

TaxSlayer Gator Bowl: Clemson vs Kentucky

Friday, December 29, 2023

Jacksonville, Florida, USA

TIAA Bank Field

Clemson Tigers

Barrett Carter

Press Conference



Q. Are you a wrestling fan?

BARRETT CARTER: Oh, my gosh. I was the biggest wrestling fan when I was a kid. When I realized it was fake, I kind of stopped watching it, but 7-year-old me is screaming right now just seeing the older version of me with a belt. It's definitely a surreal moment. Yeah, I used to be a wrestling fan.

Q. Barrett, defense allowed some big plays, fourth quarter turnovers. What were you able to do to come out and (off microphone)?

BARRETT CARTER: I think it all starts with Wes giving us great play calls. But, secondly, guys are just doing their jobs and flying around. I think that's how you create turnovers when guys do their jobs, and you get to the ball, and you never know what's going to happen.

Just like K.B. forcing that fumble, and I was able to scoop it up, just guys flying around doing their job. That's just a big emphasis for us, just flying around, making the plays that come to us, not trying to do too much. That's just huge for us to create those turnovers late in the game and just huge for momentum as well.

Q. Trial by fire for younger guys, but how much will that help them?

BARRETT CARTER: For sure. It's definitely a lot of growing pains when you are a young guy and you are thrown in the fire like that, but that's how you learn.

We just watched the video and said, if you don't lose a rep, if you don't lose in life, you're never going to learn, and that's what these young guys did.

They fought through so much adversity, but long-term it's going to help them succeed. I'm just super proud of them the way they fought for four quarters.

Q. Barrett, again, quartet of guys just led the way, Xavier Thomas with the pressure, you and Khalil and then Lewis put the bow on it, the nail in the coffin there at the end. As Dabo said, TV the defense. Y'all kept them in games all season long. How did it feel for the defense to just show resiliency, and how did it feel to be on the sideline to watch the offense make their mark and kind of end it on their terms?

BARRETT CARTER: Coach Swinney talks about our team is a triple-braided cord: offense, defense, and special teams. We all just try to feed off of each other and complement each other. Defense creates the turnover. Offense go out and score a touchdown, kick a field goal. Yeah, special teams in there with the kick.

We focus on that every single day at practice, just building off each other, creating momentum for each other and just feeding off each other's energy.

It was a four-quarter game to the least. Guys fought for the whole game. Just super proud of us and super proud of how each segment was able to feed off of each other. Just super proud of the guys.

Q. Why do you think you were so successful in the pass deflection today?

BARRETT CARTER: It was something we emphasized this week, just mirroring the hand. I mean, no knock on Devin Leary, but he is not a huge quarterback, and that's something we do week-by-week whenever we play somebody that's not as tall. Just focus on mirroring the hand and trying to bat those balls down. Fortunately, I was able to mirror the hand and get a pick.

I'm still mad. I dropped, like, two picks early in the game, but I'm super glad that I got one. That's definitely something that we work on all week in practice.

Q. You tipped one and went backwards. What was your frame of how you see the ball? What will you remember from that?



BARRETT CARTER: We had a good play called. Running back came to block me, and I saw he was about to throw the ball, so I got my hands up. I saw the ball -- it went behind me. Usually when you bat a ball down, it goes back towards the quarterback or somewhere like that, so I saw that it went behind me. I knew I had a chance to get it.

Just super fortunate that I was able to make the play. Just huge momentum for our team. That was a spark that was much needed for us.

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