

Capital One Orange Bowl: Alabama vs Oklahoma

Wednesday, December 26, 2018

Tua Tagovailova

Alabama Crimson Tide



Q. The practice on Christmas Day, was it different than normal practices?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: It's the same practice. Monday practice has been the same, Tuesday practice has been the same. What is today, Wednesday? Wednesday practice is going to be the same.

Q. Tuesday practice is a Tuesday practice, whether it's Christmas or not?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Oh, yeah.

Q. So hitting was good, nobody too stuffed or --

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Oh, I don't think anyone ate the way they'd eat on Christmas Day. It was different. Not a lot of homemade food, you know.

Q. What do you think it's going to be like seeing Kyle around the other side now that you got to know him so well in New York?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: I think it's going to be exciting. I think he's a competitor, I'm a competitor, and to be able to go up against the best, that's what you want to do. I think it's going to be really fun.

Q. Have you guys kept in touch since then? Have you texted back and forth at all?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Well, we actually haven't. He's been really, really busy, especially after the Heisman, and I've been kind of busy with trying to get treatment on my ankle, rehabbing. It's been really good.

Q. This offense has been described as a smashmouth style. Do you consider this a smashmouth-style offense?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: You know, I think we're pretty multiple at this point. We can run the ball, and Coach Locksley can throw the ball. Whatever the coaches call, we're going to go out and try our best to execute it.

Q. How much of an advantage is that, being able to have kind of whatever you guys want to be?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: I think it's a big advantage, keeps the defense on their toes. It doesn't let them get comfortable with think we're just going to do this or do that. It definitely makes them feel uncomfortable with having to defend all perimeters of the football.

Q. Just quarterback to quarterback, what's the

biggest thing you see the first time you see Kyler play?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Oh, he's exciting to watch. He's exciting. He's very explosive. I mean, with what he does in that offense, he's done a tremendous job, and I have a lot of respect for him.

Q. Growing up as a left-handed quarterback, did you look up to any left-handed quarterbacks?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Yeah, so our family team growing up was USC, and my number was No. 11 kind of when I started playing because Matt Leinart I think was the quarterback, and he was a lefty, as well. That's who I looked up to at first.

Q. What do you think of the fact that there's no left-handed quarterbacks left playing?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: I did not know that.

Q. Have coaches ever pointed out to you because there are so few lefties that drills are kind of uncomfortable?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: No, no.

Q. Do receivers have to do things a little different?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Yeah, when I first arrived, a lot of the guys were so used to right-handed quarterbacks that when I ended up throwing to them, they definitely talked about how the spin was different, how the ball comes to them. It's not the same.

Q. How is it different? We've never caught passes.

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: I'm not too sure. You would have to go across there and ask that man, Jerry Jeudy. He could explain to you better than I could.

Q. In what areas have you seen improvement from him?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Well, I think his work throughout the off-season has definitely paid dividends to not only the awards but just everything that he's been getting recognized for. I mean, aside from what he's been doing off-season, he's been a really great teammate. He's been helping out guys like Jaylen Waddle and a lot of the other younger guys. He's been really good for us.

Q. How has Jalen pushed you this year, and what was that dynamic like?

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Yeah, I mean, I think Jalen pushed me a lot, but aside from Jalen, we have other guys in the quarterback room, some walk-ons and we know we have Mac Jones, as well. It's a competition every day you go out there. You have the defense challenging you, you have your coaches challenging you. I'm not saying there's a lot of pressure, but you do understand that when you do go out there, there's a standard that you need to compete to.

Q. You were in his shoes at the end of the SEC Championship game that he was last year. What was going through your mind? How happy were you for him? Was that kind of like watching him do what --

TUA TAGOVAILOVA: Yeah, I was very happy for him, for him and his family to have stuck it out like that. I understand that it's not easy to do something like that. I mean, I wouldn't be able to fathom what they went through as a family throughout this entire process, but I'm grateful for how he was raised, how he's been raised, and I've said this before, it's definitely a testament to his family and his upbringing. But everything that he's gone through and that he witnessed in the SEC Championship game, he definitely deserved.