

CFP National Championship

Saturday, January 11, 2020

Ed Orgeron

LSU Tigers



**NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIP**
NEW ORLEANS 2020

Q. When Dabo was here earlier, he said the two teams are almost a mirror image of each other.

How do you see that?

ED ORGERON: A very good comparison. Great quarterback, great coaches, great skill players, outstanding technique. Those guys have won 29 games straight. They've built a lot of great things at Clemson. They're doing a great job. They're attracting great recruits and developing them. A lot of similarities.

Q. How special is it just being here?

ED ORGERON: It's very special. It's very special for us to drive down the interstate yesterday with a great motorcade. I know our players were looking forward to that. Ever since we knew the National Championship was going to be in New Orleans it was a goal of ours to earn the right to be here, and now we're here and we've got to do something about it.

Q. Could you have written a better script?

ED ORGERON: No, I couldn't have written -- there's no way. And especially to have the football team that we have, the coaching staff that we have, and have the type of players that we have and the camaraderie we have at this time. I think that there's no way I could have written a better script, no way.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: I think it's a combination of senior leadership, a combination of being prepared. Our coaches, we're led by Joe, Joe is a very serious guy. We've got some leaders on defense that have really come along, Rashard Lawrence. We talked about this in his living room during recruiting. Those guys were very, very focused on getting here, and you've got to give them the credit.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Yeah, you know, he fires our team up. Joe is like a linebacker out there. I think it all started last year, he took some hits against Georgia -- I mean, two seasons ago, but the time that he got hit against UCF and he got back up, and we were down 14-3, I think that kind of sent a message to our football team who he is.

Q. Do you see this more as an SEC representation or is this more about LSU?

ED ORGERON: It's always going to be about LSU, but we have pride in being in the SEC. Obviously I know a lot of people, I've been told -- in the SEC, I think it's the greatest conference in the United States, a lot of great players, and we're honored to be here. To be in the National Championship Game you've got to beat a lot of good teams in the SEC to get here and then go into the SEC Championship and beat another good team. So we feel that we've earned our right to be here. We feel that we're always representing LSU, but it's great to be a member of the SEC.

Q. One of the things that make Trevor Lawrence a dangerous quarterback?

ED ORGERON: Well, his quick release, his reads, the plays that they give him. He can make a decision on the line of scrimmage whether to hand it off, whether to throw it, short, easy throws. And then they're going to take shots at those big receivers. He gets a one-on-one, he's going to get the ball down the field, and then it shows you the type of championship quarterback he is that he started extending plays with his feet. I thought he took the Ohio State game in his own hands to win that football game, and you can see his determination and his grit and his courage, just like you see in our quarterback.

Q. How do you keep focus on all of this when you've got an offensive coordinator that's very highly sought after?

ED ORGERON: That's part of it. You want guys coming up, your coaches. It means you're doing something well. I believe in Joe. I believe in Scott -- Scott put the plan into place a long time ago. I do believe that we're almost finalized with the plan. I do believe Joe is going to be a Tiger. But you know, as in coaching in football, anything can happen. But I do believe that the talks that we had with Joe are very, very positive, and he's going to be at LSU.

Q. This year for a lot of guys (indiscernible) they're going to leave early for the NFL. How do you put into perspective what the offense has done, guys like this, that this is their shot?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, I think it's a combination. I think they have contributed to the offense with their outstanding skill, but I think this offense has put them in position to showcase their talents. So we know that we have juniors that are going to leave, but that's a good

thing for us. That's a good thing for us in recruiting. Guys want to come to LSU. They want to get developed, and they want to be high draft picks, and when they get to the NFL, they want to have a lot of success. So I think that shows that we can take a guy like Justin Jefferson as a two-star athlete, he could have been a five-star as far as it mattered to us because we thought he was going to be a phenomenal player, and him develop into the type of young man he is. Got five-star athletes in Ja'Marr Chase, got two-star, three-star, four star. It don't matter how you got here. I think guys are getting put in position to make plays in space and develop.

