

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Oregon vs Indiana

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Indiana Hoosiers

Pat Coogan

Press Conference

PAT COOGAN: Through the summer, through fall camp, some of our hardest periods of fall camp were the last period. We'd always do a two-minute drill, a four-minute drill, a one-minute drill, kind of to end practice. So I think that has paid off. Just preparing us for the moments, preparing us to really strain at the end. But, yeah, it really just starts with mindset.

Q. I'm sure you were impressed with the bunch of teams you played this year. What did Oregon do that stuck out to you?

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. I mean, just a dominant defensive force, really. Their front seven is loaded. Their front four is probably one or two best in college football. You know, it all starts up front for them.

It's strong, long, fast, violent, it's going to be a huge challenge for us, no doubt.

Q. Is it easy for you to put all the glitz and glamor of a bowl game, semifinal aside?

PAT COOGAN: It's certainly easier, and I'm grateful for that, because I don't -- you know, it's part of the business and part of the sport, but I don't necessarily love it. I'm an O-lineman at the end of the day.

But, no, it certainly is easier, just because I've been there, kind of like you said. But the atmosphere and the moment and everything, I try and take it in, take a deep breath, kind of soak it in for a second, and then it's just going back to playing ball.

Q. What was this moment like for you coming back into this building?

PAT COOGAN: Unique. This is my third time playing here. Obviously last year didn't end on the greatest note



here, but it's another opportunity, another opportunity, and I'm just grateful to be here, grateful to be here with my team and my teammates and coaching staff. And we have just an unbelievable opportunity on our hands, and we gotta go seize the opportunity for sure.

Q. Riley Leonard got his first start in the NFL. Have you had a chance to talk to him, watch it, have any kind of interaction with him?

PAT COOGAN: I texted him a couple of times. I texted him the day after our game, because I found out he was starting, just like wishing him luck and so happy for him. And then I texted him a couple days ago after he balled out.

And I'm so happy for him. He's such a great guy. We got really close last year, and I was just proud of him, just watching the TV in the training room, smiling, hyping him up. It was awesome.

Q. What's your level of excitement right now knowing how close you are to possibly winning a National Championship?

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. Certainly excited, but I'm excited about the Peach Bowl. Like about the semifinal, like I was telling someone earlier, like the National Championship, yeah, yeah, of course, you know. Everyone wants to win a National Championship, but you can't get there unless you win the Peach Bowl. And I'm just grateful to be here, and we have another day tomorrow to prepare and get better and hone in on the details. So excited for that.

Q. We know how big the IU faithful, how they showed up for you all at the Rose Bowl. Indiana, a lot closer to Atlanta. How much are you looking forward to having the great support Friday night?

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, certainly. Special moments out there in Cali. I'm sure we're going to get a lot of noise and a lot of fans here.

It's awesome, man. It is so fun watching people go crazy



and just the excitement around the game and the program and Hoosier Nation really just showing out. It's awesome.

Q. How do you feel like age and experience has meant to you guys?

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, certainly. I think it's helped us mature as a group. We're a lot of veteran players. We've been around the block. We've been around adversity. We've been around building a team, the off seasons and everything that entails.

So I think it definitely is an advantage. And kind of like I said, a lot of us have been around the block. We've played a lot of competitive football, and it certainly is an advantage, and we gotta use it to our advantage.

Q. Looking back to freshman, how do you feel like your preparation has changed?

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, certainly. I've kind of found a niche in how I like to prepare, and whether that's my pregame warmup, I've been doing the same thing since my junior year, which was really my first year playing. So just like found what works for me, found what I like and what feels good for me.

And certainly in my game prep, I've found like how I want to go about my week, starting early in the week, moving into how kind of practice is structured, whether it's base down, third down, short yards, goal line, stuff like that. So you just move throughout the week, and I've definitely found a path that works best for me.

Q. I know you've probably talked about this a million times, but that moment at the Rose Bowl, you representing the O-line, getting that MVP. Just eyeing that spotlight at usually what's an unsung hero of that position, what does that mean to you to be able to have that?

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, it was a great moment. There's no doubt about it. And I was just so happy to celebrate it with my teammates and my loved ones.

Like you said, it was all five of us, or six of us that really played, and they got to enjoy that moment as well. It was a great capture of kind of all of our hard work and that preparation leading into the game.

So, yeah, shout out Kirk Herbstreit for that.

But, yeah, it was a great moment. There's no doubt about it. I'm very grateful that a lot of my family was there to celebrate the moment and enjoy the moment, because it

was very special for them, too, just being there and the surprise that they had. They had no idea either. So definitely a special moment.

Q. Talking about that hard work, how that offensive pressure opens up the run game and the ground game. Can you just kind of speak to that as well? What makes you guys special and how it's able to open up so much more?

PAT COOGAN: Certainly. Yeah, obviously, it all starts up front. There's no doubt about it, and we embrace that. We kind of seize that opportunity. Our ability to run the ball and run the ball efficiently definitely sets up Fernando and our receivers and our explosive play makers to get a little more space when we're ahead of the chains, and being productive on early downs.

So there's no doubt about it that running the ball is at the core of our identity, and it certainly sets up our offense for success because of it. It allows us to be more explosive on the outside when we're ahead of the chains, kind of like I said.

Q. And this is the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl. Do you have like a go-to Chick-fil-A order?

PAT COOGAN: My go-to Chick-fil-A order would probably be a deluxe sandwich, no tomato. Two deluxe sandwiches, no tomato on both, don't like tomato. Large fry. Eight count nugget. Nothing crazy.

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