

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

Tuesday, December 29, 2020

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

North Carolina Tar Heels

Hard Rock Stadium

Emery Simmons

Press Conference



Q. Emery, you've obviously seen probably a lot of noise on social media about the opt-outs hurting you guys' chances to win on Saturday. Do you feel a sense of disrespect and are you playing with a chip on your shoulder despite playing well this season?

EMERY SIMMONS: Not at all. I feel like us as a team, I feel like we all supported our teammates with the decision they made. The goal of this game is to play, and then if you're blessed with the opportunity to go and further your career, then take it. It's all love to them guys. I wish them the best, but I feel like with our team we've still got guys that's in play, that can fulfill them roles and make the big plays. That's why we recruited. That's why coaches come out and get us. I feel like even now with them opting out, I still feel like we've got a good chance to come out there and prove that we're a top contender.

Q. Because of all the opt-outs and people maybe doubting you and see a little bit more despite you saying you get recruited for a reason, are you playing with a chip on your shoulder hearing this commentary knowing how you and your teammates can play?

EMERY SIMMONS: I still would say it wouldn't be much of a chip. The confidence is there. We know what we do in practice. We know the type of skill set we have, so I feel like it's another game. You just go out there and play. I mean, it's just on a bigger -- just now you take the chances you get, it's on a bigger stage, but it still doesn't change the game at all. I still feel like our guys are going to be ready and we're all going to step up to the plate.

Q. Kind of sticking on the opt-outs for a second, how much does your role change, if at all, with so many skill guys opting out, and kind of staying with that as well, how much does your mindset maybe going into the game change knowing that you're going to be a guy that's really heavily relied on to go out there and make plays on a consistent basis?

EMERY SIMMONS: My mindset still hasn't changed. It's still been with me throughout the season. Just next man up. It's been that way from the beginning of the season. You've still got to take that, even though Dyami is not here, you've still got to prepare like you're in that starting role or you're going to get the ball because you never know.

So with him being gone, it's making more room for guys just to come up and make plays, and now it's going to be all over the place now, so it's more so other guys like our running backs, Josh Henderson, British Brooks and a little bit more of our receivers coming in and making big plays to help out this offense and keep the offense where it's been.

Q. You were inserted in the starting lineup after Bo went down. You've gotten a ton of reps since then. How was your game evolved over these last seven games or so?

EMERY SIMMONS: Just more confidence I would say. Over these last couple games with me getting -- starting, I feel like I've built more confidence, but I feel like that confidence has been there all along. It was just a matter of getting the opportunity to go out there and show it. So I feel like with that happening, it was more so just next-man-up mentality and go out there and playing the game you love, just going out there having fun doing it, and it just worked out.

Q. We've seen some flashes from Khafre and the Virginia game, for example, he had a big touchdown in that game. What is your scouting report of Khafre Brown?

EMERY SIMMONS: Khafre Brown is explosive. He's an explosive guy, very twitchy, very fast, and he's just like his brother, can beat you deep, got great hands. All around the board good guy and great player.

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