Q. How would you describe what's at stake for LSU in this game, as a program?

ED ORGERON: Everything. Everything. Everything that we've done up until now is good, but it's not great. We want to be great. To finish the season strong with a win is our goal, and that's going to be a tough task. But we didn't look at it as hey, man, we've got to go down there and win the National Championship, it's going to be bigger than ever. We've got to play well enough to beat Clemson, and that's been our focus. We've done that every week.

So we weren't going to change that, not make it bigger than it is.

Now, after the game, depending on the results, we get to look at all that stuff.

Q. What makes their defense so special?

ED ORGERON: I do believe it's a combination of their great athletes that they have, but he always has them in position to make plays. The guy is a phenomenal game day caller, especially his blitzes. He knows how to blitz protections, and he can just send one linebacker, but it's at the right place. The way he uses No. 11, he's going to be all over the field. He puts his athletes in premier spots to make plays, and the guys play with great technique. They're hardly out of position.

Q. You and Dabo seem to have the same idea about coaching relationships. We don't necessarily always see that. How important is that to your philosophy?

ED ORGERON: You know, I think every coach obviously when you get to be a head coach at this stage, you have to play to your strengths. And I do believe everybody is different. So some guys are Xs and Os guys, some guys are CEOs, some are top level. It takes all kinds. I always felt that I was a people person. I always wanted to be in the mix. I wanted to be involved but I wanted to be a team player. I was a team captain when I played. I do believe that recruiting

is very important in college football. I enjoy recruiting. I enjoy meeting people. So that's the way we run our program. We say one team, one heartbeat. Everybody has a role. Nobody's role is more important than the other. I coach from within, not above, and it's working for us.

Everybody feels at this organization that they pull on that same side of the rope, and that's important.

Q. You seem to be very comfortable (indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: I do. I feel at home. I always wanted to go recruit in Louisiana, and I have been at other schools and I was comfortable in their office, too. But there's something about being in Louisiana, wearing the purple and gold and going into a school or a home in the state of Louisiana. I feel like I'm at home. I feel like I can relate to the guys. If they talk some Cajun French, I can talk to him. I probably know them. I know their coach for sure, and there's relationships.

What's happened for us in the last couple of years, when we go to a home on a home visit in Louisiana, it's not an official home visit, it's a party. There's 30, 40 people there, there's jambalaya, there's gumbo, food, music and it's just a festivity. That's the great part about being in Louisiana.

Q. Most National Championships are special. Is it any more special because one, it's in New Orleans, you're coaching for LSU?

ED ORGERON: I think it all adds up. I really do. And I think those are the things you think about after the game. Those are the things that can get in the way before the game. It's considered an outline of distraction. Block out the noise. It's going to come down to blocking and tackling, playing great for 60 minutes, and after the game, I guess you have a couple days to think about it, then you've got to go recruiting.

But it does -- I'm honored to be here. Obviously being from Louisiana, being the coach at LSU and being from Cajun Country means a lot.

Q. Could you talk about what you expect (indiscernible)?

ED ORGERON: Tyler was the No. 1 player in the state of Louisiana when we got him. He was a slim 390 when we got him, but Tyler has worked very hard, and he has. He has a tremendous family. He's one of the first -- I think he's the first home I went into as the head coach at LSU, and there was more gumbo in there than the law allows, I promise you. But it was a great day. Tyler has a good heart. He's a good young man. But he's got down to about 345. Now, after one away trip he was 359. I got on him. He ate too much on that

trip, but he's really come along. He's a force. And the thing about Tyler is that he's still learning. He's still developing.

But to get a guy that big and that quick is very, very odd. He's one of the most athletic linemen that we've had here in a while.

Q. Dabo told the team that going to play LSU in Louisiana is like going to play Rocky (indiscernible)?

ED ORGERON: I don't know much about that, but I think those motivational tactics are for the other team, and obviously he's done a great job. I couldn't even tell you who those two guys are to be honest with you. But I just know this, that it's going to be an emotional night when we do run out of the tunnel. I believe it's going to be a home-field advantage. But we have to take care of it. We have to use it to our advantage, and as you know, those fans are going to be fired up. And we have a saying: Big plays fuel the emotion. They're going to be looking for some big plays. If they don't get the big plays, they'll have some emotion the other way. We don't want to see that.

