

CFP Semifinal at the Capital One Orange Bowl: Georgia vs Michigan

Tuesday, December 28, 2021

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

Michigan Wolverines

David Ojabo

DJ Turner

Press Conference

Q. Can you guys explain how much of an impact Mike Macdonald has made on each of your careers and what he's done for each of you individually and how much of his scheme has kind of given you guys the ability to maximize your talents?

DJ TURNER: For me, he did a lot. Man, he just gave me a chance. We do a whole bunch of different schemes, and it's just really good when he came, the knowledge of football he brought with him.

DAVID OJABO: Personally for me, he just made the game fun again. Like DJ said, he gave me a chance to play loose and have fun doing it.

Q. This question is for David. How much of an influence has Aidan been on you in terms of the work that you've put in, and how do you attribute the way that you two have developed the chemistry that you have on the field?

DAVID OJABO: Yeah, it started in the summer training when I just told him I was going to be in his hip pocket, just knowing he was going to be a Top 5 guy. It was a smart thing to do, to have someone who like knows the ways and having someone to follow, and it's translated throughout the season. We just feed off each other. You go up, I go under, you go under, I go up. We just do our thing.

Q. What would you say are some similarities and differences between Stetson Bennett and JT Daniels?

DJ TURNER: I'd say they're both good quarterbacks, and we just know that we just always have to make the tackle. They're really good quarterbacks and make good reads.



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DAVID OJABO: Yeah, mobile, know how to sit in the pocket, too. You've just got to account for them at all points.

Q. David, I wonder if you could expand on that statement about making the game fun again. How have offenses approached you maybe from the beginning of the season to now? Are you always getting singled up? Are you getting doubled? Is Aidan taking more from the offense? How is that working?

DAVID OJABO: Man, I mean, I don't know. I don't really pay attention to all that, double, single. Obviously he's definitely getting doubled, you know that. But man, like I said, it's just fun. I'm just out there doing my job play by play. I don't know the details and whatever whatever, but it's just fun again, man. I don't know how else to say it.

Q. I don't know how much you look at what Georgia's defense has done all year given that they have been kind of singled out as being one of the most elite, but when you look at film of them, do you see any similarities between how they approach the defensive side of the ball and what you do, and if anything, what makes what their defense has done so great?

DJ TURNER: Being on the defensive side, I don't watch too much film on the defense. We know what we have to do, and we believe in us, so that's the feeling we have going into the game.

DAVID OJABO: Yeah, we're watching their offense. Their defense doesn't have anything to do with us. We're out there just trying to execute and beat their offense.

Q. David, you mentioned wanting to be in Aidan's hip pocket because he was going to be a Top 5 guy. I don't know how much you care about this stuff, but obviously your draft stock has soared this year, as well. Has it been difficult to avoid any of that stuff if you're not interested in hearing about your draft situation, and if you do hear about it, how much have you thought sort of about what the next step for you might be given how well you've played this season?



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DAVID OJABO: No, I'm focused on this season. I haven't really given that much attention. When it comes time for the draft time, draft attention, I'm going to switch the focus to that, but you see us, we're in the playoffs. Can't be talking about the draft or focusing on the draft.

Q. DJ, I wanted to ask you about George Pickens. He hasn't put much on film this year because he's just come back from an injury, but obviously the last couple years he has. Have you seen much of his film, and what kind of match-up might he present?

DJ TURNER: Yeah, he's definitely a good receiver. I played him in high school, too, so I know what he can do, and I know he's coming off an injury. He played the last couple games, and I'm expecting him to be out there this game.

Q. David, along the lines of the draft, did you imagine being in this position where you are talked about as a player, being viewed in that light? And looking back at the season, is it pretty remarkable to see how quickly your ascent has been this year?

DAVID OJABO: Yeah, definitely. I mean, coming into the season, I had 20 snaps and I was unknown. Looking back at it, seeing where I'm at now, it's a blessing, but like I said earlier, when it comes to draft time, that's when my focus will go on there and really reflect on what I've done, but it's really obvious, coming from unknown to now, it's a big jump.

Q. Your coach Jim Harbaugh gets a lot of attention, sometimes gets a lot of criticism. Was there any sort of special satisfaction to the year to -- I know he would never say this, sort of proving doubters wrong, but did the team get any special satisfaction out of sort of delivering this great season for a coach who often gets criticized a lot?

