

**November 26, 2012**



An Interview With:

## **EJ MANUEL**

**Q. First, how do you mentally shake off the effects of losing to your big in-state rival and turn your focus to this game? How difficult is that a thing to do?**

EJ MANUEL: It's tough, but at the same time, having a mature team and having a mature outlook on what we do as football players and as competitors, we understand we have another game next weekend. That game is tough, as well, because it's a championship game, and it's something that hasn't been done here at Florida State since '05, and you just have to move on. It's a process, understanding why you made those mistakes, and you can't go out there and do it again next week.

**Q. What adjustments do you think you have to make within the offense to have the kind of performance you want to have in this game coming up?**

EJ MANUEL: I think executing, going through my reads better, and guys just executing at every position. I think that's what we lacked, and turnovers. Teams that have good defenses thrive on that, so whenever you turn the ball over, that gives them the added confidence. I think that's the biggest thing, not turning the ball over.

**Q. You played in the championship game two years ago when you were a sophomore, and of course you lost that one. Does having played in this offer any kind of advantage to you, and what did you take away from that game the first time?**

EJ MANUEL: I think playing in a big game like that, it was my first college championship type game or anything like that. It was like a second Bowl game. Just the fact that you have a week to

prepare, you try to treat it like a normal game week. I understand that and my teammates understand that, so we have to get the job done.

**Q. Are there any lingering effects this week from the injury?**

EJ MANUEL: Yes, sir, I'm fine. I took a hard hit. It's a part of the game. It's a physical game throughout the whole 60 minutes, we got some hits on them, they got some hits on us, so I'll be fine.

**Q. What did you injure?**

EJ MANUEL: My jaw, so yeah, I got hit in the head.

**Q. Did they do a concussion test on the sideline?**

EJ MANUEL: I think they went through some preliminary tests, and I passed them all and I was able to go back in and play. Whatever tests they did do, I don't know for sure, but I passed so I was able to go back and play.

**Q. There's no lingering effects of that at this point?**

EJ MANUEL: No, sir, I'm fine.

**Q. What was the moment like when you went back in?**

EJ MANUEL: Yeah, it wasn't even a factor in my mind that I wasn't going to go back in and play. They were going to have to hold me down if I couldn't go. I didn't want to finish the game with an injury like that being my last time in Doak Campbell. I wanted to finish the game whether we won or lost. My teammates would have done the same if they could. We're all tough guys and we're all football players, we understand it's a physical game. You get knocked down, it's about how you get back up after that.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

EJ MANUEL: You mean just in general?

**Q. Yeah, in terms of just overall, your expectations were different.**

EJ MANUEL: It's tough, but now it's Monday, the sun still came up, my parents were here on Saturday, hanging out with me yesterday and things like that. It's tough. You don't want to lose to your in-state rival. It's a huge game. It was definitely a game we thought we could win. But it just didn't go our way. For whatever reason the turnovers, I have to do a better job at quarterback taking care of the ball.

It's tough, but we understand that we have a huge game, basically an even bigger game this week coming up versus Georgia Tech, being our Conference Championship. We have to be ready. We can't allow this game to linger on.

**Q. On a bigger picture with Conference Championship games across the country this weekend, do you guys or do you think Florida State or do you individually feel any kind of calling, any kind of responsibility to represent the ACC well to kind of carry that flag into the postseason or to have an 11-win team in the Orange Bowl after a hard weekend last weekend across the board in some high profile games?**

EJ MANUEL: Definitely. We just want to go out and win the game. We want to make it to a BCS Bowl game. It hasn't been done here since '05, so we feel like there's definitely still great goals out there for us to achieve and we don't want to come up short and get to the 100 percent goals we want to get to.

**Q. Do you think that league reputation means something to people across the league and just the big picture of college football? Is it important to you how the ACC is viewed?**

EJ MANUEL: I think so. I think we're one of the stronger teams in our conference. I know Clemson has had a great season, as well. But I think if we go out there and win the game, we'll be able to help our conference.