Q. When you beat Oklahoma in the semifinal, how do you prevent your team from being overconfident in this game?

ED ORGERON: I think your team knows. They know the opponent. They watch the film. And when you see Clemson the way they made big plays to what we feel was an outstanding Ohio State football team with some great players on that team and to see Etienne running away from them, to see Travis running away from them and making big plays, you can tell your team all you want, but we have big guys on the O-line and they see it on the tape. This is a very, very talented football team.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Obviously that was at a different point in time.

Q. Do you ever think back about how that engrained in you and how that has become a mantra of this season?

ED ORGERON: I'm glad it has. You know, after that game that I said it, I felt that we finally matched them with the physicality and that we fell short on a couple of plays. So that's what I meant by that. And obviously they were the best for it, and we had to get the players, get the coaches to be able to beat them to get here today, and we did it. We're still coming. We still ain't backing down, and we've still got a ways to go. We feel like we're just getting started.

Q. Did you feel like playing in so many -- they talk

about so many games against top-10 teams, did it have a snowball effect?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, I think it all played into each other. That 3rd-down-and-17 against Texas was the defining play in my mind in our season. It goes to show you that we have some big-time players, especially at the quarterback position and the receiver position, along with the protection that can make plays in tight quarters, in a tight spot in the game. That was a big-time play in that game. If they get the ball back, no telling what happens.

So I thought that that parlayed into beating Auburn, who I thought was a very good football team, Florida, Alabama, Georgia. Those were some really, really good football teams that we played this year.

Q. Coming back to LSU seemed like it was never going to happen; did you think it would ever reach that point?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, for a while I thought I would stay on the West Coast. It looked like I was going to be at USC for a long time. We really enjoyed it. It was a great place. It was something we really loved, me and my family. But when my boss came back, when we left Ole Miss, we had a chance to go to the Saints or the Cowboys. Obviously I wanted to be with Sean Payton. I thought he was an excellent coach. But really my kids wanted to live in Louisiana, and they wanted to live near their grandpa. The reason we moved back to Louisiana was because our kids loved it. And then when I went back to USC my kids wanted to stay in Louisiana. That told me a lot about where my family wanted to be, and when that happened we started gearing towards coming back to Louisiana. I would have been happy coaching the defensive line, but I just wanted to be back at LSU.

Q. When you think back to when you were a student, did you ever think that that opportunity would be there -- is that something you've regretted --

ED ORGERON: Yeah, there was unfinished business. No question. I regretted it. There was no question. Every time that I passed under that bridge going to Northwestern, although Northwestern was a good place for me, I just felt there was always unfinished business at LSU that I didn't give myself a chance to compete at the highest level like I should have, so I'm a little disappointed in myself. I wanted to get the chance to come back to LSU and prove myself.

Q. When the playoff pairings were getting ready to be announced, there was all this arguing, this team should be 1, this team should be 1. How do you think your team has kind of embodied that?

ED ORGERON: I think any place, any time, anywhere,

anybody. We can't control that stuff. All that stuff -- whatever we need to be -- I'm not going to listen to that. All that stuff goes out the window when that ball is kicked off. It's about blocking and tackling and the players and coaches making the right plays. Those are the things we try to concern ourselves with.

Q. What is LSU's social media policy?

ED ORGERON: We say -- with our players?

Q. Yes.

ED ORGERON: We tell them to be careful, obviously, block out the noise. That's about the extent of it.

Q. You don't care if it's during the season, Instagram or Twitter --

ED ORGERON: Yeah, I'm not going to stop that. We used to have a rule you can't bring a phone into a meeting. If you tell them they can't do something during the season, I think that wouldn't work.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: I think it means a lot. And you know what, that's why you coach at LSU. That's why you play at LSU, to represent the purple and gold and to represent this great state. We have a great relationship with the governor. We have a great relationship with everybody in the state. And all the high school coaches are so proud.

I remember growing up being six years old and watching LSU play and Cholly Mac play and I remember what it did to the community. In the year I was off, I worked out at Franco's down there in Mandeville, and man, look out, when LSU won and when the Saints won, the whole city was on fire, so I know that's the way the state is. So we want to give back. It's a great state. It means a lot.

