

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

Monday, December 28, 2020

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Texas A&M

Hard Rock Stadium

Jalen Wydermyer

Press Conference



Q. Jalen, I wanted to ask you about the idea that you, Ainius and Isaiah from all from the Houston area and how much pride y'all have in that, being from 90 miles, 100 miles from Texas A&M and doing what you're doing together as sophomores?

JALEN WYDERMYER: I see it, it's really amazing to me. It's kind of crazy if you think about it. That's me -- that's something me, Ainius and Isaiah Spiller kind of talk about, and how it's really cool to put our city on the map pretty much.

Q. I know we talked to Kellen earlier about what this would mean for him if it was his last game. What in your opinion has Kellen done for this program and how have you seen him mature and take on leadership roles with the program?

JALEN WYDERMYER: I've seen him hit amazing strides in his game and his leadership on this team. He's one of the best leaders I've ever been around. He pushes other people to be better in practice when nobody wants to strive to get better. When everybody is tired, he's the one that says, come on, we've got to go, we've got to keep going, we've got to keep working.

He's one of the best leaders I've ever been around and I've seen him grow so much since last year.

Q. How much is there a conversation around about some of the older guys, if they're going to come back or move on and try to go pro with the extra year of eligibility?

JALEN WYDERMYER: Honestly, I have no idea. That's their future. That's something if they want to do then they can do. Yeah, I don't know what they're going to do.

Q. The last time we talked to you we were trying to figure out who was going to be in the College Football

Playoff. Obviously the next day was a disappointment. What was the mindset of the team when you found out that you guys were staying at five and how has that mindset changed now that you're getting ready for the Orange Bowl?

JALEN WYDERMYER: Like I say, we were definitely disappointed that we didn't get in the No. 4 seed or the playoffs, but we're humble and excited to play in the Orange Bowl against North Carolina. You've got to get what you can get.

Q. What did you have to work on the most to become a complete tight end when you came to A&M? Seemed like you already had receiving skills, but in terms of what they wanted you to do, what you had to do to kind of take it to that next level, what was the thing you had to work on the most?

JALEN WYDERMYER: It would definitely be my -- I was always a skilled runner, a skilled route runner, but it would have to be my willingness to block. That's something that I had to learn as I came here and since I've been here I feel like I've grown in that tremendously.

Q. Can you talk about how, I guess, important it would be for you guys to end the season on a win? I know it's always a big deal, but how that kind of catapults you guys into next season?

JALEN WYDERMYER: Yeah, it would definitely catapult us into next season, a good taste in our mouth, and after a year like this, this is the kind of year that would build a culture around A&M, and if we keep that going, it's going to help us a lot with recruiting and just all-around football play around this school. It would definitely help a lot.

Q. When you look at North Carolina on defense, some of the guys have opted out, but what do you see on the defense when you look at them on film?

JALEN WYDERMYER: Something that really caught my eye is they have really athletic linebackers that can move around and chase the ball and make plays, so that's something we've got to look out for.

Q. What did you make of the passing game this year? You lead the teams in yards but no one has got huge

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numbers. How were you guys successful in the pass despite not having huge numbers?

JALEN WYDERMYER: Like I say, we run the ball a lot. We do. We make second-level blocks and first-level blocks and we set up the run really nice. Once the linebackers step up and stuff like that, that's when our chance is for play-action passes and RPOs and stuff like that.

Q. You want the ball in your hands, right? How does that work when you're a quote-unquote running team, how do you remain unselfish?

JALEN WYDERMYER: I'm really close with Isaiah and Ainnias, and I know that running the ball will set up play action and will bring the linebackers up, and that's when I get my three- or four-yard touchdowns. That's how I get certain stuff, but I've got to block and show that I can be a blocker first, and it will always come back to me. I'm not really worried about it.

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