**Q. I've been looking through some of the Conference Championship game records, and it looks like there's no real pattern to if somebody loses a game the week before in a lot of these games, most of them if not all of them are rivalry games and the performance in the championship game. Not just with FSU but with most teams, does having a championship game, does having that kind of carrot the very**

**next week enable you to bounce back a little bit quicker than you might have from a disappointing loss like that?**

EJ MANUEL: I think it's kind of the same, whether we have another regular season game -- any time we lose, we want to get that bad taste out of our mouth. I know me personally as a quarterback and a football player and just as a competitor, I want to get it out of my mouth as soon as I can. Being we have a game next week and it's our championship game, I'm going to be ready for it, my teammates are going to be ready, and I think that's the biggest thing. You just want to move on, get that bad taste out of your mouth and get a W.

**Q. Talk about last week against Florida. What do you guys have to do this week against Georgia Tech because they have a very good defense, as well. What do you have to do as a quarterback to win that game?**

EJ MANUEL: We just have to take care of the ball, execute when the plays are there. I don't think it's any more complicated. It's simple. It's football; you've got to take care of the ball, move the chains, get 1st downs, can't get a lot of three-and-outs and things like that, put your defense out there, and that's a big thing because I know those guys run the ball a lot, so time of possession is extremely important. So when we have opportunities, we need to score touchdowns and not just field goals.

**Q. You have two more games in your college career and then you're off hopefully to the NFL. What do you want to do after football?**

EJ MANUEL: After the NFL and things like that?

**Q. Yeah.**

EJ MANUEL: I'm not sure. I think the fact of being an athlete and you meet so many different people throughout your college career and then your pro career, I think that's where you can kind of branch out into different things. As far as right now, I would like to get in business, but I'm not exactly sure specifically what I want to do right now.

**Q. You played at Charlotte at Bank of America Stadium your sophomore year.**

**What's it like playing in an NFL stadium like the Panthers'?**

EJ MANUEL: It was great. We played in Jacksonville a few years ago. I don't know if I played in that one. I played in a Bowl game in Jacksonville. Any time you get a chance to play in a pro stadium it's always a treat. Playing in Miami is a pro stadium, so it's kind of like you're in the NFL even though you're not yet. Any time you get a chance to play in an NFL surrounding, it's a great feeling.

**Q. I know it was a while ago, but I'm curious what you remember from your games in 2008 when you were red shirting and your game in 2009 against Georgia Tech?**

EJ MANUEL: Yeah, I didn't play in that one but I know it was a close game. We had a turnover at the very end that kind of cost us, and they're a great team. They still do the same scheme of offense. I'm sure the defense is just as good as they were last -- when we played them. I know they had a couple NFL guys on the team back then. We're expecting a physical game, a great game. We're expecting those guys to do well on offense, so we have to do well on offense, as well.

**Q. Did you run the scout team offense in 2008, do the option stuff?**

EJ MANUEL: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

**Q. What do you remember about that?**

EJ MANUEL: That was my red shirt year, so it was fun. They have a lot of wrinkles in their offense as far as kind of doing the triple option. They do a lot of trick kind of things out of it, run the option then drop a bomb on you. Back in my freshman year it was enjoyable.

An Interview With:

## DUSTIN HOPKINS

**Q. You played in the championship game two years ago. Of course it didn't go your way, but what do you remember about that experience? Can that be any kind of advantage to you this time around?**

DUSTIN HOPKINS: Any time you can get experience doing something, I think it's a benefit. That being said, Georgia Tech is a great team, and

I mean, their offense is scary. In regards to whether we've been there or not two years ago, I don't think it's going to be a huge impact on this game. But I do remember it was cold and it was like freezing rain, and the elements were definitely something both teams had to deal with and get used to.

So we'll see what the weather is like, and I mean, two southern teams playing, and we'll see how they handle the cold.

