

# Capital One Orange Bowl: Texas A&M vs North Carolina

Monday, December 28, 2020

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

## Texas A&M

Hard Rock Stadium

## Ainias Smith

Press Conference



**Q. When you look at the offense, obviously the O-line is senior-laden except for Kenyon and obviously you've got Kellen, but other than that a lot of the playmakers, it's you and Spiller and Wydermyer. What do you make of the young kind of playmakers on the offense?**

AINIAS SMITH: I'm excited to see what the future holds for us. I mean, it's definitely going to be tough losing Kellen and all of them, but we have playmakers, just like you said, so I'm excited.

**Q. How do you feed off each other, especially you and Isaiah this year? We've talked to you a lot this year, but what's the dynamic been like?**

AINIAS SMITH: Man, it's amazing. It's just -- I know really the way I feed off of everybody else is I know the person next to me is going to be on their P's and Q's at all times, so I'll never have to worry about anything that -- I don't have to worry about them messing up and them not knowing their responsibilities.

So it's just we're all on the same train and we're all pushing for the same goals.

**Q. When you look at the North Carolina defense there, what impresses you when you look at them on film? What do you see?**

AINIAS SMITH: They play very well, and they know their responsibilities. That's what I can say about that.

**Q. Big bowl game that you guys are playing in against a ranked opponent. What would a good performance in the Orange Bowl do for this program?**

AINIAS SMITH: It would just give us huge confidence in ourselves and just prove to us that we are able to be able to play with a lot of people in this nation, not only in the

SEC and just being able to go around and playing whoever. I mean, this win is going to mean a lot to us.

**Q. Proving it to yourself, do you feel like you have to prove it to anybody else, maybe fans or other folks in the nation?**

AINIAS SMITH: I would say we're not too much worried about proving our ability to anybody else. I feel like our main thing is just proving to ourselves that we can keep going.

**Q. How disappointed was the team that y'all didn't make the playoff, because I know there was a lot of tweets and a lot of conversation about that and then just kind of what has been the conversation since then to kind of get focused in for this bowl game?**

AINIAS SMITH: I can say we were actually pretty disappointed that we didn't make the playoffs. I mean, who wouldn't get disappointed that you're not in the playoffs and you're right there. You were working so hard and winning and believing that you're doing everything right to be able to get in the playoffs, but our mindset is not worried about that no more. We're worried about finishing the season and finishing strong.

**Q. Coach Dickey was talking about y'all's style of play is like the long drives, but as a receiver do you ever get anxious and wish that they'd just start throwing deep to you more?**

AINIAS SMITH: I mean, I trust Coach Fisher, so it's not really a problem. Whatever he calls, we've just got to execute. 3rd down, we look at that as just another down, and we've just got to capitalize. It's not so much about getting in and getting out. If we control the ball, then shoot, we'll win.

**Q. I'm just asking personally as a receiver, do you want him to open it up more and look at you deep?**

AINIAS SMITH: Like I said, I trust Coach Fisher, so that's on him.

**Q. A couple UNC guys have opted out of the bowl game, but Coach Dickey told us everyone from A&M seems locked in and ready to go. From your**

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**perspective, what does that say about this program that it may not have been the CFP but everyone is committed to playing and showing out in the bowl game?**

AINIAS SMITH: It just shows how dedicated and how much work that we actually put in to be able to get to this opportunity. We're not going to take this opportunity for granted. We're going to take advantage of every opportunity that we have given -- that we have been given, and I feel like that's the whole team's mindset. We've just got to come out and execute and just show ourselves that we can do it.

**Q. I was just wondering, why do you think your dynamic ability to receive handoffs and receive the ball at the same time in the backfield make you such a threat for this week's game against North Carolina?**

AINIAS SMITH: We can get them in different personnels and Coach Fisher loves that. If we get them in a bad personnel to where we go four wide, and then I get moved to the backfield with Isaiah in the game is just a bad match-up for them.

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