Q. Do you know what you think you might do if you get a chance to win the game, how you will celebrate?

ED ORGERON: No, no. I'm still thinking about how we're going to practice this afternoon.

Q. So much talk about Joe and the receivers and for good reason. Brent Venables called them the heart and soul.

ED ORGERON: Yeah. I say this all the time. Clyde walks in the room, he's 6'4", 270. That's the kind of persona he has. Listening to what I hear from other coaches, he's the hardest guy to game plan because he's a receiver in the backfield. But he's also a great running back. The things that he's done this season for our football team, not only on and off the field makes him the heartbeat of our offense.

Q. He talked about having a chip on his shoulder. When you talked about the evaluation process, what did you see, and do you see that?

ED ORGERON: Oh, we always liked Clyde. He reminded me of Maurice Jones-Drew. Do you remember him? I had to go against him at UCLA, but Coach Miles had had him committed, we stayed with him, too. We liked him. We fought for him. We always thought that Clyde was going to be a phenomenal player before anybody had told him that after the season, we loved him.

Q. What's it been like having Bill this year?

ED ORGERON: Phenomenal. Bill coached me in college. Bill got me into coaching. There was a situation where Dennis Johnson couldn't coach on the field. I needed him to coach, because I was being the defensive line coach, and he came in there and did a tremendous job for us. He brings so much to our school. He loves being here. He's from north Louisiana. He loves being at LSU. Tremendous coach.

Q. (Indiscernible) how important are they to what you do?

ED ORGERON: Key. Especially in transition. We don't -- we come here, everything is set up for us, rooms are set up for us, equipment is set up for us, practice is set up for us. We feel like wherever we go, we're practicing at home. Those guys are tremendous, and I like it because they give our guys all this nice new gear. I've got to talk to them, I've still got this bag from 1986 here.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Everybody deserves a second chance. We learned, we mature, and that's why we need coaches. That's why I feel like I'm a model-like figure to some guys, but I'm also a disciplinarian. We draw a line. If you cross the line, there's got to be consequences. He brought me in, don't cross it again, so guess what, I didn't. I'm very appreciative of that. I'm very appreciative of him drawing the line and making me do the right thing because it taught me that I need to do the right thing.

Q. Do you think the rejection that Joe Burrow's dad and you had at Ole Miss has --

ED ORGERON: Let me say this to you: I'm very appreciative of my time over there. I really am. I am. I learned a lot. I had a great opportunity there. But it didn't work out. But you know what, it helped me be a better coach than I am today. So for that time, I'm appreciative.

Q. Along those same lines, when you were offered a job, at that point in your life were you thinking am I going to get back into this?

ED ORGERON: Yes, it was critical. In fact, the day he

called, I was thinking about going and getting another job. It was that close. Henry who was down in the bayou went and talked to Coach Rose, he gave me an opportunity, it was as a volunteer, but I had to prove myself. I stayed with him for a year. He hired me as a linebacker coach during that year, and then the next year I got a chance to go to Syracuse with Paul Pasqualoni, and he was another guy that gave me a shot at Division I football. So for those guys along the way I'm very appreciative but also did a good job for them, too.

Q. What other jobs -- I can't imagine you not coaching football.

ED ORGERON: I hate to think about that. I just never let my mind go that far. I was going to coach football regardless.

Q. What do you see from Trevor Lawrence?

ED ORGERON: Winner, obviously. I've called some high school coaches in Georgia and they talk about his legend over there, and one of the coaches that coached me in college, John Thompson, was one of the few guys to ever beat him, so he's been letting me know that. But anyway, a winner, very quick release, very well-coached, outstanding feet, knows where to go with the ball, can run. I think when you look at the Ohio State game, he took that game into his hands. He was going to win that football game. They're down, what, 14, 16-0? He was going to win that game. You could see it in his eyes.