**Q. Also, games of this nature quite often place kickers have an important role in the outcome. In your career you've seemed to relish those moments. Is that still true?**

DUSTIN HOPKINS: Yeah, I think in a position like kicker or something like that, the last basketball shot, whatever it may be, you have to want to be in that moment and want the ball on your foot or in your hands, whatever the situation. And if you don't want that to happen and you don't want that to be the case, you've almost already lost.

So those moments you remember, and those are the moments that make playing the position of kicker that much more worthwhile. So it's definitely something I enjoy, and given the impact of this game and the prestige of this game, I mean, I've got to be looking forward to it, and I know the guys are looking forward to it, just because that's why you come here, to play in championship games and play historically great teams like Georgia Tech.

So yeah, I think big moments and big games is when all great players -- it's what we look forward to.

**Q. What kind of soul searching goes on within a team after a disappointing loss like this and knowing you can't kind of wallow in it? What happened positively after the NC State loss, for example? What happened positively after losing to Virginia last year and you bounced back and beat Florida? What is it about this team that in the past you've been able to shake that really disappointing game off and move on very quickly?**

DUSTIN HOPKINS: I think our coaches have a huge impact on us in that aspect, simply because in the past they've just instilled that in us where you can't let one loss turn into two, that kind of stereotypical thing, but that holds true. And then

specifically this year, speaking of this game, after coming off an obviously tough loss against Florida, it's -- especially us, no one wants to lose a game and nobody wants to lose to Florida. But that being said, our situation would not be very different if we won that game this past weekend. We still have the ACC Championship to play for, and then the implications of that game have huge implications on our Bowl and where we play.

Nothing would almost really change, and I think the team realizes that. So we have so many goals still out there and so many aspirations that we as a senior class and all the underclassmen also have and that we're not willing to give up on just because we lost the game. We know that if we looked at one loss could hinder how successful a team can be in the postseason, we'd be so disappointed in ourselves and so disappointed that we let down a city and a program. We just realize we have so much left to play for.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you about the perception that Florida State should roll in this game. You guys were picked before the season even started to win the Orange Bowl. Given what happened last week, do you feel like you guys still have something to prove? Is there a sense that this isn't a gimme?**

DUSTIN HOPKINS: Oh, yeah, there's definitely a sense it's not a gimme. I mean, Georgia Tech hasn't had -- they made the championship, first of all, that's not an accident, but they haven't played as well as I know they wish they would have, but the offense they run and just their team, they're going to have a chip on their shoulder, and they're scary, just because I know they're a talented team. They have a lot of weapons.

Yeah, it's not a gimme game by any means. I hope none of our guys think that way, and I don't think we do. And I'm sure that's something that's going to be reiterated to us, that needs to be reiterated from our leadership positions to our guys because when you're playing for a championship game, teams come out to play, regardless of games in the past. It doesn't affect being in the moment and being ready to play on that Saturday -- on this Saturday coming up.

So yeah, we'd be sadly mistaken, we'd be remiss if we came in lightly to this game.

**Q. Growing up being a placekicker, who did you idolize kicking field goals?**

DUSTIN HOPKINS: It's weird because I really didn't idolize any field goal kickers, which is kind of weird. I always played a position my whole life up until college was the first time I only kicked. So I was kind of -- I was a Deion Sanders man my whole life, when he played for the Cowboys, and that was kind of who I looked up to.

Yeah, I mean, kicking-wise, I watched Morten Andersen, and growing up in Houston, Chris Brown, he kicked there for a long time, and then I also knew who Sebastian Janikowski was, and it's coincidental I'm in the same university.

But as far as kicking I didn't really look at them too much I guess like a lot of other people in the country. We're kind of an afterthought.

