

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

Sunday, January 3, 2021
Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Texas A&M Aggies

Hard Rock Stadium

Buddy Johnson

Press Conference



Texas A&M 41, North Carolina 27

Q. Thinking about that 4th down stop when you got the turnover on downs, you guys got the lead and then you got the stop on defense, how exhilarating was getting that stop? And what did it mean that Jayden Peevy, a senior, was the guy that made that play?

BUDDY JOHNSON: That's huge. That just goes back to our toughness and the effort we play with around here, what Coach Fisher is trying to build around here. That's huge for JP to get that, because if you just look back where we started and where we came from, we got Coach Fisher in and changed the program around. For us seniors to be able to contribute and be part of the reason why this program has been changed around is huge for him.

Q. Did anything change defensively for you guys there in basically most of the fourth quarter? After they scored, you guys held them scoreless down the stretch.

BUDDY JOHNSON: You just have to lock in and keep making game adjustments. Like I say, they have a great team and they came out and they fought hard, but we rose to the challenge. Hats off to them for giving us a hard fight, but that's our type of game. When it's time to step up, I think our guys did a great job of doing that.

Q. What does it mean senior to go out like this?

BUDDY JOHNSON: It's huge for us to be able to be Orange Bowl champs and having a New Year's Six bowl is huge. Just look back at where we came from and it's just huge to be a part of it.

Q. Earlier in the week you said this was the calm before the storm and the real storm was coming. Just wanted to follow up on that after the Orange Bowl win. What do you think the storm that's coming looks like?

BUDDY JOHNSON: I don't know, but I would definitely be scared if I was looking for it. Like I say, Coach Fisher, he's a tough coach, and all that toughness just goes back out to the field. It shows itself. Like I say, man, just being a part of it, I see it, and I see it coming. I would be worried if I was someone looking for it.

Q. Speaking of Coach Fisher, did you know he was that fast?

BUDDY JOHNSON: Man. I'm talking about took off. It probably -- half of it was because Buck was slow, too, but he took off.

Q. With you potentially not coming back next season, I was wondering if you could talk about how much of a pleasure it has been for you to lead this A&M defense this season.

BUDDY JOHNSON: It's been huge, just being a leader and being one of the chosen ones by the coaches. But I have to say it wasn't only me that was a leader on this team. We had a lot of guys that stepped up and was leaders for our team, like me, Micheal Clemons, Kellen Mond, Jayden Peevy, guys stepped up huge for us. We rose to the challenge, and I'm just only proud of the guys that stepped up and proud of the team for trusting the leaders and the coaches and being able to be led.

Q. Coach Fisher talked about on the stage there putting the bitterness of the final rankings aside, putting your focus on the task at hand. That's one that sounds easier said than done. How do you actually do that in the two weeks since the rankings came out, and how did you not let the bitterness get the best of you and go play the game you did tonight?

BUDDY JOHNSON: Like I say, guys will be frustrated, and emotions will be high. You feel like you're supposed to make the playoffs and you didn't make it. Like I say, it's about keeping your composure and being able to go out and finish the season. Like I say, we had a huge opportunity right in front of us, and I think we looked ourselves in the mirror and went out and did a great job of finishing the season off. Last week, like I said, this game was going to be the game that we put a cap on the season, and I think we did that.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

Q. Does tonight's win kind of encapsulate and sum up what this team was about this year, kind of a grind-and-fight team that never seems to go away?

BUDDY JOHNSON: Most definitely. Back when the pandemic first hit, there was a lot going on, and then we had social injustice things going on. Some of those things pull teams apart, but I think it only made our team stronger. We bonded together a lot more, and I think that was huge for us.

I think the pandemic was a lesson for us, and I'm so proud of the coaches, just the way they handled it. Some of these coaches are like father figures to some of us. So for them to step up to the plate and just be there for whatever we needed was huge for us. That's why I think we lay it out on the field for those guys because we know they have our backs.

Q. You talk about, again, the storm that's coming. Are you going to be part of that storm?

BUDDY JOHNSON: Man, I hope so. Like I say, I'm going to pray on it, and wherever God leads me to, that's where I'll be.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports