



**Allstate Sugar Bowl
Georgia
Post-Game Press Conference
January 1, 2020**



COACH SMART: I'd first like to thank Monique [Morial], president, and Jeff [Hundley], CEO, for the tremendous job they did hosting us.

I said it the other day, I was very concerned about our players coming back to this bowl game where they would know the events, know the places, know all that, and not be excited about it.

But our kids embraced it. They embraced being with each other. They went to a bowling event. They went to a barbecue event. They went to a basketball game, and they had a blast each time. Each time we told them to turn on and work, they worked.

We didn't work long, but we worked really hard and really physical. They bought into that. I thought our coaching staff did a great job. Our players bought into it.

The Allstate Sugar Bowl Committee has just been tremendous to us. I finally got a Sugar Bowl victory. I've been to a lot of these and didn't get many wins, but I got one this time. I'm proud of this team.

Q. Jake [Fromm] and George [Pickens], it appears like you guys got a little bit of chemistry and it was working pretty well, especially in the first half. Jake, can you talk about it first? And, George, can you talk about that? And having George back next year, would that be incentive for you to return?

JAKE FROMM: Yeah. I love George. George is a great teammate, a great football player. What I love about George is he loves football. He loves going out, competing. I can say for him showing up at practice, he's the same guy, same competitor every single day. And I know I love it. I know Coach (Kirby Smart) loves it. But he's a competitor. He goes out and competes. Seeing him do something like he did today, no surprise to us. And he's just going out and playing the game he loves.

GEORGE PICKENS: I also agree with what Jake said. It's really just him. He pushed me every day. Coach [Kirby] Smart pushed me every day to be the player I am today. So just me connecting with him at practice all the time is really just the best thing.

Q. I wanted to ask you about that jump or leap or whatever it was. Do you think about it before you do it, or what's going through your head when you're midair like that?

GEORGE PICKENS: I just play football. When I see that guy running full speed, I try literally every option to avoid him. I know it looks crazy when I'm trying to leap over people and risking injury, but I mean I'm just playing football.

Q. Kirby, how big was it to your defense to get that shutout in the first half? And, also, I know you've got to be proud of the running game. I think D'Andre [Swift] only ran it one time. But all those other backs got the change moving.



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COACH SMART: I thought that was the biggest difference in our offense tonight, having a semblance of the running game, committed to the run, and being able to get those positive yards.

I thought Jake [Fromm] did a tremendous job making good decisions on the RPOs on the perimeter. Obviously we won some 50/50 balls.

The defense played really inspiring football. They played really hard. They got turnovers. They gave the offense some short fields, which we thought would be critical, whether it was a fourth-down stop or a turnover.

Q. Jake [Fromm], I wanted to ask, tonight has been different from the last six games or so. What did it feel like to get rolling in the way you did? This is a much more common stat line for you than the most recent.

JAKE FROMM: I think going into it, I think there was a big focus. I think we had probably the best two and a half weeks of practice we've had all year. I think guys were committed. Guys were focused, and we had a really good plan going in. It was an opportunity for a lot of guys to come out and kind of have their coming-out party and a lot of guys played really well.

And I think there was a big common goal, no outside really noise to it, and guys just wanted to come out and play football. I think we had a really good plan and we executed on it.

Q. Coach [Kirby] Smart, can you just talk about, Lewis Cine, D.J. Daniel lead the team in tackles. George Pickens leads the team in receptions. Zamir [White] leads in rushing. A lot of young pups kind of stepped up today. Can you talk about that and sort of looking forward to having a lot of those guys back next year?

COACH SMART: Yeah. I mean, to be honest with you, the future's only bright if those guys continue to work because there's a disease that creeps in at Georgia where kids believe they are better than they are and they read their own press clippings.

And our team chaplain did a wonderful job today expressing that in a verse, and I can't quote the verse. Jake [Fromm] probably can. He basically said that when you start reading about yourself and believing your own press clippings is when you start to fall.

Those kids you just mentioned are tremendous players, but they'll only be as good as they can be if they stay as hungry as they are.

When you're not hungry, you become average. And some of that, I think, has affected us in the past. And we've got to find a way in this program to not let that creep in and keep that same hunger you have as a young player because we've had it happen to several guys that were really hungry, and then they become full. And you can't become full when you go playing the teams we play against.



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Q. Kirby, was that fake field goal there earlier? And why call that then the second time, I guess?

COACH SMART: Well, I wanted to call it the first time, and I chickened out. And then I wanted to call it the second time, and then I chickened out. So the third time was the charm because we didn't want to do it on a long down and distance. We wanted to do it on a manageable. You have a fourth and two and it's there. And you have a fourth and three and it's there. And you don't know how many of those situations you're going to have because it's not a play that's going to work on fourth and really long.

But we had worked it hard. Coach [Scott] Fountain and his staff had put it together. We thought it was there. And we've kicked so many field goals this year that you have got to score touchdowns. And I thought that would give us the momentum if we got it, and I felt like they were going to score points.

We've got to score touchdowns. We can't keep getting 3s. Jake [Fromm] did a great job executing it. And Eli Wolf had one of the prime -- he and Charlie [Woerner] did an unbelievable job blocking on that play.

Q. Jake [Fromm], you had to starting offensive tackles out. Just say something about that offensive line. You were sacked very few times and the job those two guys. [Jamaree] Salyer stepped up and certainly on that left side, Cade Mays filling in. What would you say about the protection you had tonight?

JAKE FROMM: Honestly, I'm not surprised. I think It's a big moment for those guys, Cade, Jamaree, and Warren [Ericson]. They've played some football, but this is their big moment to start, especially at tackle. And they came out and they played well. Really not surprised at all.

Those guys have put in a lot of work, a lot of hard work. And for them to come out here in this moment, play as big as they did, not surprised and really thankful they're on our team.

Q. George [Pickens], do you think you've grown up over the last four months and even --

JAKE FROMM: Yes.

GEORGE PICKENS: Yeah.

COACH SMART: He's still got growing to do.

GEORGE PICKENS: I've still got growing to do, but I can kind of tell myself that I'm improving every day.

Q. George [Pickens], if you could expound on it extensively, how would you describe this season, your first season in college football?

COACH SMART: Careful, George.



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GEORGE PICKENS: I mean, it was a great season to me. You win some; you lose some. But I feel like every day, every practice, every walk-through, we just fought. I like winning that way instead of winning the easy way out. I like fighting for the win.