**Q. Watching you on games on TV, how do you get yourself in the moment knowing that you have to kick this field goal without getting nervous because I know a lot of field goal kickers get on the field and they're like, oh, God, I have to hit this field goal.**

DUSTIN HOPKINS: Right. Well, I think a huge part of it is I have faith in God that whatever happens is going to happen, and like he's sovereign in that kick, whether it's a make or a miss. I'm going to do my best, and that's all anybody can ask. I'm going to try to put myself in a position to be successful. I'm going to go through my cues and be in the right mental state and the same mental cues I go through every time and doing my routine and developing those habits, when pressure comes -- this is something Jimbo always says, when pressure comes, habits come to the surface, so I think it has a lot to do with developing good habits in practice and like taking those over into the game and not thinking about what's going to happen in the future if I make this kick, what's going to happen in the future if I miss this kick, but instead kind of being in this moment and realizing if I do what I need to do in that moment, the rest will take care of itself and the future will take care of itself, so that's kind of the mentality that I have.

**Q. I know you've kicked in a lot of stadiums in college and also some pro stadiums. What's the difference kicking this weekend in an NFL stadium down there in Charlotte? It might be windy and rainy.**

DUSTIN HOPKINS: Right, yeah. I think any time a kicker -- I don't think any kicker will say he'd rather kick in rain or sleet or windy conditions.

I think everybody would rather have good weather. But that being said, it's not new. It's something I've kicked in before. You have to go through the same cues, same processes, and not hope for the best because there's more to it than that, but like I said before, put yourself in position to be successful, and whether the wind changes that ball or if the grass you slip or whatever it is, you're not worried about those outside forces as much as worrying about what you can control and trying to take that angle from it.

So yeah, just worry about what you can control, not external forces.

An Interview With:

## BJOERN WERNER

**Q. Talk about some of the things that went wrong in rushing defense against Florida and some of the things you're going to have to correct this week to face another team that runs the ball really well but in very different ways than Florida.**

BJOERN WERNER: Well, it wasn't a bad game, having a -- didn't have a good rushing defense, but we're going to fix things up this week and prepare well against Georgia Tech and their triple option and hopefully have a good game.

**Q. What's the most important thing assignment-wise on the front when you're facing an offense such as what Georgia Tech runs?**

BJOERN WERNER: I think it's really important. Everybody in the box has to play their assignment. They can't get greedy and try to make a play. Everybody has to just play his assignment, what they're supposed to do, and then we'll be successful.

**Q. Is it just a matter of patience?**

BJOERN WERNER: Yes.

**Q. In a lot of cases?**

BJOERN WERNER: Yes. When technique meets opportunity, you make plays.

**Q. Like I said, on Saturday was it a matter of they seemed to catch you with the right play call and the wrong defense? Was it**

**missed tackles, a lot of that situation, and is it things you can correct do you think?**

BJOERN WERNER: Yeah, there's always things you can correct, even if you blow somebody out. There were two good teams playing against each other and somebody won. You can't change it. Everybody makes mistakes. Florida had some mistakes, but at the end we had more mistakes than them and they won the game, so now we just have to move on, like forget about it.

**Q. With Tank Carradine down and out for this game, do you expect that you might draw more attention at your end because there will be a less experienced player on the other side?**

BJOERN WERNER: I don't know. We at Florida State, we have a lot of good recruiting classes. If there's more attention on me, I'm confident that the other side defensive end, whoever steps in in his place will make plays and be good, you know?

**Q. He is a significant loss, however, because with the two of you coming from both directions, you apply that terrific pressure to the quarterback. How much will his loss hurt you?**

BJOERN WERNER: I mean, it's big, him as a -- just him being around as a person, that we lose him for the remainder of the season. But the same thing happened with Brandon Jenkins. You have to move on. You can't think about it too much, and just somebody steps up.

An Interview With:

## QUAYSHAWN NEALY GEORGIA TECH

**Q. I wanted to ask you about the turnaround for you guys. When was it during the season that a sense of urgency kind of kicked in for the players, and where did the leadership come from this year?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: The leadership came from our seniors, and the turnaround I would probably say after firing our defensive coordinator Coach (Al) Groh. We knew right away then that

we had to -- the seniors needed to step up and lead from there, and we had to make it to a Bowl game -- if we was going to make it to a Bowl game, we would have to make some changes.

