



Georgia Defensive Player Quotes
Marriott at the Convention Center
December 29, 2018

Senior Defensive Lineman Quotes
Jonathan Ledbetter (Tucker, Ga.)

On how he's changed as a person and a player

"I try to take it one day at a time and slow down. It's the little things that start to matter more when you get older. You start to realize they have more input for the big things. If you do those right, everything starts to fall into place. I learned that recently."

On Assistant Coach Dan Lanning

"Even last year, he came in and worked with us a whole bunch when we were doing our regular packages. I was playing outside linebacker, and he was coaching me and doing extra meetings – all types of stuff. He is a great guy and a hard worker. He and Coach (Glenn) Schumann are identical in their work ethic. They are always in a book, always studying something and eager to get more information and more knowledge about football. When you have coaches that are still knowledge-seeking, that sets the standard for your players. You then have players that have the same habits and do the same things. They (Lanning and Schumann) just have good football players."

On if your bowl really registers if you aren't playing in the College Football Playoffs

"I have been on both sides. I am not going to lie – it is different when you are in the national championship from a player's perspective because you feel like you are going toward something. But with Georgia, if we are in the game, we are going to play our hearts out and give it all we got. That is the cool thing about our team. It does not matter if we are in the national championship or we are in the Sugar Bowl or we are in any bowl. It does not matter because we are going to play. We are going to show up. We like to play good football games – it is what we do."

On not worrying too much about the game, scoreboard, etc.

"The crazy part about it is, especially being in the SEC, you are going to play good football teams, and they are going to make big plays. It always goes back and forth. If you are really in a good football game, there are so many momentum swings. You just have to keep swinging. That is exactly what it is – you just have to keep throwing punches. Just how many punches you can take and throw is who stands on top in the end."

On the Texas offense and quarterback Sam Ehlinger

"We need penetration. He (Sam Ehlinger) is a great quarterback. He is mobile. He likes to run and lower his shoulder. He is not afraid of contact. He has some great receivers with some great size. DB's have to be locked in and on the same page communicating with each other. I think if we go out and play our brand of football and execute and make sure we are on our toes... in these bowl games, scoring goes up a lot because of tackling so we have to make sure our special teams are tackling and running to the ball. Just have fun, ultimately. This is a good opportunity to be in a great bowl game – just to play with the boys one more time."

Junior Defensive Back Quotes

J.R. Reed (Frisco, Texas)

On the biggest challenge on the defensive front

“Well, you just have to play the ball. Those guys [Texas] do a great job catching the ball. They are going to make some catches. That is what they do. You cannot get down when they do that. You just have to keep going onto the next play. Playing the ball is the most important thing.”

On what schools he grew up rooting for in Texas

“As a Texas kid I just watched football. I would just kind of watch and cheer for whoever and cheer for certain players.”

On his transfer to Georgia

“I just believed in myself first off. I really depended on myself and realized the challenge. That is why I wanted to leave (Tulsa) because I realized the challenge (of playing at UGA) and believed that I could do it. I knew there was a new coaching staff, too. And when there is a new coaching staff, they always want to get new guys and guys they like in the games. So, I took advantage of that and made the best of a great opportunity for me.”

On the excitement to play a school from his home state

“Yes. Anytime I get to play Texas or Oklahoma, in that area, I always get excited. I have a lot of friends that go to those two schools, and I always get excited to play those teams.”

On the team’s motivation after being left out of the College Football Playoffs

“(We are) playing for the seniors. These guys have put in a lot of work over these last three or four years. Some of the guys are leaving early so they have put in three years of work. Really just playing for those guys. Also playing for the ‘G’ on your chest and having pride about playing in this game.”

On if this is a “message game” for Georgia

“I wouldn’t really call it a message game. It’s a big game being the Sugar Bowl and a New Year’s game but I wouldn’t call it a message game.”

Sophomore Defensive Back Quotes

Richard LeCounte III (Riceboro, Ga.)

On Texas’ wide receivers

“They are pretty good. From what I have seen on film, they are physical, big-bodied receivers. They remind you a lot of Mike Evans, who played for Texas A&M and the Buccaneers. They are a pretty good group, but I think we are still the best DB core in the nation, so we are going to go out there and show everybody what we can do.”

