

# Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Georgia vs Cincinnati

Monday, December 28, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

## Chris Smith

## Tyson Campbell

Georgia Bulldogs



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with Chris Smith and Tyson Campbell.

**Q. Chris, getting ready for this Cincinnati team, I'm wondering for you in particular having to take over midseason, how much different do you feel, how much more comfortable do you feel playing your position? What are the unique challenges that you expect to face in Cincinnati?**

CHRIS SMITH: I definitely feel more comfortable as every game goes on. I'm able to learn more, get more things in. Cincinnati is a very good team. They got very good wide receivers, very good runningbacks, elite quarterback. We're going to face a lot of challenges.

They have a very balanced offense. We have to be able to take away what they do well.

**Q. Looking like you're going to get Richard back for this game. With him, is it as much about the energy he brings as what he brings on the field? What does having him back going to mean for you guys?**

CHRIS SMITH: I would say mostly the energy. His leadership is second to none. Definitely his play making. He always finds a way to stay around the ball, make plays, things like that. That's definitely something we've been missing and we will need back.

**Q. Do you expect Cincinnati is going to try to attack the side where Eric Stokes used to be, test somebody that's a little bit more inexperienced?**

TYSON CAMPBELL: We just going to come in the game expecting for the unexpected. We trust our defense and all the players on the defense, all of us are capable of making big plays.

Whether the ball is thrown to my side or the other corner

side or to the safeties or to the linebackers, all the players are capable of making the play. We'll be there for it.

CHRIS SMITH: They might try to attack the side that Stokes has vacated. Like Tyson said, we trust all our players. We have guys that are ready for this moment.

**Q. Tyson, last season you battled a lot of injuries, versus now this season you're fully ready to go. How are you feeling going into this game? What are your expectations besides winning the game that you have for yourself?**

TYSON CAMPBELL: Going into this bowl game, very excited. It's a New Year's six bowl. We'll continue to get prepared for this game. But for me, ultimately besides winning I just want to be able to make plays that are beneficial to the team, help contribute to bringing the Peach Bowl, victory in the Mercedes Superdome.

CHRIS SMITH: I think we have an opportunity to show why we belong. We definitely excited. Cincinnati is a great team. It's going to be a great challenge for us to finish out the year well.

Personally, I just want to be able to make plays that make the team better and help us win.

**Q. Could you give me your thoughts on when you play a quarterback who can buy time, like Desmond Ridder. The scramble drill, is it different for a corner than a safety? Talk about what that scramble drill is like, what facing a mobile quarterback presents as a challenge.**

CHRIS SMITH: I would say a mobile quarterback is definitely more difficult. Scramble drill is difficult at times, too. But you got to keep your eyes on your man and just be able to plaster. You can't get out of coverage. As soon as you get out of coverage, a quarterback like that will make you pay. You have to be able to stay disciplined against a quarterback like this. He's a very good athlete, make a lot of plays, throw the ball very well. You have to be able to stay disciplined, because you want to be able to eliminate his scrambling abilities.

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TYSON CAMPBELL: To back off of what Chris said, when you're facing a dual-threat quarterback, depending on what you're in, just make sure all 11 guys are doing their job. Some guy's primary task might be to focus on the quarterback, others to focus on the receiver, runningback, get in the zone. Everybody has to be on the same page in order to make sure things go right for the defense.

**Q. Tyson, you're someone who has NFL Draft potential. Why is it important for you to play in this game?**

TYSON CAMPBELL: I'm still a Georgia Bulldog. My task is to finish out the season. I'm still part of this team. We have one game left, so... I want to finish this season with my teammates.

**Q. Chris, when you look at how the season has gone for you, how far are you from being where you want to be? You obviously want to keep getting better. Have you played an acceptable level of football in your opinion or do you feel like you have more there?**

CHRIS SMITH: I feel both. I feel I played acceptable, but I also got more there. There is plenty more opportunities for me to make plays for the team. I definitely want to be able to get there. Do good in the run game, the pass game. I just want to be able to make those big plays with the team I haven't made yet, but it's coming. I just got to keep working.

**Q. How do you look at the secondary and the defense in general, your performance this year as a defense? Statistically overall in the SEC first, second a lot of categories, but those two games stand out, Alabama and Florida.**

TYSON CAMPBELL: We just take it one game at a time, make sure we learn from any mistakes that we've made in the previous game. We won't make those mistakes again.

