

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Oregon vs Indiana

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Indiana Hoosiers

D'Angelo Ponds

Press Conference



**PLAYOFF
SEMIFINAL**



Q. Do you have a most memorable play that sticks out in your mind from the season?

D'ANGELO PONDS: I had a lot of good ones. The one that sticks out to me would probably be the Illinois play, the blocked punt, return for a touchdown. I would say that was probably one of the plays that sticks out to me.

I have a lot of great ones. I would say that one. The last one against Ty Simpson to hit on the fumble recovery, I would say that's a big one, as well, but Illinois's play sticks out to me because I scored.

Q. The Asics shoes, is that a team thing? I saw Cig wearing them.

D'ANGELO PONDS: No, there's nothing to that. I guess everybody just loves those shoes, but it's not a team thing. A lot of people on the team do have those, but it's not a team thing at all. I've never seen Cig actually wear them. I don't look at his feet, though.

Q. Coming into this building, you've played at the Rose Bowl (indiscernible).

D'ANGELO PONDS: I think it will help us. It's a little adjustment to this field, as well. The numbers are different. The hashes are different, as well. It's an NFL stadium. I feel like having that experience from the last time we played in the Big Ten, it will help me as a corner. I need to know things like that.

Q. What makes that such an adjustment?

D'ANGELO PONDS: I would say the splits -- splits are kind of based off the numbers. Since the numbers are moving, you've got to know where they are or where they would be on a college field, so I feel like that's the difference.

Q. What do you feel like is going to make the difference in the outcome of this game?

D'ANGELO PONDS: I would say the most physical team will win. I would say if we do our job and eliminate explosives as a defense, I feel like we'll be okay.

Q. What was that hit like you had against Simpson against Alabama? What was that play like for you?

D'ANGELO PONDS: It was just a great feeling just to see the ball roll out. I tried to jump on it but my teammates got to it, and it's just a great feeling knowing we got a turnover.

Q. What went through your mind on that play?

D'ANGELO PONDS: So I was just playing my guy, and then I see him scramble, and I seen Fish dive at the ball. I just seen he wasn't going to slide, so I was like, I'm going to get a hit on the quarterback. I just meant to get a hit on him. I didn't know he was going to fumble. Definitely want to make a quarterback pay for scrambling and running, so that was my mindset when he ran.

Q. How much are you looking forward to the rematch against Oregon?

D'ANGELO PONDS: Definitely very excited just to go against a good team, a great quarterback, great receivers. Just definitely excited just to take on that opportunity, and it's going to be a battle.

Q. (Indiscernible).

D'ANGELO PONDS: That's all credit to Coach Bryant Haines. We're a well-coached team. I feel like it stems down to Cig all the way to our coaches, and it's something we take pride in.

Q. What's he like in practice?

D'ANGELO PONDS: Coach Haines? I would say he's on us 24/7. He's a very detailed person. Any little things, he's



on it, so I feel like that's what makes him different as a coach.

Q. (Indiscernible).

D'ANGELO PONDS: I think, like you said, it kind of stems down from Coach Cignetti. He coaches that 1-0 mindset, no warm fuzzies, like he likes to say. I would say, yeah, we definitely take it one week at a time, try to go 1-0, put the past behind us. Good, bad or indifferent, and we're on to the next.

Q. When you look at this game, what is it like having a rallying cry (indiscernible)?

D'ANGELO PONDS: It's great. Just to see him and experience what he's going through, I kind of talk to him a lot. It's a funny thing, and it's great to know that the locker room is behind him.

Q. Seeing Fernando getting that rallying cry, how cool is that?

D'ANGELO PONDS: It's been very cool. I feel like a lot of people don't get to see that in person. I feel like he's one of the hardest working guys I've ever seen. After every practice I feel like he's out there throwing the ball. I feel like he deserved it.

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