**Q. How difficult was that bye week for the players, losing your defensive coordinator and then just kind of facing so much pressure to have to turn it around quickly?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: It was pretty difficult, but at the same time it's just we all know it's just a business, and we have to make changes for the better of the team. It was kind of just a quick turnaround for everybody and a reality check. The guys took it well, and we just moved on and moved forward.

**Q. Can you tell us what has been the most improvement on the defense since the beginning of November let's say? I know you guys have still had a couple of games where you gave up a lot of points, but where are you guys better right now since the middle of the season?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: I would just have to say we're playing faster. We haven't had to think a lot on defense with all the calls. Coach (Charles) Kelly has kept it very simple for us, and just guys are able to just play without thinking so much about like what gaps and all that they have to take care of or who they've got in the flats and stuff like that. Just know the call and just play. That's all we're doing.

**Q. Is it just as simple as find the ball and get to it?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: Yeah. I mean, we still have gap responsibilities and stuff like that. I mean, as far as even with like the inside linebacker, I only have like one gap to take care of. But at the same time you can play freer and you can run, and not so much things that bear you down to where you were just thinking so much and not playing.

**Q. And just off-the-cuff what you've seen on TV of Florida State and what you've seen on film to this point, what's going to be the challenges you will have with that offense?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: Well, right now we haven't seen them on film yet, but we know that EJ Manuel, give him credit, he's doing good and he

has some talented receivers, and we know we're just going to have to play him hard coverage-wise and as far as stopping the run, too.

**Q. I'm curious, can you talk me through what the last, I guess, 48 hours or so have been like since you lost to Georgia, you come back and you obviously have to try to flush the game out of your system. What's it been like trying to move past that game?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: I mean, it's been the same as any other game. I mean, it's a bigger game because it's Georgia. I mean, it's one of the toughest games of the season basically just because it's Georgia. But I mean, it's no different than any other game we had to flush down this season. We've just got to move forward and look past this. It was a big loss, but we have something bigger to play for, which is the ACC Championship. So everybody's mind is really focused in and dialed in on this.

**Q. What was yesterday like for you? How were you feeling and thinking?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: To be honest, I was feeling bad, but I didn't even want to watch football. I just ended up staying in my room and just chilling. But the past is the past, and I'm over that now, though.

**Q. Was there a point at which you started kind of stopped feeling bad about that and started looking forward to next Saturday?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: Oh, yeah. Just coming in here today, knowing that we're playing for the ACC Championship really changed my mood around from being all down all weekend and stuff like that.

**Q. I don't know how much you read or hear of stuff, but I think a lot of people are probably thinking or hoping that they want Florida State to win just to represent the ACC better in the Orange Bowl and so forth. Do you think that will give you guys some juice, kind of knowing that no one really wants you guys to win?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: Of course. Of course it's going to give us some juice. But I mean, we've been the pick that all season that for a lot of teams coming in, right off the bat, Virginia Tech, we was down point-wise, saying they were

just going to beat us down and this and that. We're going to be juiced up and ready to play, hands down.

**Q. You talked about the seniors on defense a minute ago. I wanted to ask you about one on the other side. What do you see as -- what would it mean for the team to have Orwin Smith back this week, and is his value to the team more than just the stats that we see on the paper?**

QUAYSHAWN NEALY: It definitely is. He leads our offense, gets them right, along with Tevin. He's a big part of our success, and yeah, we really are looking forward to having him back this week.

