

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Georgia vs Cincinnati

Monday, December 28, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Gerrid Doaks

Josh Whyle

Cincinnati Bearcats



THE MODERATOR: We are back with runningback Gerrid Doaks and tight end Josh Whyle.

We'll take questions.

Q. Gerrid, how is the ankle doing, leg? How frustrating was that to not get to participate like you wanted to in the second half of the Tulsa game?

GERRID DOAKS: It's doing good right now. Doing everything I can just to get it back healthy. In the game, of course it was frustrating. Championship game. But at the end of the day I know we had a room full of runningbacks that's capable of taking over the game, getting the job done, so...

Q. Josh, no opt-outs on the Bearcats for the bowl game. What does that say about the level of anticipation you have for this opportunity?

JOSH WHYLE: I think it just means everybody wants to be involved. This is a great opportunity as a team. I just think everybody wants to be a part of it.

Q. Gerrid, obviously big part of this season was you kind of being the main runningback. Seems like you haven't lost the desire to do little things, whether it's receiving, picking up blitz, blocking for Des. You played on special teams this season. Why was that such an important thing for you even as the starting runningback coming in this year?

GERRID DOAKS: Being part of a program like this, you want to be able to do everything you can to get to where we are now. The little things like that, most of our starters play special teams. Small things like that results in good results, which is why we're undefeated.

Just being able to do everything I can puts us in a good position.

Q. Josh, how exciting is the opportunity to get to play against a Georgia defense that's seen as one of the best in the country, get to prove yourself against a higher level of competition?

JOSH WHYLE: I mean, it means a lot. Just being able to have this chance in the Peach Bowl against a great team, in a great atmosphere, I mean, it's really exciting. It's exciting for this team.

We've been so close the past couple years, just being able to be here is going to be really a dream come true. I mean, I know we're all excited here. We're all preparing. We're just excited to get down there, be ready for that kickoff at noon.

Q. Gerrid, you have a 6'4", 215-pound quarterback. Describe how Desmond is able to use that strength so well.

GERRID DOAKS: Des, great athlete. When we find ourselves in positions where we're kind of struggling, he's always there. He uses his skill, he got speed, he can throw. He helps us get out of the bonds that kind of we struggle in sometimes. But he also brings that energy, picks up everybody else's game as the game goes on.

Q. Josh, you were highly recruited coming out of high school. You could have played at a lot of different places. A few other guys on this team that could have played just about anywhere. A lot of the talk on the outside about this game is Georgia, highly touted recruiting classes. Is that in the back of your mind, you could have played at bigger schools, but you decided to play here? Are you thinking about that heading into this game?

JOSH WHYLE: No, I wouldn't say that. I mean, every guy puts on their pants the same way. We're all just Xs and Os on the board. It's going to come down to Coach Fickell, in the meeting on Sunday, it's going to come down to preparation, toughness, and competitive spirit. I think the team that has that is going to really show out.

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Q. Gerrid, you have both said, everybody has talked about what a great opportunity this is. At this point in the season, it's been such a grind with COVID tests. What have you done to stay mentally sharp, not only physically?

GERRID DOAKS: At the end of the day it's all about just being disciplined, realizing what's at stake. Such a good season we had going on, it would be a bummer to just see everything fall apart with people popping up with COVID tests and stuff.

It all came down to just being disciplined, doing the right things outside, hanging around the right people, which we usually just around each other. As long as we did things like that, we knew we was going to be in a good position.

Q. Gerrid, you've been through a lot, five seasons, couple rough years, some years where you got close but couldn't get over the hump. How fun, how magical has this ride been to see a lot of those dreams you have had on the board come true?

GERRID DOAKS: It's been great. When I first got here, things was real rough. Nobody really bought in. Everybody was just here playing football.

Fick came, changed the coaching around here. It's what every college football player would want their career to be like, just being able to win games with their brothers, win championships. That's what we're doing, so it's really good.

Q. Josh, back to your recruiting. I think I saw Georgia was one of your offers. What do you remember about any involvement you had with them during the recruiting process?

JOSH WHYLE: To be honest with you, I don't remember much at all. I committed to Cincinnati pretty early. Other than that, I didn't get involved with too many other schools.

Q. Josh, you and Lenny have had some opportunities this year to step up and show what you're capable of. Can you tell us about Bruno, his impact on the offense not just on the field, but as a team leader off the field and behind the scenes this year?

JOSH WHYLE: Absolutely. Bruno is a great example of a senior leader. He's one of the play-hard guys in our program. Just being able to play behind him, I mean, it's awesome. It's a great opportunity to learn the game better. Yeah, I mean, I think he kind of took things away from Josiah. It's like the ripple effect, things keep coming down. It's really awesome.

There's just great, healthy competition within our position group, so it's a great learning experience.

Q. Gerrid, five years ago did you see yourself being at this stage in your career in your last game?

GERRID DOAKS: Five years ago, how things was going then, nah, I didn't at all. Coaching changes, culture changes, like everything just changed. We're at where we're at. I'm grateful for it.

Q. How rewarding is it to be in this spot looking back five years?

GERRID DOAKS: Hard work pays off, man. That's all I can really say (smiling).

Q. Josh, especially throughout this year there's been a lot of talk about Cincinnati being a place that produces a lot of tight ends, quality tight ends. Do you ever watch Travis on Sundays and think, I'm part of that legacy, I've got a lot to live up to with maybe the best tight end in the world?

JOSH WHYLE: Yeah, I mean, it's definitely something to think about, especially because me and Kelce have a similar play style. That and there was a great opportunity with Josiah here, to be able to experience that. That's not something many people can say they had.

So, yeah, I mean, there's definitely an expectation and a standard in the tight end room. We're just all trying to live up to it.

Q. What has it been like interacting with Travis? Have you been able to pick his brain any?

JOSH WHYLE: No, I haven't talked to him at all. I haven't met him yet.

Q. Everybody has talked about how things changed with coach Fick. If you could put your finger on one thing, what would you say he brought that was different and better?

GERRID DOAKS: I say, like, the competitive spirit around here, it kind of dug the will to compete out of everybody out here. When he first got here, we went through attention training. I've never seen so many people realize that they didn't really want to be here. Like, doing things like that kind of got the coaching put in place of who we are, what we're going to be. That's why we are who we are now I think.

JOSH WHYLE: I mean, the core principles, effort, attitude, competitive spirit, strength, those are things he hits on every day. I think it comes to senior leaders on this team, guys like Gerrid, Desmond, all those guys, they lead the way for us young guys. It takes discipline and maturity from us to really buy in.

I think coach Fick believing in that and instilling that in us is really what changed this program out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time.

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