

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

Friday, December 27, 2024

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Texas Longhorns

Anthony Hill, Jr.

Press Conference

Q. Curious, you guys going back to a place where you just played a couple weeks ago, the emotion of that. Do you let yourself feel the sting of that loss in this same place where you're going to play again now?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: Of course we're going to kind of feel that a little bit, but we kind of want to move on and just get ready for Arizona State. They're a good football team and we kind of don't want to think about that game all over again. We want to move on and just get ready to go.

Q. Anthony, you've heard the quote from PK at the beginning of the year where he talked about you wanted to grow as a linebacker, not just as a good football player. I wanted to ask you, can you maybe think of one or two things that PK has talked to you specifically about the linebacking that maybe you didn't know or didn't conceptualize in high school?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: Of course my coach is Coach Nansen, so I'd probably want to talk about him more. Just developing, seeing stuff before the play and kind of working on my footwork, just not crossing over and kind of understanding the picture, the tight splits and are they going to run the over-route. Are the linemen on their heels. Are they pulling. Just little stuff that where you kind of don't think about in high school that just helped me develop.

Q. Anthony, so there are certain people in life who transcend life itself. They love what they do so much that they attract fans to them. You're one of those people. I'm just curious, where does that come from? Is that from your mom? Your dad? Your aunt? Why do you love this game so much? And to follow on to that, would you ever consider being mic'd up on the field for a game?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: I'm going to talk about the mic. I



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don't want to be mic'd up. I don't think that's going to be a good option for me.

The love of football just came from my mom and my dad and a little bit of my little brother and me. I've been a football fan my whole life. I've been watching the Seahawks. I grew up with Cam Chancellor Bobby Wagner. I'm a big gamer. Derrick Johnson always tells me, how do I know all these people? Because I was on Ultimate Team when I was a little kid playing with Derrick Johnson and Tom Baugh and different guys.

So I kind of just understand football at a different level kind of from playing video games and playing, from my friends, and watching football with my dad when I was a kid.

Q. Michael Taaffe said after the Clemson game that he learned some lessons from the success that Klubnik and the offense had. What did you learn playing that Clemson offense that'll help you moving forward?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: What I learned is kind of helped me just fine tune some things in zone coverage. I mean, there was a couple little busts and we'll all say that we take accountability for those busts.

It's just kind of understanding when a down gets longer, just plastering and zone drops and different landmarks that you want to stay in during a long running down.

Q. PK just told us how Colin's pass rush ability is elite. He won that Freshmen of the Year Award recently. His ball get off, the first step or two is incredible. Is that just God given or what does he do to make that so special?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: That's just God given. I mean, I love like -- of course, I was the freshman last year. I kind of love just seeing freshmen making plays. Next year hopefully a guy comes in and does what we did the next couple of years.

It's kind of get off understanding the football has been different. He's been helping me a little bit. We're in

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competition every week. Are you going to get more sacks? Who's going to get more sacks? He's got me right now, but hopefully next week I can get him back.

I kind of love playing with him. We kind of like each other. It's been great playing with him. It's been pretty fun.

Q. I just wondered, what is your impression of the way AC and Vernon have played this season, holding the point of attack, and what does it do for a defense when you guys have these goal line stands and A&M, the one against Clemson. What does it do for you all mentally?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: First off I just kind of say with AC and Vern, I kind of love how they've been playing the whole year. They play fast and physical and it just helps the linebackers.

When they're playing fast we can play fast and the back end can play fast. It's all tied to a string. If we're all playing fast we can all play fast together, and the goal line stands test the point of how we practice and how we execute in the off season.

We went out on the field before that after that punt and we said, we're going to get a stop, and the fact we did it was amazing. We just kind of love making those plays and it helps to boost the defense.

Q. How simple or how complicated is PK's style of defense? Is there a phrase he always uses that you go to sleep and you can hear his voice in your head?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: You know, learning the plays when you first get here are kind of hard, but once you get here and months go by, years go by, you kind of realize how simple it really is.