An Interview With:

## TEVIN WASHINGTON GEORGIA TECH

**Q. In your offense over the years, what do you think baffles defenses more than anything? When everything is running well and you guys are clicking, can you almost see guys on defense getting confused, and what is the biggest challenge for them? I'm not asking you to reveal how to defend you guys, but where do you think you bother them the most?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I think just the type of offense we run. It's an option offense. We're coming to full speed. It's not like we're lining up and just -- we show them what we're going to do before the snap. It's going one way or another and you've got to make a decision at the snap, when the ball is snapped you've got to make a decision on how you're going to defend it. I think that gives defenses challenges.

**Q. And this season obviously you guys have scored a lot of points. Do you ever get a sense like in the North Carolina game, do you ever get a sense that every time you guys get the ball, whether it's after a turnover or a punt or a kickoff, do you just have a sense you're going to score on every possession? Do you feel that in some games?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I mean, as an offensive player that's the goal to try to go score every time we get the ball. A lot of times as an

offense, you know if everything is done correctly and everything is executed that we're going to give ourselves a chance to score. So we harp on trying to make sure we do things the right way, take care of the football, minimize mistakes and go out and execute and just play. We feel like everything will work out for the best for us and we'll be out to go out and put points on the board.

**Q. How do you guys rebound mentally from losing to your biggest rival?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: Mentally, I mean, I feel like if anything to bounce back mentally, I think our team can. We've been able to play through adversity the whole season, so this is just another pivotal point of the season that we can push through adversity, just come back this week with a lot of energy, correct the mistakes that we made in the last game and just seize the moment, realize the opportunity ahead of us, that we've got a chance to play for the ACC Championship, and that's the No. 1 goal for us. We've got a lot still to play for.

**Q. From a physical standpoint and execution-wise, what are the things you have to correct, because they handled your offense probably better than anyone else this season.**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I think we have to correct just taking care of the football I think is the most important thing. We take care of the football, I think we put ourselves in a good situation to be successful.

**Q. I think at your bye week after Al Groh was fired, a lot of people probably wrote you guys off and now here you are going to the championship game. What do you attribute the turnaround to, and what sparked it?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I think you attribute it to just, I mean, sticking with it. Sticking with it all the way through. Our guys have not loomed on the past much and each week is a new opportunity to try to go out and try to get a win and try to move forward and leaving the past in the past and moving forward. I think the mindset of the team has been that throughout the year, and that's really helped us to keep going forward and things kind of worked themselves out when you do that.

**Q. I know you guys obviously run a different offense than Florida, but do you take**

**any confidence from the fact that Florida State's defense allowed them to run the ball with so much success just last week?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I mean, we're going to approach each week the same. I think it's the same approach each week to each team with any kind of defense because any game is going to be a new challenge presenting itself. We just take the challenge and try to go out and execute and do what we do on offense. They're going to be ready to play, we know that, because there's a lot at stake for this game. So we've got to come out and be on our "A" game.

**Q. You guys have had a very balanced running attack, a lot of players and a lot of depth, and no one just dominant guy like maybe there was your first couple years. Did Orwin Smith's value, do you think maybe some people might underestimate what that was, and maybe can you say what that impact, how it was felt when you didn't have him last week against Georgia?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: Orwin has made a lot of plays in his career at Georgia Tech and he makes a lot of plays for us on offense. I felt like not having him there, it was a vacant spot there because he's a senior, he's a leader, also, on the team. But we have young guys that are ready to step up and make plays, too. I think we have a host of guys that are ready and able to step up and make plays. I just feel like going forward, I mean, with him there it gives us a better chance at being successful.

**Q. Was it a surprise for you that he wasn't able to play in the game? Coach Johnson seemed a little surprised after the game.**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I mean, it was surprising -- I don't think Orwin has missed a game since he's been here. I think that was more surprising than anything. But he's been banged up throughout the week, and we knew it was going to be a game-time decision. He wasn't able to go last week. Hopefully he'll be able to go this week so we can go out and try to get a victory this week.