On the impact of losing Deandre Baker and his impact on the team

“I found out a little bit after you all found out. I am so proud of Dre and the things he did for this university. I saw something on the internet that he hasn’t been scored on in like 724 days or something like that. That is a major accomplishment. Some of the things he did on the field can’t be replaced. He really set the standard high, being the guy that he is and being a mentor to me and my fellow teammates. Since he was not practicing, he was there coaching us up on the sidelines, making sure we do everything that we need to do, because we are next up. His time is up, but he did everything that he could. We wish we could be playing in that playoff, but things didn’t go our way. He is here cheering us on, being a great role model and the great guy that he is, so I really appreciate that from him.”

On the young DBs stepping up to replace Deandre Baker

“That’s what these guys came here for. There is no adversity. We always knew that Dre was a senior and he was going to be able to leave, so we had our guys getting prepped all season to be able step up in this position and make

these plays. It's not something that shocks us or anything like that, because we knew that at some point we were going to have to answer the bell and be able to move forward. I think this is a great game to be able to show how we are doing."

On playing defense for Coach Smart

"He (Coach Kirby Smart) has been a great guy to play for. He is very intense, something that you would want. I don't have any regrets coming here. I know every day I am going to get my coach's best, and that is all you can ask for. So, I have to personally ring the bell, show up every day and give my all. That is all that you can ask for from a coach."

On being motivated for the Sugar Bowl

"We are amped up. We are going to play like this is any other game. We come out and give our all. That is what we do and that is what we practice for. We are going to come out and play just as hard as we have played any other game. There is no added incentives or things on our mind. We are just focused on playing Texas. Everything that has happened in the past is in the past, so we are geared up and ready to play this next game."

Junior Defensive Linebacker Quotes

Tae Crowder (Hamilton, Ga.)

On the Sugar Bowl

"The opportunity to play in any bowl is great but the chance to play in the Sugar Bowl is special. The experience is different, and you never know what is going to happen."

On the team's attitude going into this game

"We just want to keep performing the way we have in the second half of the season. We want to make a statement for the SEC and the reputation our conference carries."

On how this year feels different from last year's College Football Playoffs

"We are going to approach every game seriously no matter the circumstance. There is a different feeling, but this is still a big game. It is a statement game and very important to Georgia football."

On the Texas offense

"Sam Ehlinger is an excellent quarterback with a solid running game behind him. It is not about the Texas offense though. We have to focus on ourselves and Georgia defense."

On how to shut down the Texas offense

"We have to play together as a team, cut out little mistakes, and execute."

Junior Defensive Back Quotes

Tyrique McGhee (Byron, Ga.)

On whether Texas is game planning differently with Deandre Baker out

"Honestly, I think they are just focused on their game plan just as much as we are. With (Deandre) Baker not being here, I think they believe a little bit. I don't think there is any drop-off in our guys between Erick Stokes and Tyson Campbell at cornerback. We are confident in the cornerbacks doing their job and holding up."

On Tyson Campbell's preparation for the Sugar Bowl

"I think he is ready. For him to get those games under his belt early on in the season, regardless of the productivity or whatever happened, I think he is ready. Nothing beats experience, especially at this level. I think he got the little bit of experience that he needed, and he will be ready."

On defensive meetings and practices being different without Mel Tucker

“It isn’t that much different. Here at Georgia, we have a standard. The coaches are around each other so much that they start to act like each other. You can’t even really tell the difference. They are still scheduled the same way. The only thing that we miss is his (Mel Tucker’s) personality. He can have a whole room light up. But even Coach (Dan) Lanning, Coach (Glenn) Schumann and Coach (Kirby) Smart running the meetings has been great.”

On the team’s motivation relative to last year’s semifinal game

“I think there is a standard here at Georgia. I do not think there is much of guys not getting motivated to play this game. As an athlete, any time you get on the field, you are going to try to get out there and compete. You are going to compete, especially against a historic university and athletic program like Texas. They have a lot of great players, especially on the offensive side of the ball. If you can’t get motivated to play against another opponent, you shouldn’t be out there on the field.”

On the opportunity for other players to step up with Deandre Baker out

“It gives them the opportunity to showcase their talent and what they can do, as well as what (Deandre) Baker has taught them. Baker is a great leader. He has taught them everything from little tools that they can use on the field. It gives guys like Tyson (Campbell) and Eric Stokes a platform for them to showcase their dominance on the field.”