BENNETT: It's business-like, I think. It's exciting. I love it. Because you know what you are doing, and you know you're not there yet, but you know you'll get there, and you trust that, and it's day-by-day and step-by-step.

I mean, it's exciting, and it's fun to make those little progresses, to hit those little goals, and it's a challenge, right? Everybody loves to compete.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: It's tough for me to say anything about TCU's culture. I don't know anything about their program or how they run it. Obviously it works.

But, yeah, I have seen -- it has been cool to kind of -- I wasn't here in '16. I really wish I was here in '16. I feel like I could have learned. I think we won eight games or something that year. I feel like that was an important year, but I've been here every year since then.

Except for '18. That was a bad year too. Hey, maybe there's something there. I'm just kidding.

Yeah, I think it has molded a little bit more into that. I think Coach Smart has learned and adapted, and he had the greatest to learn from, but he did learn from him, right, and he knew it.

He was smart enough to wait until a job like this opened. He didn't -- but, yeah, there has been continual -- I mean, you look at our facilities now. They're absolutely ridiculous. He has the belief of the whole state and for good measure.

And the team has started to -- this is his team completely, right? It's, like, me -- there's a few guys that, like, remember the guys that were here before Coach Smart was here, but other than that there's no people.

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So it is his program now, and I think it's been molded, and it's almost more professional, like you said.

Q. (Indiscernible) -- how do you as the quarterback get ready for such a unique challenge like this?

STETSON BENNETT: Well, I think our scout team does a great job. They're in there watching film of TCU's defense to run their defense, which is it -- that's special. And they do it because they care about this team too, and they put in the work too, and they're here too, and they love and want to win just as much as we do, right? They're not going to get on the field, so they're going to make the guys who are getting on the field better.

So those guys are selfless and damn good football players too. But, yeah, it is tough. You try to watch as much film as you can just to get inundated -- is that a word?

Q. Inundated.

STETSON BENNETT: Inundated. Yeah, right. Just familiarize yourself with the defense, so when you are out there and you see it, it slows down a little bit, and you know what you are seeing.

Q. Are you excited -- (indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I tried to kind of pace myself a little bit. I think I didn't do a great job of that last week, but pace myself. Prepare, prepare, prepare. Don't get all the jitters and the nerves and the adrenaline before you need it, and then when you need it, let it all out.

Yeah, there is a buzz in the air in the preparation of it.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: What age did I realize --

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I don't know if I ever realized that. I think I just always and still am just hungry to get better, right, because that's what makes it interesting and that's what makes it fun it. Competing and competing with yourself day in and day out. Getting your brothers beside you, them competing, them getting better. So I think it's just a constant struggle for that toward perfection.

And then what was the next part? Sorry.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: My inspiration. I guess if there is -- I think probably more than anything my dad used to tell me this story about Erk Russell because Daddy walked on to Georgia Southern when Erk was there.

He said in the first team meeting of the year, and coaches come in, and you go through the team rules. We have a manual about 70 pages long. It's a pain in all our butts. Coach Russell just walked in there and wrote, "Do right." Do right.

I think most of us usually know what's right. As far as football goes, I was just always trying to do right. Do the best that I can to get to where I wanted. So I think that's probably inspiration.

Q. (Indiscernible) -- on the West Coast now. A little switch-up. What is on your playlist on the West side? It's a little bit different.

STETSON BENNETT: You know, I don't -- it probably will be a little bit different. A little bit more -- a little cooler. A little breezier. Yeah.

Q. For some reason everybody kept saying last person on the bus is Stetson Bennett. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: I don't know. I do kind of move at my own speed, I guess. It is a problem. It's probably the bane of my existence. I'm usually not late, but I am -- I don't know why. I don't know why. I'm working on it. I promise I am.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: What am I eating?

Q. (Indiscernible).

STETSON BENNETT: I eat a lot of grapes. A lot of grapes because I don't want to be heavy, but I get hungry, and I love the crunch, the crunch. I eat them at halftime, and apple sauce. We've got these little things of apple sauce, and I just slurp those down. They're, like, quick carbs, and they taste yummy. I love apple sauce.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: How bad of an outfit?

Q. Bad. Like bad outfit, bad haircut.

STETSON BENNETT: Oh, I would probably rather have a bad outfit because you can change your outfit.

I know I need a haircut. I know I need one. I'll get one before the game.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Probably -- I think Peyton is probably an icon, so probably Peyton. Either him or Luke Bryan, probably.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Oh, there's a number (laughing). Who would I not let?

Oh, Nolan Smith, that traitor. No way. Yeah, he is not dating my sister. No chance. Yeah, that traitor.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: My grit? Probably a 10 there. Pretty gritty.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I think it's a -- I think it's very important to our success. Just remembering where we come from, how we got here, and it's almost like the old 'ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,' right?

So when we -- we know what the dangers are of the mighty, you know, whatever are. What traps they fall into. Then we can be on the lookout for them. So I think it's helped.

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: All-Star. All-Star. I'm an All-Star guy. I can have my sausage burned, as black as your apron. Hash browns scattered well and cheese eggs. Lots of ketchup.

Q. You said Peyton and Luke Bryan?

STETSON BENNETT: Yeah, I think so. Yeah.

Q. Do you want to say something and see if one of them will answer?

STETSON BENNETT: No, I'm not going to bother them. I'm no fun.

Q. We were doing some Stetson Bennett trivia with your teammates, so I was wondering what would be a good question we can ask somebody about?

STETSON BENNETT: In what way?

Q. We're asking people your middle name and your dad's name, and a lot of people got that wrong.

STETSON BENNETT: That's a good one. That's a good one. Stetson Bennett IV's dad's name. Oh, man.

What was the furthest place I ever lived away, I guess? Alaska. Alaska. Frame the question better than that. I don't think that's a great question, but...

Q. (Indiscernible)

STETSON BENNETT: No. It is a wild journey that I don't think anybody would really believe. But for me, again, I just took it day-by-day. Then we ended up here.

It would be really special. It would be a lot of pride, and my teammates, these guys here, the coaching staff, you know, nutrition staff, everybody involved in that program, recruiting, Ms. Kim, our cooks, our chefs. Everybody that sacrifices so much and the hours, and it's expected of them, but they do choose to be there and to do it, and it's all for this game.

So that would be -- it would mean a lot, and winning makes people happy for some reason.

Appreciate it.

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