Q. So much at stake for this team so fast. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Well, you know, it seemed like we got every award in the country, and we're very appreciative of that, but I was a little worried going into the Oklahoma game. I didn't tell anybody that, but you hear about all that, know what I'm saying? It just goes to the character of this football team. So I think all those things aside, I do believe that our football team is very focused on winning the football game and doing the things that it takes to win the football game, to beat a very good Clemson team. They're not thinking about what size ring they're going to get, what they're going to do, who's going pro, what's happening to this. We are totally focused in on the task at hand, and that's made this football team what they are today. Does that answer your question?

Q. Can you talk about the significance of having this game in New Orleans, the fans, the meals, things like that?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, we had gumbo, fried chicken, macaroni and cheese last night. All the family was there. We loved it. I had about four bowls. It was good. You know what? Just to show up at the hotel and to

see all the fans there, just to hear them, just to hear them when we walk out here, going down -- when we left Baton Rouge, neighborhoods, there was hundreds of people in front of the neighborhoods, and just seeing the little kids.

Understanding the magnitude of this football team and what it means to me and who we represent.

Q. Does it feel like a home game?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, it sure does. It sure does.

Q. Some of your players said Joe (indiscernible) does he have any rules?

ED ORGERON: Yeah, he missed two plays -- yeah, he wasn't satisfied. He throws eight touchdowns and he said he didn't feel like he played his best game. That's him. I'll give you an example. Joe Burrow at his best.

We have a tradition here at LSU that we carry the seniors off the field for the last practice. Joe Burrow told the quarterbacks, if any of you try to carry me off the field, I'm going to whip your... and he walked off the field. So that's Joe Burrow for you.

Q. You being a Louisiana guy and living this dream season, what does it mean to you personally to have this game here?

ED ORGERON: You know, it's always going to be about the team. I don't let that stuff get to me. That would be selfish. That would be something that -- that's part of our team.

Now, to see the joy on the kids' face. To see the joy on our team's face when we win, to see the elation of the people of Louisiana, that means the world to me, and I'm more of a giver, and I just like to see all the people happy. And I know how much it means to them, so it puts a little internal motivation in myself to win it for the people of Louisiana.

But as far as myself, I'm just happy to be the head coach at LSU every day.

Q. Did you expect to change this much, and was this part of your plan for the offense?

ED ORGERON: I was hoping we could get Sean Payton. I think Sean is a genius, and I really like him. We don't have Sean Payton, but what we have one who is very, very good in Joe Brady. We wanted to study the red zone offense on the feet part, Michael handles very well, and then we asked him, do y'all know anything about the RPOs, and they brought in a young guy named Joe Brady. The guy was phenomenal in his approach. The coaches told me that, they'd also brought the personnel -- into the personnel meeting. So we kept up with Joe, kept up

with Joe, did our research. We had some people at the Saints tell us he was an up-and-coming star, and Kevin Rogers, who I worked with at Syracuse, coached with him at a younger age. He's an up-and-coming star. We took him, and they were right.

Q. What was Joe Burrow's reaction when you told him exactly what this --

ED ORGERON: That's what exactly what we need. That was his offense. He loved it. Thank God we had Joe for two years. Most graduate transfers you only have for one year. So the other offense he didn't flourish. In this offense he flourished. So there was development on his part. It was part scheme, part calling. I think it all worked out perfect.

Q. If you win the toss, do you take the ball?

ED ORGERON: You know, today is Thursday, and Saturday it's at 7:00 -- 7:15, central standard time. 3:30 p.m. on Monday or whatever day it is, I'm thinking of Saturday. We will have a coaches' meeting, and I will have made that decision at 3:29.

Q. How is Clyde?

ED ORGERON: He looked good yesterday. I think he's 100 percent healthy. I feel good about it.

Q. How about Dave?

ED ORGERON: Dave is good. He's practiced, a little sore after practice. But as far as handling the workload, he handled everything. He could cut. He's doing everything -- I think he's going to be as close to 100 percent as we can ask him to be.

Q. Do you like the shorter number of days here versus the number of days you had in Atlanta?

ED ORGERON: Love it.