**Q. What impresses you most about EJ Manuel, and what's the challenge trying to stop him in that offense?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I think his ability just to run and throw the football. He's a big quarterback, and he's talented in a way where he

can look downfield and hit a receiver that's wide open, or if nobody is open he can pull the ball down and make a play with his legs. That's going to be a challenge for us defensively. I feel like on the flipside, I feel like on offense we've got to do what we need to do to be successful as far as executing, taking care of the football and giving our team a chance to win the game.

**Q. I asked Quayshawn this. Was there a point where you stopped feeling bad about the Georgia game and started to look forward to playing Florida State?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: Yeah, there was a point. I mean, it came a point where it was evident we had a game this week, so like any other game, you have to move on. You can't -- you never get too high, too low behind a loss or a victory. It's always got to be even keel. You've got to always stay grounded in the sense of knowing that you've got another game to go play and come out the next week reenergized, refocused and ready to play.

**Q. Like even on the bus ride home from Athens, were you starting to think about this game or were you still kind of lost in the fog from losing to Georgia?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I mean, that's our biggest game of the year because it's our rival, so on the bus ride home you're kind of still in dismay about the game. But in the back of your mind you always keep in mind that you've got a game the next weekend. Come out Monday getting ready to practice, let bygones be bygones, and come out this week because we've still got a No. 1 goal attainable, and it's right in front of us.

**Q. Is it kind of hard to believe that you're 6-6 and you can still be playing in the Orange Bowl?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: I mean, I don't think that it's hard to believe because we're here now, but I feel like there's been times in the season where the momentum was shifting one way or the other for whatever reason, and we had to continue to be mentally strong and just keep faith that we did everything we could in our power to put us in a position that things would work out -- work themselves out and give us a chance to go to the championship. We were fortunate enough that we took care of things we could control, and everything else took care of itself.

**Q. I realize it's obviously early in the week, but have you had a chance to look at any film of Florida State's defense, and if so, how would you compare them athletically, et cetera, compare them to Georgia's defense?**

TEVIN WASHINGTON: We haven't had a chance to go and look at film yet, but just watching them play a little bit last weekend and throughout the season, they have a very talented defense, a lot of times the guys on the defensive side of the ball, they're fast, so I feel like they're going to present a challenge for us on defense, and we've got to be ready to come out and play.

An Interview With:

## **ORWIN SMITH GEORGIA TECH**

**Q. How is your ankle feeling and what are your thoughts for this week?**

ORWIN SMITH: It's definitely feeling a lot better than last week, and this week is a big game, very important. Obviously one of the most important games of the year, definitely one of our goals.

**Q. And do you know or think that you can play, or that's to be determined do you think this week?**

ORWIN SMITH: It's still to be determined. I think I will play, yeah, so we'll just see how it goes day by day.

**Q. How hard was it to sit and watch Saturday's game?**

ORWIN SMITH: It was very tough. It was hurting at times just to watch my other guys get treated like that in a way. I'm a very emotional guy out there on the field, and not being able to be out there with my guys was real tough.

**Q. Was there really much of a decision at all to make Saturday, or was your ankle still in such a state that you really couldn't move on it?**

ORWIN SMITH: Well, it actually came down to the game time to decide if I was going to play or not. I did try to give it a go. I warmed up before the game, and it just wasn't up to par to be

able to go -- to feel like I could contribute in a way that I needed to to have a good chance at winning. We just held out.

**Q. Orwin, from your vantage point Saturday, what improvements does the offense need to make to be able to compete with Florida State?**

ORWIN SMITH: I just think assignment-wise, we need to make sure that we cut down on missed assignments, and guys just knowing where to go and playing harder. It's a game of four quarters, and you have to play all four, and I think there's just more of a mental standpoint than anything because I think our guys are physically ready.

**Q. You rely obviously a lot on your speed in particular to be able to get outside. What percent do you think you need to be at sort of in order to be effective? Can you still be -- do the things you want to do at 80, 85 percent?**

ORWIN SMITH: That's a tough question because, I mean, my whole career I've been playing on a banged-up toe, so I don't think I have actually been 100 percent while I've been at Tech. I can't really say what percentage I need to be. But I mean, if I had to give a number, I would say 80, maybe 75, 80, just to give you a number.

