



Clemson Post-Game Quotes

Notre Dame vs. Clemson
Saturday, December 29, 2018
AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas



ISAIAH SIMMONS, Safety

What was working best for you today?

“I feel like I was just keyed in on the little things. The little things are what make the big plays possible. When you can narrow down the play to see the little things, you can see the big picture. I would say that really helped me out the most.”

How did you react this week after hearing the news about what happened to Dexter Laurence?

“Everyone showed him a lot of love and rallied around him. Everyone knows he isn’t the kind of guy to do anything like that on purpose. We just loved on him this week and bonded together. It really pushed us to play even harder because we wanted to do it for him.”

What are your thoughts on the younger player’s performance today?

“It is amazing because they just continue to impress us each week. There isn’t much else to say about them but wow. I know the program will continue to play at a high level with guys like that stepping up already in their first few years.”

NOLAN TURNER, Safety

What were some of the things that helped this defense be so successful today?

“Every week we just try to play our best four quarters and that is what we did today. We got the job done to make us 14-0 and now have the chance to be 15-0 by just going out there to play another four quarters and bring home a National Championship.”

How did this defense improve since the South Carolina game?

“Not that much different. We just started making big plays and focusing on details to get the job done. We started matching players better on routes and found ways to tighten up some of our defensive schemes.”

Is there any satisfaction in being able to fight through the adversity with everything happening this week?

“It was big for us to get a win. It means a lot to be able to go to the National Championship and carry those guys with us. It is pretty special to be on a team that has earned a trip to the National Championship three times in the past four years.”



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J.C. CHALK, Tight End

In terms of your performance on the field is it all that you thought it would be?

"Obviously I had very lofty goals coming in and I didn't realize the difference between high school football and college football so I expected coming in to play as a true freshman. That's one thing, you have to be completely different to be able to do that. So right when I got here it was kind of frustrating but once I figured out if I worked hard enough I going to be bale to play, have a good time and have success. It's gone the way I planned it, it's just that it took longer than I thought it would."

What is it like to be able to play this kind of game 30-40 minutes away from your hometown?

"It's exciting. It was funny because when we practiced here in the stadium it brought back lots of memories. Some good ones because we won state here one year and we lost in double overtime one year so I have lots of different emotions coming down here. It was fun for sure."

CLELIN FERRELL, Defensive End

How do you think the defensive performance tonight helped you all as a team?

"I mean we held them to only three points so anytime we can keep an offense out of the end zone that's the biggest thing regardless. They had a couple drives where they got into the red zone, but anytime you bend but don't break that's big."

Does it surprise you that Bama is already up 14-0?

"It don't really matter to me, we'll find out who we play whenever that game is over and it will be a good matchup with either team."

It seemed like Huggins made an impact today, what do you think about his game and how he performed?

"I mean he just did what he could do. It wasn't a big surprise, we know what he can do. He's played a lot of snaps. He's been a starter for us for a lot of games so I wasn't really surprised by the expectations that everybody had for him and we knew what he brings to the table."



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TRAVIS ETIENNE, Running Back

Just for the program to get to go back to another national championship, and win another semifinal game, what does that mean to you?

"I mean, it's a great feeling. The program is definitely heading in the right direction. We just don't take it for granted. (We) just know that hard work pays off in the end."

When Clemson recruited you, did you imagine being in this moment? Going to the national championship, wearing the Clemson uniform?

"Definitely, I envisioned this when they offered me. Coming here, I knew that I wanted to get to the Playoff. They kind of gave me my best shot at getting there."

Why was it tough to kind of get things going in the first quarter for you guys?

"We were just making mistakes. We just had to get the nerves out of the way, I guess. Just making small mistakes and not being on the same page."

The big plays you guys hit in the second quarter, it seemed like Trevor (Lawrence) got into a flow there. How fun was that?

"It was very fun to see Trevor go out there and do that. And to see Justyn Ross go out there and make those grabs, those catches, and be physical like he is. For Tee (Higgins) to make that grab that he made, I mean, all credit goes to Tee on that catch. It was unbelievable."

Playing for your second national title in three years, what does that say about the dominance of this program?

"It goes to show that the coaches are bringing the right guys into the program. That we're buying into the system that we have here, and that we just genuinely care about each other. (We're) going into the off season and putting in the hard work."

CHRISTIAN WILKINS, Defensive Tackle

On tonight's win...

"It is definitely special. All the work we put in, the leadership by the seniors and the vets on the team, the coaches, the staff. We put in so much work each and every day it is just special to be here. I've experienced a lot of success in my time here but it really never gets old. The challenge of trying to get back here every year is the most fun part. You face different adversities, you go up against different challenges, and each year is different and it is special each and every time because we try and find ways to get better, to challenge ourselves and to challenge our teammates. This is just another opportunity to compete in the National Championship and I am looking forward to next week."



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CHRISTIAN WILKINS, Defensive Tackle

On Clemson's defense giving up 3 points to Notre Dame...

"Notre Dame is a really good team. If you would have asked me at the beginning of the game how many points I thought we would give up, I definitely would not have said we would only give up three points. They are a very talented team, they have talent everywhere, and we definitely have a lot of respect for them, and their coaching staff. We just prepared the right way and had fun out there like we always do and we went out there to compete."

TEE HIGGINS, Wide Receiver

What did you see on that touchdown catch in the second quarter?

"On that play, I was laser focused on the ball. I found nothing else but the ball and made the play."

Did you know you were in bounds?

"I knew I was in the back because the ball Trevor (Lawrence) gave me. We practice those balls. I knew where I was and I got my foot down."

On Trevor Lawrence's performance.

"That guy is unbelievable. Everybody knew that he had confidence after those first couple of drives. I am really proud of Trevor."

Have you seen Trevor (Lawrence) this dialed in?

"He has been dialed in since he's been the starter. He's looked the same to me. Trevor being Trevor."

When did you see Trevor (Lawrence) gain confidence?

"That first pass to Justyn (Ross). Justyn got that first touchdown; all of a sudden it started clicking. After that, Trevor got hot."



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AMARI RODGERS, Wide Receiver

On how the team handled Notre Dame's defense

"We just take what they give us. They are a very disciplined defense and like to keep things in front of them. We just had to stay patient and take what they give us."

Earlier in the week you talked about your dad (Tee Martin) bragging about his national championship. What does it mean to play for one next week?

"It means a lot man. It's one of the highest goals in my life. Now, I have that opportunity. I am going to work my tail off this week."

What are your thoughts on Trevor Lawrence's performance?

"I am so proud of him. He came in and went through a lot with the quarterback situation. We got behind him. He kept getting better every week. Now, he's playing on the biggest stage of his life next week. I am excited for him."