Q. Not as long a week.

ED ORGERON: Love it. And really, the combination there were great, but we felt like we were inside the whole week, which we were. It was good to practice at home. Our guys needed a break from being in the hotel. I think this is a perfect schedule.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: You don't know until you go through it. But adversity makes you stronger. You may wonder what has happened; it don't feel good. But when you look at, you figure it out, you know what, through that adversity, I grew. I changed I got better here. I got better there. I think the competitive fire that you see in Joe, although he doesn't say it, that has a lot to do with it. I think the competitive fire you see in me, past experiences, internal motivation, it makes you better, it makes you hungry.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: You know, it was never a doubt that Joe was going to be a really good quarterback for us, but being the Heisman winner never entered our mind. All we wanted to do was win games and have a good quarterback, and he exceeded all our expectations.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: I think having the second year with us. Most graduate transfers are only there for a year. Changing the offense to spread, having Joe Brady, having the look overs on offense to where we can change the play and have the right play dialed up and giving him great receivers. We changed our protection. We're not the same. We're more spread out. So there's more choices for him.

I think all those combination of things.

Q. Did you picture this team as being "this team"?

ED ORGERON: No, I didn't. I didn't believe we could win every game. After what I saw in the spring, I looked at our schedule, and I didn't tell anybody this, but I said, with the teams we played at home, I thought we had to have a great home schedule, which we did. I think Auburn and Florida, our home crowd won that game for us along with our team. And if we could go on the road and beat Alabama, which I thought we could, we'd have a chance at the National Championship.

Q. Dabo said earlier (indiscernible) sustainable model.

ED ORGERON: You know, it all depends on us, what we need, who's available. It's been good for us, Cole Tracy and Joe Burrow have been good for us.

Q. We were talking to Brent Venables earlier and he called Clyde the heart and soul of this offense.

ED ORGERON: Clyde is 6'4", 270, when he walks in the room. That's who he is. He has a big heart. He's hard to tackle. He's explosive out of the backfield catching the ball. He's hard to defend. I think that when Clyde is not in there we're very predictable. When he's in there, you can't overplay the run, you can't overplay the pass. You have to be balanced on defense, and that enables all the other guys to make plays.

Q. Do you have any pregame rituals?

ED ORGERON: I get fired up. I drink a couple Monsters and Red Bulls.

Q. Going into this year, did you have any New Year's resolutions for yourself?

ED ORGERON: Yes, I did. My New Year's resolution is eat less and it won't happen, and it hasn't happened. Guarantee.

Q. You mentioned the transfer portal and the fact that so many graduates come for a single year. How much did those factor into your going after him and thinking this is a guy we can actually develop?

ED ORGERON: Huge. It made the whole difference in our season, it made the whole difference in Joe Burrow. Usually you only have them for one year. We would have took him for one year, there's no question. But after last year he was a good player, but being in the system for two years he's a great player. But to let you know how smart he is, to graduate in Ohio State in three years, that says a lot about that young man. There's a lot of things that go into when you evaluate a transfer, especially a graduate transfer, and they rarely graduate in three years. So we got the whole package with Joe. We got lucky we got him a second year.

Q. What's the hardest food to try to eat less of?

ED ORGERON: Well, here's what happens. You're with the team, who always eats. It's buffet. And then there's rice and gravy. Once I start eating any type of rice and gravy, whether it's étouffée, gumbo, jambalaya, spaghetti, it don't matter. I can't discriminate on any of them.

Q. What have you seen out of Travis Lawrence this season?

ED ORGERON: Winner. He took that game in his own hands. Him and Etienne took that game into their hands against Ohio State and said we're going to win this thing. He has a quick release, sets his feet on RPOs and makes great decisions. But he's 6'6", 220. He's an athlete out there. He's tough, tough as all get-out.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: I think he's very similar. Joe is about 6'6", bigger. They do a little bit more running with him. Their tight end stays in most of the time on their protections. We're more of a spread. They're more of an RPO team. But they both throw the deep ball and make great decisions.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: His heart. The game that he played against Alabama, he just took that game in his hands. Clyde is a great young man. The way he practices, the way he carries himself, his character and his grit, throw all that other stuff out of the way. There's a lot of great backs I've been around. Clyde is one of my all-time favorites.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: It's about the trunk. It's not about the height. He was already committed to Coach Miles, so I didn't find him. But we kept him and we liked him. He

reminded me of Maurice Jones-Drew at UCLA when I was at USC because of the trunk. But those guys are hard to tackle. They're hard to see.