**Q. This is your ankle and not that old turf toe injury, though, correct?**

ORWIN SMITH: Yeah, yes, sir. Yes, sir.

**Q. Before the season even started, a lot of people projected Florida State to be winning the Orange Bowl, and it doesn't seem like a lot of people are giving Georgia Tech a shot here. Do you guys take that as motivation and expect you and your teammates to play with a bit of a chip on your shoulder?**

ORWIN SMITH: Definitely. I think whoever we -- whoever we would be playing in the Championship they wouldn't be giving Georgia Tech a shot. It doesn't really matter who we'd be playing. We know that just from how the season has been going that we'll pretty much be the underdog in possibly every game. We're just coming into the game just like any other game with a chip on our shoulder and ready just to prove the doubters wrong.

**Q. What would it mean to you guys to be able to do that, especially considering it would sort of punctuate the turnaround for you guys? You came this far.**

ORWIN SMITH: Yeah, I mean, it would be awesome. That would be a great story to end the year off of and to make it to the Orange Bowl. We've had a lot of adversity, and we feel like our story is very, very inspirational, and we just need to keep going and finish it off.

**Q. What do you attribute that turnaround to this year?**

ORWIN SMITH: I would say after that bye week guys kind of buckled down and knew that we could still do it. Coach reminded us after the bye week that it wasn't over and we still had a shot and that he believed in us. I feel like after that bye week, guys actually changed their mindset and believed in themselves.

**Q. Does it bother you or any of your teammates at all that you guys are playing in this game because Miami declared themselves ineligible?**

ORWIN SMITH: Not at all. I mean, it's a championship game. We're here. It doesn't really matter. It doesn't matter to me how we got here, and I'm pretty sure it doesn't matter to any of the other guys because this is a great opportunity, even if we were playing for the National Championship (because) five teams got suspended. We're still going to treat it like we made it. It's a great time, and we're going to definitely enjoy it.

**Q. I'm wondering when it was time to make that game-time decision last week, knowing that you have this game coming up, did that play a factor at all, that you wanted to make sure you were there? As important as last week's game was, you wanted to be there for the ACC Championship game?**

ORWIN SMITH: This game didn't really dictate if I was going to play last week, but I mean, it was in the back of my mind because if I could have played last week, I would have definitely been out there with them guys. But just having an opportunity to be able to have one more week for the season to keep going, it did kind of brighten me up a little bit knowing that I still had a shot just to get out there and play for something much more bigger than that rivalry game.

**Q. And you know where you're going if you win Saturday, the Orange Bowl is ahead, but as a senior, have you guys been given any kind of idea what might be there if you don't win in terms of a Bowl?**

ORWIN SMITH: I haven't really heard much. It's up in the air. I mean, I've heard probably three different Bowl games. But our main concern right now is let's get to this Orange Bowl, and we'll kind of see where it goes as far as all the other Bowls if we don't.

**Q. Just to follow up again on your ankle, are you expecting to practice today?**

ORWIN SMITH: No, sir, not today but tomorrow definitely planning on being out there.

**Q. Which ankle is it?**

ORWIN SMITH: The right.

**Q. And one other thing: You guys when you were freshmen obviously you went to the Orange Bowl, won the ACC, and now you have a chance to finish your career the same way. What would it mean to you to be able to get back there again on the team that you've really been a much bigger part of?**

ORWIN SMITH: It would mean a lot. That's one of the main things. My freshman year it was great. I mean, it was a wonderful experience just to be a part of that, that championship team. But I played on special teams, and that's pretty much the most I could contribute. Making it this year, it would feel so much more -- because I've actually contributed as far as the offense, special teams, and just all around. It would mean a lot more.

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