

Receiver has big game while playing with heavy heart

By Ben Ledbetter Special to The Herald

(Published September 11, 2005)

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Clemson senior wide receiver Curtis Baham wanted to contribute to Saturday's 28-24 win over Maryland.

He caught a game-high two touchdown passes for 57 yards, with his biggest play coming at the 7:35 mark of the fourth quarter when he caught a 51-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Charlie Whitehurst.

That cut Maryland's 10-point lead to three.

"I feel good just contributing to a win," said Baham. "I've never won up here. I've been up here all this time and it just feels good."

That followed the three receptions he had for 49 yards in Clemson's opening 25-24 win last week against Texas A&M.

For the recipient of the game's longest touchdown pass, the throw from Whitehurst couldn't have been any better. Baham beat his defender early.

"I went out and showed it to him. I saw him bite up," Baham said. "I turned around and looked for the ball. It was a big-time throw right in the pocket. Touchdown."

Although Baham, a native of New Orleans, shined in Clemson's Atlantic Coast Conference opening win, the victory was not the only thing on his mind.

"This whole season is dedicated to our hometown," Baham said. "I'm sure there are plenty of people that wish they could be doing the same thing I was doing."

Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and much of the Gulf Coast region. Because of the damage to his hometown, Baham wants to play his best every game.

"It's just an unfortunate situation. I just want to shed light on it in every way possible," Baham said.

"Every game I come out more inspired than ever, especially this season. With the Hurricane Katrina stuff, this whole season, I know at least from my perspective is dedicated to my city and family."

He's called the Crescent City home, however, since the damage to the area, he might be living in another city.

"We can't really get to our house, I don't believe, until Tuesday," Baham said. "They're going to let everybody in to assess the damages and file the insurance claims. We're going to have to get back out."

"I'm pretty sure we lost everything as far as houses and things of that nature goes."

Everybody's more on relocation right now. My dad's in Atlanta setting up shop. My brother's in school. My grandparents are all doing the same thing. I have some in Houston. And everybody's thinking more relocation now than getting back."

Copyright © 2005 The Herald, Rock Hill, South Carolina