Now, Clyde has developed, but the thing that I'm most pleased with is not his running ability, it's his ability to catch the ball out of the backfield. I think that's where he's made the most improvement.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: If there's 6,000, there will be 5,999 I think they're coming, and I'm glad they are. I wish I could've gotten them all tickets, but I can't, but we're going to have a big contingent and I'm very proud of them, and if not, I hope they're going to be watching it on TV.

Q. When you were at USC, you guys won national titles, you had Matt Leinart, Heisman quarterback, great quarterback, and yet if you were to look at his stats compared to Joe Burrow's, they're not even close. How much does that say about how much this sport has changed?

ED ORGERON: Yeah. First of all, thanks for recognizing that, because that was the blueprint. That was the blueprint in my mind. There's no question about it. The things that I learned from Coach Carroll and also the things I learned from Coach Johnson and Coach Erickson at Miami. And I thought we had the most prolific offense in the world, and I always wanted that offense.

I never dreamed that we would shatter all those records. But it just goes to show you, like you said, that's from a pro-style offense into a spread. That's the reason -- we have pro-style guys, but you can't score enough points in our opinion in the pro game, in the pro-style offense, so we went to the spread and look what happened.

Q. To win a National Championship, you've got to have a great defense, a great running game (indiscernible)?

ED ORGERON: Well, obviously it helps. I do believe you have to have a great quarterback to win a championship. I think that's the standard. That's the benchmark. The way offenses are going, you have to score a lot of points. But this game may be different, but I think the National Championships that are 13-10 are going to be few and far between.

Q. I know (indiscernible) affected by injury, but how valuable is he?

ED ORGERON: Phenomenal. It started off in the summer. When Terrace came, he had an injury in high school. He got great conditioned in the summer, was having a phenomenal year, and then got banged up a

little bit, was brought back. He's a big target, especially in the red zone. Joe really likes him. I think the best thing about all our receivers is all of them have specific skills, and we use them at their best. Joe knows exactly where to go with the football. When the players call, he knows who's the favorite route, favorite play, and Terrace is one of them.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Yeah, he did. I'm not going to tell you what it is. It just so happened that we were calling the champion high school coaches just to congratulate them on winning a state championship. And I called one of them to say, Coach, you know you're the old coach -- one of the last defensive coordinators to beat Trevor. He gave me some advice and he passed it on to Dave, and we'll see if it works.

Q. I heard about this cookie policy you used to have at USC, and when you took over you let the linemen have cookies. Why haven't we had cookies in our meetings yet?

ED ORGERON: You give a lineman a cookie, you make him happy. What do you mean, you get cookies on the training table? Hey, I got a question to ask you. Tell me about that new bowling technique that you have.

Q. It's just coming out my hips and letting that ball fly down the alley.

ED ORGERON: How many bounces it got to take before you can get a strike?

Q. I'm not a big mathematician, but if I can bounce it between the first hit and the pins, I know I can get something down.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Yeah, no question. I give him all the glory. I couldn't have wrote a better script. Couldn't have even tried it. Couldn't have even tried it. I remember when we went to Macaroni Grill, me and Pastor Steve, and he asked me what I wanted to do, and we wrote the plan on a napkin. That was at Macaroni Grill. The plan has come to -- I can say that, even better. I give him all the credit, all the glory, and that's how I try to live my life on a daily basis, just give it to him and see what happens.

Q. What do you see from Trevor Lawrence?

ED ORGERON: Winner, obviously. He took the game in his hands against Ohio State. They're going to make plays with a winner. But his footwork, his releases, his RPOs, his decision making process, but he has that ability to run the football. That was surprising to me to see his feet at 6-6, 220. The other coaches would have him playing defensive end rushing the passer.