I mean, he kind of breaks down --we do a good job of getting younger guys in meeting so they understand what's going on. So I feel like he does a great job of getting us going and putting the young guys in position to make plays. When we first got here we had me at a smaller role.

We kind of do that with some of the new freshmen so they play fast and comprehend what's going on.

Q. PK said in the off season y'all moved to that post defense, middle of the field close. How does that help your position when you have maybe either Drew or Taaffe dropping down and helping out?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: It kind of helps us play faster. We kind of running a little bit more cover three. It helps us play

faster having an extra guy in the box. We feel like we've been stopping the run pretty well so far this year, and we got a big challenge this week.

So we understand that playing this cover three helps some of the post and some of the current routes that teams have been attacking us last year.

So it's been pretty useful for us.

Q. Cam Skattebo said he's the best running back in the country. 1500 yards rushing, 1000 after contact. He's a 500-yard receiver. What do you see from this guy on film and what is he different from anything you've faced this year?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: I've been watching the tape and, I mean, he deserves to say that. I mean, he put up 1500. I've been watching the tape. He's running guys over. He's catching balls out the back field. So I feel like he deserves to say that.

But at the end of the day we have a challenge and we're an elite defense, so I can't wait to play against him and see who's really the best.

Q. Just wanted to ask you talked about that challenge to follow up on that question. How much does it excite the defense going into a game where you know they're going to try to run the ball on y'all and your all's front seven loves when teams try to do that. So how much is that exciting for you all?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: It's really exciting. I mean we're seeing him running guys over on tape. We're seeing him do all this different stuff. So we see it as a challenge. We want to be the best and we strive to be the best, so we want to play against the best.

Q. I just want to follow up, before you were talking about your love for video games and how that's shaped your love for football. Is that like -- how does that happen to make you love playing the sport? Do you still play? Is I just wanted to hear more about how that's kind of shaped you in a football sense?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: I've been playing football since I was like two years old. So just kind of playing Madden. When you've been playing football so young you're going to gravitate to the game you've been playing your whole life. So kind of when I'm seeing all these guys I'm playing Madden, because, you know, in the NCAA there's only one football game.

So I'm playing with these guys. I'm like who is this? Why

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can't he do that on the game? So I'm watching on Sunday nights and seeing why he's doing this and how he got these stats and I'm like, oh, man. Look at him do this and do that.

So that helped me understand coverages at a young age. So I kind of understood like this is cover three, like I'm running this in the game, I'm running this in real life and cover four and man. So it kind of correlates hand to hand for me.

Q. Obviously you discussed how different it is going against a player like Skattebo, but the SEC was kind of hyped coming into the season as a league with a lot of great quarterbacks. Sam Leavitt has kind of been under the radar from a national standpoint when it comes to his talent and what he brings to the table. What is your room and the defense's seen on film at least from the outside over these last couple of days and how would his skill sets or how do you feel he ranks among the quarterbacks you've played so far this season?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: I wouldn't want to rank him. I feel like that's a little bit too much.

But I'm seeing him throwing post routes, making big plays on third down, pulling it, tucking, and running. So I feel like he's an elite quarterback with sneaky speed. I'm seeing him do all this little stuff.

So of course we're going to have to game plan for him and seeing him extending plays when he's rolling out and throwing the screens late in the downs. So we're really going to have to execute and be ready to play against that guy.

Q. Jumping from freshman to sophomore year is huge. Which one of your teammates have taught you the most and helped you develop your game over these last couple of seasons?

ANTHONY HILL, JR.: I want to say just Jay Ford. Jay Ford, Barryn Sorrell, Jahdae. Them are some of the guys. Murphy and some of the guys that kind of helped recruit me, I kind of always look for them for help, and especially Barryn Sorrell.

So I look for him for help and stuff like that. So I feel like he's one of the ones that kind of helped me get better throughout the season and throughout the years.

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