

Capital One Orange Bowl: Alabama vs Oklahoma

Thursday, December 27, 2018

Ben Powers

Oklahoma Sooners

Q. Are you excited to be down here in Miami?

BEN POWERS: I am.

Q. Have you ever been here before?

BEN POWERS: I have not. I'm enjoying it, though. The weather has been beautiful. I thought it was going to be a lot hotter.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the defensive line this year. What have you seen so far?

BEN POWERS: I mean, they're a great defense, obviously. They've been great all year. Looking forward to playing them.

Q. Quinnen Williams, then there's Isaiah and (indiscernible). What are you guys kind of messaging (indiscernible)?

BEN POWERS: Just play our best ball. If we play our best, it's going to be enough.

Q. Do you guys kind of feel like underdogs with how everyone is talking about them and not saying too much about you guys?

BEN POWERS: You know, a lot of people have been down on us all year. It's nothing new for us.

Q. Talk to me about the preparation this week of practice leading up to this game. What is it like game planning for Alabama and their personnel that they bring to the table?

BEN POWERS: You know, we've been game planning like we have every game. We treat all these games the same, but obviously this one has more on the line, so we take our preparation just a step further in that aspect, going and getting after it, man.

Q. Do you see any similarities to last year's game with Georgia to this Alabama defense?

BEN POWERS: Yeah, I'd say similar in the aspects that they're both good defenses, and yeah.

Q. What's it like blocking for a guy like Kyler Murray who can escape any minute, extend plays, make all the throws? What's it like blocking for him up front?

BEN POWERS: You know, I've been so fortunate to block for Baker and then Kyler, it's pretty crazy that I've had such two good quarterbacks, but as much as we

help Kyler keeping the pocket clean, he helps us in getting out of situations.

Q. Most quarterbacks are broke in college. Kyler Murray is not. Does he treat you guys well? Does he take you guys out to eat and spoil you?

BEN POWERS: Like he said in his Heisman presentation, he takes us out every Wednesday night.

Q. How would you describe your guys as a cohesive unit?

BEN POWERS: You know, if you spent any amount of time around us, you'd see we're the closest group of guys you'll probably ever know and the closest group of guys I've ever been around, and we have a great time, and we have so much fun together. These are the funniest guys I've been around. But when it's time to go, it's time to go. And when we strap it up and put on the pads, it's all business.

Q. People say chemistry is important. All offensive lines want to have it, but what's gone into getting that?

BEN POWERS: If you look at it, me, Cody Ford, Dru Samia, Bobby Evans, we all graduated high school in 2015, and they had a semester here before I came here. And other than that, we've been -- in that time since 2015, we've done everything together. And so you're exactly right, it takes a lot of time to get to where we've been.

Q. Were there recruiting weekends at the same time? Did you guys hook up on social media before you arrived on campus?

BEN POWERS: You know, those three got there -- they were here for the first time playing in the Orange Bowl, and then I went to a junior college my first semester of college. So I didn't go to any recruiting visits with any of them. But I'm not sure if they --

Q. You were kind of like the new guy in the group, they already had some time together?

BEN POWERS: Exactly right.

Q. Did you have to earn your way in?

BEN POWERS: Yep, uh-huh.

Q. Even Alabama's D-linemen, that's where I first noticed that they saw on film what they interpreted



as real closeness between this offensive line. The quarterback makes a play, the offensive line is on fire. Like your opponents notice that. That might be second nature for you, but --

BEN POWERS: That's interesting. I never heard that before.

Q. I had never heard a D-lineman say I noticed watching the tape -- that's just a characteristic --

BEN POWERS: That's something we practice every week, and obviously if he's seeing it, it shows, so that's a good thing.