We will continue to stay positive, but at the same time we're aware of mistakes we may make. We just continue to improve each and every week. We don't really like try to linger on the past games. We just try to make sure the next game is the best game.

That's always the mindset we keep. That's how I see it.

CHRIS SMITH: I feel the same as Tyson. We don't try to linger on past games, things like that. I feel like our defense is very exceptional. I feel like we get better every week. I know those past games we had a lot of miscues, but I feel like we're a way better defense since then. Every

week we come in, go to the doctor, see what we need to work on. There's plenty of things we've gotten better on, communication. Tackling is one of our main focuses this week. We're going to try to go out and put on our best product for this week.

**Q. (Question about players on the team.)**

CHRIS SMITH: They still young guys, they still learning. They progress way better than when we were freshmen. I just tell them there's things, you need to be ready for your opportunity, things like that. I feel like if we have to use those guys, they'll be more than prepared. They're very good, very talented kids. They're getting better every day, just like the rest of the team.

TYSON CAMPBELL: Like Chris said, we just keeping them under our wing, making sure they're staying after practice, getting extra film, make sure they're learning defense. Anything can happen. Your moment can come. You want to make sure you're prepared. That's the main focus, making sure they're getting better at something each and every day, whether it be mental or physical or something that's technical, scheme-wise. That's the main focus when it comes to those young guys.

**Q. In terms of the pandemic, navigating everything, what would you say the biggest sacrifice is that y'all have had to make in terms of how the pandemic has affected everything?**

TYSON CAMPBELL: We just making sure, sometimes we don't know if we're going to have a game. We just make sure we're prepared, staying ready so we don't have to get ready. We make sure we keep getting better, make sure we're staying in shape. During this season, like, the unknown is the unknown. We just making sure we're always ready.

CHRIS SMITH: Yeah, I would say the biggest sacrifice is probably time with your family and free time. We got to kind of restrain from things we would do in the past just to make sure we protect our bubble and the team. We don't want anybody getting COVID or anything like that. Like Tyson said, not knowing if we're going to have a game or not, still going out there practicing and competing every day, giving our best, we always got to do that.

**Q. Chris, not knowing if you're having a game, obviously you had one taken away from you, how does that factor in to your hunger and desire to finish out here in the bowl?**

CHRIS SMITH: Definitely factors in a lot. We want to go out there and get a final win for our seniors that didn't get a

chance to go out there the last time we were supposed to have a game. Definitely fuels us a lot. We definitely want to go out there and get a win.

This is obviously a big bowl, against a great, amazing team. We have to come out there with our best.

**Q. A season perspective question. You came in with a lot of hype and returning guys. How would you assess the way that y'all have done given all the bodies that went down or got hurt this year?**

TYSON CAMPBELL: I think we did well. Guys took advantage of the opportunity. Guys stepped up. Guys got some new experiences. I think it was big for us. It helped bring our team closer together. Those guys that went down for that period of time, we just continued to encourage them, give them support, keep them healthy mentally so they can come back like they never left.

That was the main focus, just making sure the guys that stepped up were comfortable and ready, and the guys that went out were getting right back to their natural selves.

CHRIS SMITH: I agree. I think we did a pretty good job this season. Although things didn't go how we wanted all the time, we've got better every week. Even though we didn't get the end result we wanted this year, I feel like if we win this game going into next year we'll have a lot of confidence for a lot of guys. That will be very important.

These bowl weeks in the past years, a lot of times I've been able to get a lot of good reps, get a lot better. This is very important for our team and us going into the future.

**Q. How prepared would you say that you guys are going into the new year with this game?**

TYSON CAMPBELL: I would say we're prepared. We're always practicing hard, learning in the film room, on the field. I feel like all the guys are prepared. We have great coaches on this coaching staff, great leaders. Everyone just continues to stay disciplined, listen to them, do their job, we should have the game we're expecting to have.

CHRIS SMITH: I would say we're very prepared also. We got a lot of talented guys on this roster. If we don't have one guy, it's always the next man up. A lot of new guys going to be playing this game.

I definitely feel like we're prepared and ready. We got great coaches. We got a great scheme in place. We got a great program. All those things factor in to us being able to replace when we don't the old guys we used to have. We're definitely more prepared and going to keep

preparing till game time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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