DJ TURNER: Yes, I'd say that I love Coach Harbaugh, and we always knew since day one it was Michigan versus everybody, and we live by that. So that's why when we proved everything and just -- we've got a lot to do left, and it just feels great to do it with my coach, too.

DAVID OJABO: Yeah, we didn't even -- we weren't even fazed by that because at the end of the day the same people that say they love you now were the same people that were saying, Michigan shouldn't be whatever whatever. You can't pay attention to anybody outside of the building. They're not going through the grind we do. They're not waking up at 6:00 a.m. running hills. They're just watching us on TV. What they've got to say don't

really mean anything for real.

Q. David, you just mentioned kind of going from nowhere to now. Has this surprised you, your growth this season, and where do you think you need to maybe improve a little bit?

DAVID OJABO: No, it hasn't surprised me because at the end of the day I know the work I put in. There's always room to grow in every player's game, so obviously stuff like the run game, even the pass game, but the same situation for me and DJ, man. All we needed was a chance. We didn't get our chance until this year. As soon as we did, man, we just took it and ran with it.

Q. You guys have faced some pretty good tight ends in the Big Ten, but what makes Brock Bowers so effective?

DJ TURNER: I'll say the run after catch he's good, and he has good speed on him and good catch radius, so I'll say that.

DAVID OJABO: Yeah, from when I have to guard tight ends, yeah, he's definitely on the faster end, catch radius, all that. Yeah, I don't have to deal with him as much.

Q. DJ, we've asked you guys a lot about Mike Macdonald and the influence he's had, but from the secondary in particular, what type of influence has Coach Clinkscale had in terms of establishing a mentality or physicality or style of play that you guys want, and how much has he helped you, as well?

DJ TURNER: Yeah, he's like I guess changed the mindset and we take the game to the field so confident now, and we just go into the games comfortable, and we know if we have any questions during the game, we just go to the sideline and he'll have an answer for us. So he's just been a good major factor in this role and the season that we've had in the secondary.

Q. I wanted to ask a follow-up to David. What is the biggest thing that you learned from being attached at the hip to Aidan that has helped you throughout this season?

DAVID OJABO: The work ethic of a first-rounder, because at the end of the day I have the tools and the physical traits, but it's the work ethic and the grind, and just knowing that you're not going to fall from the sky and become a top-round pick. You've got to grind. You've got to put it on film. I guess it's the mentality part. And then the stars kind of aligned with my physical traits, and then kind of took off.

Q. Yesterday Josh Gattis said the way you guys played in the Big Ten Championship, you almost wanted to bottle it and play the game the next day. You've had a few weeks; has it been difficult to maintain that momentum and maintain that eagerness you guys have, or does being in the playoff kind of alleviate that concern?

DJ TURNER: No, I wouldn't say it's been difficult. Every game we try to go 1-0 every week, so we just know this is another game, and we've got to go 1-0 this week and we've been doing it the whole season, so nothing really changes.

DAVID OJABO: True. With the 1-0 mentality it starts Monday. Sunday enjoy it, Monday start it up again, face this nameless opponent and get at it. We've been doing it all season long, so it's not going to change now.

Q. David, I know it was pretty special earlier in the season when your parents got to come to Ann Arbor for a game, and I'm curious if they are going to be in Miami this weekend, or if not what their plans are to watch?

DAVID OJABO: They're staying in Scotland actually to watch this one, but my brother is actually en route right now. He's flying up to Miami to watch me for the first time, so that's going to be pretty special, too.

Q. Of the things that you guys have done so far down in Miami, what's been most fun, and is there anything that you guys have had to do that's been a little bit different given COVID protocols?

DJ TURNER: I mean, this is my first time in the college playoffs, so I didn't know what to expect, but like I said, right now this is different doing it virtual. We're coming down to Miami, the heat, we're not used to the heat. Being down south, I like the heat, and we're looking forward to it.

DAVID OJABO: Man, just having fun with my brothers, man. You don't get to spend time in Miami with guys you grind and sweat blood, all that with. So it's just taking every minute, every hour and just cherishing it, knowing it can never happen again.

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