

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

Monday, December 28, 2020

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

## North Carolina

Hard Rock Stadium

## Tomon Fox

Press Conference



entire game. It just makes you play harder throughout all four quarters.

**Q. How have you seen him change maybe in the way they approach practice, maybe there's a little bit more spirit from them, something over the last month, five weeks when they became more a part of everything?**

TOMON FOX: They changed -- they have an attitude of getting better in each and every practice. Each and every rep has a purpose now instead of just trying to get through the practices, counting down the periods, waiting for it's over, they actually are at least trying to get better because they know they're going to get in the game. So they've got to make sure they're on the same level that everybody else that's playing.

**Q. Mack was talking earlier about how proud he is of the team, everybody involved of just making it through a season, coming from all different places. Do you have a sense of pride like that yourself? How much mental and physical fatigue are you feeling right now?**

TOMON FOX: I've been with the 2-9 team, so I've faced a lot of adversity before, and I feel like this is just another little obstacle that we could easily overcome. But yeah, I do feel a sense of pride just in the whole team staying together, everybody wanting to work, starting all the way back from spring when we heard spring ball was canceled. People had Zoom workouts; it started with that. Everybody just went to Zoom workouts on time, doing the little things right just to make it to this point where we're at right now.

**Q. I know that your teammate Patrice Rene hasn't played much since suffering an injury last year, but how important has he been for you as a teammate over the years playing for the Tar Heels?**

TOMON FOX: Patrice is very important to the team. He's my class. He's just been -- he has that personality where he makes everyone around him want to just work and be better. This year, last year, he always gets noticed in the weight room for just being the person who's talking, trying to get everybody better, and you translate that to the field, too, trying to keep everybody up tempo and make sure nobody is slacking, having their head down or anything like that. He's just very important to the personality of the team.

**Q. Tomon, the defense kind of seems like it's taken the next step forward in that game against Notre Dame. What's been the key for the defense to play at a different level the last three games?**

TOMON FOX: I think it could just be our communication. We start in practice. We emphasize being able to communicate, just talking, talking every play no matter what. Every little thing we see, we've got to talk to each other out there, make sure we get enough plays in and make sure everybody is on the same page before we go out and play. I think at the beginning of the year that's what we lacked a little bit, just communication, which leads to busted assignments, which created big plays for other offenses.

**Q. What stands out to you about this A&M offense?**

TOMON FOX: Just the experience they have, especially up front and with the quarterback. They play very well together. They have a cohesive O-line. They work together to get to the next level, create those extra blocks for the running backs, which are -- they have a good running back, 28, a good downhill runner, also is good in space. Then they have No. 0 who they use all around the field. They like to motion him a lot and get him in places where he can make plays.

**Q. The last several games Desmond, Clyde, Myles and even Kevin Hester have gotten a lot more reps in that rotation for you guys. How has that made your defense better, especially up front?**

TOMON FOX: Yeah, well, those guys, they started off at practice, they have hard work in practice, and get them some reps in the game and they showed that they're able to play and there's not any drop-off. So I think that helps the team as a whole stay fresh, being able to spread the workload throughout most of the people on the D-line instead of keeping one person or two people in the whole



**Q. How important has he been for some of the younger guys? I know Trey was just in talking about how he's been -- he cheers the guys on the sidelines a lot. Can you comment on that, just how important he's been for the younger guys on this team?**

TOMON FOX: Yeah, he's like the big brother of the DB room. He's out there, like you say, he was supporting the guys. Even when he was injured, he was out there on the sideline while doing his workouts, he was making sure he watches what the young guys are doing, critiquing them, helping them get better while he's also getting better. He's just done that even more since he's came back and he's on the field actually with us.

**Q. This is your last game as a Tar Heel; what's going through your mind? From your commitment to UNC to these four years, what's it been like and what are your thoughts leading up to this game?**

TOMON FOX: There's a lot going through my mind right now thinking this is my last game as a Tar Heel. I want to make the most of it. I just think about how far we've come, having like two losing seasons back-to-back and Mack coming in, new coaches every year. Just think of all the stuff that we've been through just to make it to this point of the Orange Bowl. It just puts a lot of pride in me.

**Q. Is it going to be emotional for you? This has been a pretty big four years of your life.**

TOMON FOX: It's going to be emotional but I'm going to keep my composure on that day.

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