

# Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Texas vs Arizona State

Friday, December 27, 2024

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

**Arizona State Sun Devils**

**Shamari Simmons**

Press Conference



**PLAYOFF  
QUARTERFINAL**



**Q. In everything that's happened in the last three weeks with the discussion surrounding the penalty and with obviously the suspension staying as it stands, you just mentioned it a few moments ago, I heard you saying that Montana Warren is going to be starting on your behalf in the first half, that you're his number one fan. What has the process been like discussing with the DB room over the last three weeks just what the first half is going to be like for him and other guys getting opportunities, and what has the last three weeks been like for you processing you not getting to play the first half in a game you've probably been waiting your whole life to play?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: God always has a plan, and I just feel like his plan right now is just basically showing who Montana Warren is to the world. He's going to be a great defensive back for Arizona State for a long time coming.

It is what it is. Montana always like, when I'm on the sideline -- like when I'm starting and Montana is on the sideline, he does a great job of just telling me what he sees on the sideline. I've just got to be that for this first half. I'm excited to see him play.

**Q. Shamari, how would you explain the situation you guys are in when nobody gave you a chance this year, picked last in the Big 12. Do you guys have like a motto or a mantra going into the playoffs as an underdog?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: First, I'm just blessed to be in this position. As far as like the team, we just feel like we've been underdogs -- like the whole team has been an underdog their whole life. Once you put a whole lot of underdogs on one team, everybody just wants to prove everybody wrong. That's just what our goal is this year.

**Q. I'm just curious as heck how you're going to feel**

**watching the first half and how amped up you're going to be. How are you going to prepare for all that craziness before you get to get out there and do your thing?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: I feel like my job for the first half is just getting all the DBs just ready to play, just being the hype man to them, just get Montana ready for certain situations. That's all I can be able to do. It is what it is.

I'm just excited for the guys just to be able to just play a great team.

**Q. From what you've seen on film, what kind of stands out about the Texas receivers? Do they do anything especially well or is there a certain guy that stands out on film?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: They do a great job as a unit. They do a great job of blocking for the screen game. They're just a great team overall. It's going to be two great teams going at it, and it's just all about who can be able to withstand the last punches throughout the fourth quarter.

**Q. Shamari, you touched on it a little bit and I asked Coach Ward, but the leadership of the defense, everybody's got different personalities. You've been one of those leaders. In dealing with this situation, helping the young guys grow in the competition -- like you said, you want to see what Montana can do, he's talking to you. But with how Keith has grown and Chaffin, how much has that leadership and growth in the secondary helped prepare the younger guys for this moment?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: It's helped the younger guys just want, like they want to get in my position. The younger guys did a great job of just sticking to the presses. To my opinion, they don't even act like younger guys because they've just been so driven and just want to get out there and go play and just do the best for our team.

I just feel like we're going to do a great job together, not just individually. We're just going to do a great job of

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

protecting each other as a whole.

**Q. You mentioned the screen game of Texas. How challenging is that when they have the ability to hit you vertically or hit opponents vertically but also run the ball really well? And then the screen game when you blitz and are very aggressive. What are some of the keys to being successful against that?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: Just reading our keys and trusting what we see. If you read your keys and you just be iffy about doing it, then you're going to be blocked. That's going to be a positive game for them. They put on pads just like we put on pads. It's just all about us doing what we've been doing from the beginning of the year.

**Q. You touched on being an underdog, a team of underdogs that sort of has played off of that mantra all year. You're again a big underdog in this game, not many people expecting you guys to win. Do you kind of come at it just sort of keeping that underdog approach and looking at it as another chance to prove people wrong?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: Yes, sir. To me honestly, I like being an underdog because it's less pressure on us. All the pressure's on Texas. Texas has got to face a very good team. It's just all about us just playing free and just knowing that like we deserve to be here.

**Q. I'm curious what do you feel like is the best advice you gave to Xavion?**

SHAMARI SIMMONS: To Xavion? I mean, Xavion, he's a pro already. It really isn't too much advice I could give him because he already knows how to take care of business. As far as like defensively, I just tell my guys just to have fun. A lot of people in the world would kill just to be in our position.

So it is all about us just really embracing the moment and just having fun with just playing football.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports