

Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game: Alabama vs. Miami

Saturday, September 4, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Alabama Crimson Tide

Bryce Young

Will Anderson Jr

Cameron Latu

Phidarian Mathis

Press Conference

Q. Will and Phil, the defense today the pressure you put on D'Eriq can you take us through that and the success you think you had in the first half.

WILL ANDERSON, JR.: I think it was as we game planned this week. We stuck to our game plan saying we had to contain him and we had to rush together and rush as a unit and nobody can be selfish. And we all just have to play as a team and play up front as a team and just hold our gaps and be responsible to do our job.

PHIDARIAN MATHIS: The same thing. You know, we came out and did what Coach told us to do. That's the most important thing. I just think we've got to take from this game is keep working together, keep growing as a defense.

Q. Cameron, can you just talk about your big day today. Just talk about the whole receivers and how you all played. And also take through your touchdown catches as well.

CAMERON LATU: It felt -- touchdowns felt great, but it felt even better knowing that I helped my team gain a victory and I know we're going to build off this week and get better for next week. And receivers played great and we're just going to get better.

Q. Take us threw those the touchdowns what you were seeing.

CAMERON LATU: Down in the red area they had blitz zero, so I knew I had to get in my route, my first touchdown, I had to get in my route quick, knowing the ball



was going to come around quick.

And the second one they just -- yeah, I just caught the ball and ran. That's all. That's all I've got to say.

Q. Against the defense did Miami do what you were expecting them to do offensively? Was there a plan? I know in the second half they put up some yardage. What do you think changed -- what was successful to that point?

PHIDARIAN MATHIS: I think we've just got to finish. That's going to be a big thing for us in the future is finishing. Our four quarters we've got to finish the whole game out. I think we kind of let up and laid back towards the end and that's something we've got to fix quickly.

Q. I've got a question I'm hoping everyone can answer: Last year was really weird, there were no fans or limited fan attendance. This game there were fans and the stadium was full. What was it like for you guys?

WILL ANDERSON, JR.: It was cool. When you're on the field, like, I don't know for me, as for me when I'm on the field I kind of zone all that stuff out and focus on the job I have to do to help my teammates and lock in on getting the call and doing my job. But it was cool having the fans there just supporting us and loving us and just the noise and all that. It was good.

PHIDARIAN MATHIS: You really got to lock in. There's a lot of noise, so you've got to lock in and get the call and communicate. That's also something else we've got to do well. And I'm glad the fans back me. It brought a lot of excitement to my game and I feed off of it. I know Will do too.

Q. For Will and Phidarian, can you talk about the fourth down stop and then just kind of what a boost, it seems like Miami maybe had something going there down by the goal line. And obviously for the offensive guys turning into a 94-yard touchdown a couple plays later?



WILL ANDERSON, JR.: I think it goes back to that team chemistry we've been building, and everybody locking in and doing their job. And not one person being selfish but everybody, all 11 on the field playing the same play, same call and getting the job done. I think that's what it went back to.

PHIDARIAN MATHIS: Same thing, had to lock in and get the play call and everybody on the same page. It all started with communication and it got us where we needed to be.

Q. For Will and Phil, sorry -- my apologies if you've already been asked but thoughts about Chris Allen how tough that is for him losing him this early in the season, and how does this defense go forward without him?

PHIDARIAN MATHIS: For the season? My boy is going to be back. We going to be good.

WILL ANDERSON, JR.: Yeah, we good.

Q. Bryce, just curious was there a touchdown that felt the best to throw today?

BRYCE YOUNG: No. Not at all. Any time you can help the team put points on the board that is our goal as offense. So there wasn't any touchdown that was better. Whether it was a passing touchdown, a rushing touchdown every touchdown any time you put points on the board it's a good thing. That's obviously the goal of every drive. So they're all the same for us.

Q. For Bryce and Cam, I guess you first Bryce: Seems like you have a pretty good connection with Cam just from the offseason and then today, what is that like? And I guess the same question to Cam, what is your chemistry like with Bryce?

BRYCE YOUNG: Yeah, it's a lot of work in the offseason. A lot of reps in practice, a lot of reps after practice with us getting on the same page. And I think that's the key with any good offense, making sure everyone's on the same page. We've been working to build that connection. Obviously me and Cam been doing it, rest of the receivers, everyone on the offense has been working this offseason to build that connection.

CAMERON LATU: What? Oh. Yeah, I say we got good connection but it just all comes from the hard work that we do day in and day out. Everybody usually does, is a piece of that on the offense and just repetition. That's it.

Q. For Bryce, after all the talk in the offseason and all

the pressure, how good did it feel to get out there and play today not only play but to play well?

BRYCE YOUNG: It felt great. It felt great. Obviously any time there's offseason there's a lot of anticipation and, you know, you start to get a little anxious. But for us to get the first win out of the way, did some good things there's some stuff for us to improve on. You know, we get to put it up on tape, learn from it. Good start to the year but we know we have to keep working week in and week out.

It's definitely fun. It's fun always being out there with my guys. So it's definitely a lot of fun but we have a lot of growth and a lot of improvement left to do.

Q. For you, Cam: Coach Saban just talked about your transcription from outside backer and you buying in. Can you describe how that situation went and how fulfilled you may feel tonight after a couple of the touchdowns and a big game.

CAMERON LATU: I came in as a outside linebacker and a year later we was just low on tight ends and they just wanted to see if I could fit into that scheme on offense and see what I could do to fill a little void from having less tight ends, and it was a pretty deep outside linebacker group. So I just took a chance and trusted the coaches and just put in the work day in and day out and it just was good.

Q. Bryce, just want to ask about your first throw. The first play call, you were throwing deep. They weren't asking you to throw a screen pass or a get-to-know-you kind of play. How did that feel? What was that moment like being on the field for the first time as a starting quarterback?

BRYCE YOUNG: Yeah. That really just getting that trust from OB from Coach Saban that speaks volumes as a quarterback. Especially me who I know prior -- technically I hadn't taken a starting snap but for him to trust me and knew it a little bit from the plan going in, but to know we were going to take a shot early and for him to trust me and not try to hold back or changing the play calls, that means a lot. And I felt like that was trust I was trying to build and establish in the offseason. But having that trust from Coach Saban and OB, it means a lot to me.

Q. Bryce, for people who haven't known who you are for a while, you've been kind of at the top of the food chain from IE Ducks all the way to Mater Dei. And now you're here. People kind of expected you to have a feeling out period but is it sort of I guess a confidence builder that you are who people thought you were and even though there were so many questions like can you handle it? Can you take the mantle of this national



champion ship program?

BRYCE YOUNG: That's a good question. I'd say I didn't feel too much of that. Really, for me, external pressure is something that's always going to be there. It's not really something that I'm focused on and we're focused on as a group. For me, it was just trying to do my best to help the team. That's what it's always been. That's what it's going to be for all season. It's just doing what I can to execute the game plan, us coming out, working during the week and then executing on the weekends.

So I'm not really a big, broad, big picture type guy. It's what week are we on, who are we preparing for. And that's all I was focused on. And, really, I got a lot of confidence and a boost from my teammates on both sides of the ball. Everybody just -- I'm blessed to have the team that I have. And a lot of confidence came from enemy and the work we've put in. But I've just been focused on this game.

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