Q. Does this bring back memories of (indiscernible)?

ED ORGERON: I do believe watching Ronnie Epstein play, I do believe we shut out Notre Dame 3-0 or something like that. Irish two for LSU in the newspaper the next day, SD had like four goal-line stops, 12 tackles. He was from Le Roche, and it was the talk of the town for 10 years. Or still. And I remember this -- wow, if I could ever be a part of something like that.

And then I just loved the way the Tigers played. I just liked those gold helmets going to the ball.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: First of all, I think he's one of the best college football players ever. He changed the way we do things in the SEC. It's wonderful. He's a pioneer. He has a great family.

I remember two years ago we were playing them, and my first recollection of his first pass, it was the quickest release I've seen in 35 years of football. Now, you can practice it until you see something else. A tremendous competitor. Always handles himself with first class. I can't say that I'm sorry that he's not coming back. I'm not going to say that. But he meant a lot for football. I think he's going to be a tremendous pro. I hope he stays healthy and has a great year.

For his family to move from Hawai'i to the United States and to have the success that they have, I think it's a great story.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Oh, it does. The one in 2018 didn't matter much, because we didn't play well. We got beat 29-0. We did not play well. But that game, adversity makes you better, that's the time that me and Ensminger decided we were going to the spread after that. The day after that we said we're going to the spread. So that was a significant game in our history together. Obviously the game this year, you have to beat them. There's no question. You hear it every day. You hear it at the store. You hear it everywhere. And you have to beat them, and they're great. And in order to get great, you have to beat great teams. So that was a significant win in our season.

Q. You said when you were going on your recruiting visits that you were going to have probably 18 to 22 (indiscernible) if you had to estimate how many did you eat?

ED ORGERON: You know, that week I probably had 18 to 22, that might have been an exaggeration, but I had at least 16.

Q. Is your favorite food seafood or chicken

sausage?

ED ORGERON: That's hard. I like eggs in my gumbo with seafood. Not a lot of people put eggs in their gumbo. I like (indiscernible) in my gumbo and if I had preference, it would be chicken and sausage, but seafood is a close, close second.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Well, you know, I was working at the telephone company the year I left LSU, and he called me and said, hey, man, you want a scholarship to Northwestern State, and I said, hell yeah, where's Northwestern at? I didn't know where it was at. But he sent the coaches down there, me and him were roommates, Bobby was a motivator. Bobby had gotten into the flow of college. He understood the discipline that it took. So I think he helped me get my feet started at Northwestern and kind of showed me the ropes. Me and Bobby has always been good friends. I've always admired Bobby for his competitive attitude. Bobby is one of the toughest guys on our football team, and we believed in him.

He affected another way, it was fourth down, I believe it was 27, and we're losing the game to Bonneville, and he makes a touchdown pass and we won a state championship. Those are good memories.

Q. We've heard about summer practices. Who was the driving force behind organizing some of those workouts?

ED ORGERON: Well, first of all, we have two hours in the summer where we can do skill position stuff with our guys, okay. But after that, the players decided to stay out an hour and a half later and to work out on their own, and they did it all summer. And thank you for recognizing that, because I do believe that is how we could have so much success, especially putting in a new offense. Our guys had to dedicate their time.

I think that's one of the things that goes unnoticed, unsaid, how many Saturdays they spent working out on their own, player-only practices that was led by Joe Burrow. But it was also stoked by the coaching staff. If you want to get great, that's what great teams do, and those guys in leadership decided to do it.

Q. (Indiscernible).

ED ORGERON: Thank you. Thank you for saying that. Coach Cregg has done a tremendous job with that line. But Lloyd is the one that had them working out, because Lloyd -- I'd hear Lloyd tell them, hey, man, they think we're a question mark. We ain't going to be no question mark, so he was always motivating those guys. I think the leadership that you see in each group, you've got guys like Clyde, like Joe, like Justin, like Thaddeus Moss, like Lloyd, like D-Lew. Players like D-Lew and he likes Mr. Goodbars, too.

Q. (On Joe leading summer practices).

ED ORGERON: Joe is a different cat, now. Joe is driven. Joe is driven. We sang Coach Moffitt happy birthday last night. He wasn't big on singing happy birthday. He wanted to go watch film. Joe is very driven.