

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

Sunday, January 3, 2021

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

North Carolina Tar Heels

Hard Rock Stadium

Jeremiah Gemmel

Press Conference

Texas A&M 41, North Carolina 27

Q. Jeremiah, did fatigue set in for you guys there late in the game in the fourth quarter?

JEREMIAH GEMMEL: It was definitely hot out there, but every time we substitute D-linemen, I felt like we were getting a good push, a good move on the line. But they did some things schematically that they haven't done all year, so I think that really affected us.

Q. What were some of the changes that they made the second half?

JEREMIAH GEMMEL: They always ran their counter -- a counter into the boundary, but then they started running some G lead, one-gap, one-pulling schemes into the boundary, and they really haven't done that a lot this year, usually it's like counter and then boundary, but then they switched it up they ran G lead into the boundary. That's something we hadn't really seen since like week one or two that we thought they threw out of the package.

Q. You guys had five three-and-outs. Take away the fourth quarter of what they did. Do you think you guys actually made some progress tonight and showed glimpses of what this defense is going to look like moving forward?

JEREMIAH GEMMEL: Absolutely, yes, and there's still young guys making plays out there. I see Kaimon Rucker out there when we are in our odd front, sticking the tackle, shaking down the line and making an athletic tackle. I see JQ out there covering guys and making tackles in space.

I thought we played really good. I thought the young guys played really good, and I think that shows something that we can look forward to next season.

Q. Did you get a gauge on how Eugene played?

JEREMIAH GEMMEL: Oh, Eugene played great. Every time I sent something back or spilled, he was always right behind me to sit there and make the play. If there was a blitz and I had to blitz the B gap and he had to scrape off make the C gap, he made the play. He was on his P's and Q's. He studied, he prepared well, and that showed in the game.

Q. Jeremiah, what else did you see from the defense and some young guys that really excites you for the potential of this group next year?

JEREMIAH GEMMEL: Some things that I haven't seen really all year is some guys making some checks out of a certain formation that we've been talking about during the week. Sometimes the young guys are kind of timid like to make the calls because they're not sure if it's right, but we had two weeks to prepare. So JQ was out there yelling some of our calls in certain coverages that we had to get in. And some of the young guys got in there when they went into their empty package and we needed games in the front or a twist in the middle, the young guys were up there yelling the twist before I even said anything. So that's something I haven't seen all year, but I got to see it in this game.

Q. What to you was the difference once Spiller went out of the game and A&M went primary with -- I'm not going to say his name right, No. 6?

JEREMIAH GEMMEL: Yeah, they went to the odd formation, and actually that's when they went to the G lead play. I don't know if it was built in for No. 6 because I know No. 6 played running back early in the season, and they ran the G lead with him. But yeah, when 28 came out, I saw No. 6 leading the backfield a lot more and we saw the power eye that we really haven't seen all year, also, besides goal line.

Q. After a game like this, how close do you think you guys are to having that real breakthrough of being a top 10 team?

JEREMIAH GEMMEL: I mean, I think we're really close. They're a No. 5 team, who a lot of people thought should have been in the playoffs, and we had them tied up seven or six minutes left, and they busted one for a long

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touchdown. You take that out, no telling, it could have been different for us.

But I've seen a lot of good things out there. I've seen young guys making plays. I see young guys making checks, and most of the time freshmen are timid out there to make calls or in a big game like this sometimes they're scared to make a play, and there was no slow motion. They were quick to react, and they made a lot of plays and made a lot of checks, and that's just something I haven't seen all year, and something I'm actually proud of because they prepared so well over these two weeks.

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