

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Georgia vs Cincinnati

Tuesday, December 29, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Jamaree Salyer

Warren Ericson

Georgia Bulldogs



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Warren Ericson and Jamaree Salyer.

We'll start with questions.

Q. Jamaree, how does the offensive line being in a similar situation last year for the bowl game, replacing a couple starters up front, possibly helped you this time around?

JAMAREE SALYER: Like you said, we went through it before. We had that experience. A lot of those younger guys are there, a lot of guys were freshmen and sophomores last year. We have more of that culture we understand what needs to be done, how to approach this game. I think it was different going from my freshman to sophomore year because those guys came back. We were missing those guys. All the guys played in the Sugar Bowl my sophomore year.

I think this year we have a pretty good game plan going into it. We're excited about the guys that got to step up.

Q. Warren, based on Peach Bowl photos, it looks like you're playing center for this game. I don't know how much you want to commit to that. Can you talk about obviously Big Ben is not going to be over there at the right guard spot, and how you anticipate that shoring up together.

WARREN ERICSON: Yeah, I mean, like you said, Ben is gone. Wish him all the best. When he was in there, he definitely made a difference.

Like Jamaree said, we're confident in the guys that we got. Whoever is going to step up to the plate is going to play really well. Like he said, we're excited about it.

Q. Jamaree, what are your plans for next year? Are you coming back? Warren, who is working beside you

there at right guard? Who is going to take over for Ben?

JAMAREE SALYER: I haven't decided yet on what I want to do. I'm still talking to my family, talking to coaches, just trying to make a good, clean decision, something that I'm confident in, something I feel good about. I feel good about both options, but I haven't really chosen one or the other yet. I'm still in the decision process. Time will tell.

WARREN ERICSON: We're kind of taking it day by day. We have different possibilities at different positions. Who are the best guys out there to give us the best win. I've moved over and played a little bit of right guard, had Shaffer move around a little bit, had Truss come in. We just been moving around. I feel like game time we'll truly find out who will be there.

Q. Jamaree, how do you think you've developed this year playing at left tackle? Do you see yourself playing guard at the next level? If you come back to Georgia, do you think you'll stay at left tackle?

JAMAREE SALYER: It's been a challenge. It's been fun. I feel like I had the off-season, the work I put in during quarantine, definitely helped me out a lot to prepare for this season. It was different. You can feel the difference out there a lot. A lot of good passers in the SEC, a lot of good passers.

It was fun. I had a great time. I feel like the speed of the game was something that I definitely kept on building on as the year goes. Some weeks you can face a 4-3 guy, 4-4 guy that's 260. Some weeks you play a big guy that's, like, 300 that can't move as well. Just adjusting to different speeds, adjusting to different quarterbacks. Playing left tackle, you have to be able to block. JT may not be able to run as good but brings different things to the plate. You're just adjusting.

Approaching the different challenges week-to-week definitely helped me out as a player. Playing against good players every day, those guys can rush the passers. Just those challenges every day helped me become 10 times a better player than I was when I walked in the door.

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Q. Working under Coach Monken for a year, what has been a year that you could not have predicted between the pandemic, Jamie opting out when he did, what has been your view of this offense under Coach Monken and has it been effective what he originally wanted to do?

JAMAREE SALYER: I think he gives us a good chance to be explosive. He's very critical. He's very demanding. He likes what he likes. He likes things to look a certain way, if not, keep doing it over and over and over again. Warren can tell you about that. We take a rep on one play five or six times till we get it right.

He's very particular. I gives us a chance to be explosive. We still have the same physical run game we had. We had games through JT threw 300 yards, almost 400 yards. Yeah, we have a chance to be really truly balanced under Coach Monken. I'm glad he's here.

WARREN ERICSON: To bounce off that, he's very particular in what he wants. He's going to coach us as hard as he possibly can. He demands perfection. That's something us as players we respect. We go out on Saturdays, we want to get it perfect. The practice aspect has been really good.

Like Jamaree said, just being a balanced attack. We want to throw the ball really well, really hard. He came in, had that mindset. I think we kind of accepted his plan. We'll just keep rolling with it.

Q. Yesterday we picked up an increased, heightened sense of stress from Coach Smart as the numbers have risen regarding COVID locally. How has it been for you guys getting to the finish line here? Have you picked up on a heightened sense of need to be careful?

WARREN ERICSON: Yeah, I think just like you hit the nail on the head, we got to be careful with everything. Every single day in our team meeting, Coach Smart addresses us with a picture that says wear your mask, wash your hands. That's kind of like what our team has been about this whole entire time since July when we came back to campus.

We wanted this. We wanted this season to happen. As a team, we want to do everything we possibly can to make sure we're safe and can keep playing games.

JAMAREE SALYER: Yeah, just like what he said. We've seen that message every day. Every day we practice, every day we meet, that is on the board, wear your mask, wash your hands.

It's important to us, not just now with the heightened sense. It was heightened at another point. When we first came back, we were having increasing numbers in the fall.

Yeah, just making sure that stays the emphasis, especially now with the holidays. We have a lot of people, especially going to Atlanta, a lot of people that went to the city, a lot of tourism.

Yeah, you just got to be really careful and understand it's not just about the season, it's about safety, it's about our families, it's about coaches. A lot of older coaches on the staff. It's about their families. It's about you guys, too. It's about everybody. It's a worldwide thing.

Not just being safe for the season, but being safe for everybody.

Q. If given the choice, what y'all have been through since July with the pandemic and the grind it's been, are you glad this is the last game, or when you consider the way this offense has come together, the fact you have almost touched 50 points the last two times out, do you wish you had three or four more games?

JAMAREE SALYER: You're right, it has been a long season. Around here we like to compete. We like to compete, go out, show what we got every week. We get a chance to compete, I'm sure we'll take it every time.

It has been a long season. It wears and tears on the body. That is the next level, 16 weeks, plus the Playoffs. That's just what it is. If you want to survive at that level, you can't complain about it now when you have the opportunity to experience it.

As far as us as an offense that's come along, I think we have kind of hit a good stride. Very excited about a lot of the young guys that are coming along. Excited that we have a quarterback back there that's throwing it and commanding the offense. We rushed for 300 last game, something like that.

Yeah, just really excited for us to be able to have the opportunity to go out and compete again against a great football team. If we had three or four more opportunities, we'll line up and play those, too.

WARREN ERICSON: Jamaree stole what I was going to say.

Every single week in, week out, we want to go in and play as well as we can. If we did it throughout the rest of the

season till March or whatever, we'd keep doing that.

It has been a long season. Just like Jamaree said, our end goal is to get to the next level, the NFL. I think we just got to mentally be ready for that.

I mean, yeah, this has been truly exciting, ups and downs. We had some great games. When JT has been in, we had great games. It's just the competitive aspect that we want to continue to play really hard, really physical, put numbers up on the board, running the ball, passing the ball. We just want to dominate everything we can.

Q. You mentioned JT Daniels being in command, having success back there commanding the offense. Can you both give us a JT Daniels memory, a story, something that's happened on the field so we can get an idea what it's like in the huddle or up on the line of scrimmage?

JAMAREE SALYER: Oh, man (smiling). A JT Daniels story? You got one, Warren?

WARREN ERICSON: I don't know, man. JT is a character, man. He's calm and collected, but he's witty little aspect. He's real cool in the huddle. He gives you confidence.

I would say definitely in our meetings, when you're all together as an offense, Coach Monk will be up there looking at the board. It will be, like, JT, what do you think on this play? JT will go through and give us seven individual things that he can see and change up. He's so methodical about the things he does. He thinks out so much. His football mind is just off the charts.

I would say that's it. He's calm, cool, collected. He's one of those guys that he's going to know exactly where to put the ball if any situation comes up.

JAMAREE SALYER: I remember I think it was his first game, Mississippi State. One of their blitzers got through. He got hit pretty hard. I think he got hit really hard. I was like, Wow, this kid just took his first hit. In my mind, how is he going to react? Is he going to lay on the ground, be broken?

He got up, Hit me again. He told the defender to hit me again. I think he threw a touchdown on that play, too (smiling).

I think he had a reason to say that. But yeah, he was pretty jacked up. I was, Okay, cool, we got a tough kid. We don't always get the toughest guy coming in, but that guy is tough. That guy is tough. He got up off the ground,

kept throwing the ball, threw it and threw it and threw it for 400. Yeah, he's tough.

Q. At this time last year y'all were both getting ready for your first game under Matt Luke. What has the first year been like with him? What has been the biggest change from Pittman to Luke?

JAMAREE SALYER: It's crazy. I remember answering the same question a year ago.

Coach Luke, he's more of a spot the ball and go play type of guy. He's a teacher. He can teach. But he likes us to go play. He wants us to go play fast, go play physical. Same thing with Coach Pitt. Coach Luke is more of a high-energy guy, more of a rah-rah guy, likes to get people pumped, energized. He like the energy and enthusiasm.

You can tell he really loves coaching, he really loves what he does every day. He shows up with the mindset to be the best coach in the world. I think he is. He really does show that every day. I'm really excited to have played for him for a year. He's just shown me a lot, shown everybody a lot. He brings a different type of swagger to our group.

Yeah, I mean, those two guys, they're very good at the top of their profession. Coach Pitt has even moved up. When he was O-line coach, those were probably two of the top ones you would see. Yeah, those two guys are really good at what they do. They're both really great coaches.

WARREN ERICSON: I think Jamaree hit it on the head. He's bringing enthusiasm every single day, meetings, practices, what ever it is. He's going to be the guy that is going to be the loudest. George Pickens will catch like a 50-yard bomb, he'll be one of the first guys sprinting down there to give him a high five or something like that on the practice field. He's that type of guy.

He wants to just bring the energy all the time. That's something he's instilled with us. Both of them brought different things to the table. I think they're both great teachers, different techniques.

I think Jamaree can speak on this, too. I think we can both grab different things that both of them have taught us and just continue to get better as players.

Q. How has JT changed or evolved from when he first got on campus in June to where he is now?

JAMAREE SALYER: I mean, everybody has a growing period when they first get here, whether it's a freshman, whether it's a grad transfer. They all grow. They all come more social, become more social, become more confident,

then you just start playing, things start clicking for you. It's like a light bulb that switches one day.

He had a bit of a rough patch with off-campus stuff. He was getting adjusted. Our defense has seen some blitzes, some coverages, just stuff. Out third down period, nobody ever seen before, I ain't never seen before on no football field. They get home and make plays. Our defense is very good.

He was getting adjusted to that, understanding that these guys can really play. Once he started making those strides on the scout team, he came back. Once we brought him back to the one, the travel team, he was throwing the ball, had a different spin to it. He had a different level of confidence.

He was cool, calm, and collected kid y'all see on Saturdays. He is always that kid. Like Warren said, he's like a textbook when it comes to coverages, what we do on this play, that play. When you hear him spit it out, it's crazy, like Google or something. He has a different level of confidence. We're really happy to have him.

WARREN ERICSON: Just like everything Jamaree said. I think used to the speed of the game in the SEC, yeah, getting used to all the exotic blitzes our defense had. Our defense is good. They're going to bring stuff you've never seen before, run it to like a precision. I just think that.

He came in, he was still recovering from his knee injury, too. Like Jamaree said, once he got his feet wet, getting used to the system, used to the SEC, I think he just turned into the player he is right now.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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