

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

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

Michigan Wolverines

Cade McNamara

Hassan Haskins

Press Conference

Q. The week is here; what's the week of practice been like? What's it been like in Miami, and how have you wrapped your head around being in the College Football Playoff?

CADE McNAMARA: Yeah, I think so far this week has been good. There's been a combination of fun events and great hospitality by the Orange Bowl, and I think so far we've enjoyed our time but also taken a level of seriousness to this week. Obviously we're playing for a championship, it's not just a common bowl game, so I think the team is serious, and so far this week we've had a good week of practice.

Q. Cade, you talked about competing eventually for a National Championship; the last quarterback to do that with Michigan was none other than Tom Brady. Have you spoken to him at all, and if so, what's he telling you?

CADE McNAMARA: I haven't spoken to him quite recently. I spoke to him when I did the shoot for the Brady brand, but other than that, I haven't spoken to him.

Q. I had a question about how this match-up is going to shake out because obviously Georgia's defense has been heralded as one of the best in the nation, but at the same time you guys are going to be playing behind an offensive line that just won the Joe Moore Award. I was wondering if you could walk me through how you think your offense matches up against the front seven and the secondary that you'll be facing on Friday.

CADE McNAMARA: Yeah, we're well aware that especially their front in their box is very talented, but I think the heart and soul of our offense is our O-line, and I think if



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anyone in the country is going to block them, it's going to be our dudes.

I think we size up well to them, and I think obviously they'll be a good challenge, but we're looking forward to it.

Q. Just give me a sense of some of the things you guys have been doing down here and what it means for team building and bonding. I know that we've heard a lot this season about this being a very close-knit team. Tell me what it's been like to be down here together and working towards this goal on Friday. And can you also just talk to me a little bit about the emotions of your coach and what he's been saying to you.

HASSAN HASKINS: It's just a blessing to be down here with the team and this great weather out here in Florida. We've just did like different events, like Cade said earlier. We just did team bonding. We went to the beach one day, and we did different events like that, so they're definitely bringing the team closer and just bonding. That's pretty much it.

The second question, yeah, his demeanor has been the same. We've still got a game to play, so we've still got to take things serious, but try to enjoy our time when we can. But when we need to lock in, we need to lock in. That's pretty much his demeanor.

CADE McNAMARA: As far as the team and its bonding so far, I think as you mentioned, this team is a super close-knit team. We really enjoy being with each other, and I think this week has done nothing but help us grow in that fashion. As H2 mentioned, we've done a lot of events. We've spent a lot of time, whether that was the beach or in the game room, and I think truly these dudes really enjoy being around each other, and I think as we're coming up to the last month of our season, we're trying to make the most out of those moments because obviously this team will never be the same after this.

As far as Coach Harbaugh, same as what H2 said. He's been exactly the same. His demeanor has been serious, and we're taking a level of -- we're taking preparation at the

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highest extent. I appreciate that from him.

Q. Hassan, I was asking some of your teammates the other day, but if you could pick one highlight of yours this season to show to an NFL GM, what would it be and why, and Cade, since you've had the best seat in the house watching him, do you have a favorite from this season?

HASSAN HASKINS: I mean, there's so many plays, you know. Let me see. Let me see. There's so many that I can pick from, but probably one of mine from this season is probably just the whole O-State game. That was a so-real moment. It was a fun moment. Probably the whole game, to be honest. That's probably my pick.

CADE McNAMARA: Yeah, I think H2 has set some huge plays for us as a team. His contribution to this team is so big, and especially this offense, and I think, to narrow it down to one play is pretty tough, but one that sticks out in my mind is his hurdle against Nebraska. I thought that was pretty sick.

Q. Hassan, you guys have probably noticed that it's a little warm down here, a little humid down here. How much have the coaches been talking to you about hydration and kind of going back to almost like training camp kind of mentality on that front because it's going to be the warmest game you guys have played in a while?

HASSAN HASKINS: Yeah, most definitely. He tells us stay hydrated, drink water. We've just been practicing -- we just get in there and just try to get used to the weather and the humid and all that and things like that. He keeps telling us to drink water and stuff like that, so we've definitely been doing that, and we're getting used to the humid and the heat.

Q. Cade, I was curious during the Brady Brand photo shoot, did you get a chance to talk to meet George Pickens for Georgia?

CADE McNAMARA: No, I didn't meet him.

Q. I was just wondering, did Dax Hill travel down with the team for this game?

CADE McNAMARA: You know, it's not our job to comment on other players, so we'll let Coach Harbaugh answer that question.

Q. Hassan, obviously the Georgia front seven has been talked about a lot. I'm curious, as someone who kind of embraces contact, runs the way that you do,

are you excited for this match-up to see what you've got, and your thoughts on what it'll look like in the trenches there?

HASSAN HASKINS: Yeah, most definitely. We know they've got a good front seven, but we've got a good O-line, you know. So it's going to be a fun, physical game. I like them type of games, so it's going to determine who wants the game the most. We're going to see on Friday.

Q. Obviously we know the phrase "those who stay will be champions," and it applies to both of you. Can you tell us what it means to your game and your time at Michigan personally, what those words mean to you?

CADE McNAMARA: I think for me, it just takes me back to the place I was my freshman year when I first enrolled here. I was a redshirt. I didn't see any playing time. I felt like this team was in a much different place, especially with honestly the connection between the guys, the culture. I think it was just a different vibe in Schembechler Hall.

Obviously we won some games in 2019, but we didn't win a Big Ten Championship or beat Ohio State. When I think of those who stay will be champions, I just think of how far this program has come in the last two years, especially following last season, what a disappointment that was. It feels good that we can say that phrase with confidence now.

HASSAN HASKINS: Yeah, on my half, just freshman year, just moving to linebacker and coming back to running back, my journey has been a little different. The culture on this team definitely changed, and I'm loving it.

Everybody has just been buying in, coaches, players, and we're just all coming together. The energy is top tier.

Q. Cade, I'm curious, you have sort of a unique throwing motion. How did that develop, and have you had coaches along the way try to tweak how you deliver the ball or kind of make you into more of a traditional thrower, and why does it work for you and how has it sort of come about for you?

CADE McNAMARA: I mean, I began throwing a baseball when I was younger, and then in sixth grade I decided to play quarterback. I've been training with Jordan Palmer since seventh grade, and he hasn't -- obviously we're always working on something, but I wouldn't say I have a very odd throwing motion. All we do is try and get better, and I think however that looks, I don't think there's really a patent on how you're supposed to throw a football.

I think a lot of dudes have different motions that work for



them and their body types, and I think mine is I'm able to change my arm angle, I'm able to -- I'm not maybe the tallest quarterback, but I can find windows to make throws. I'm confident in my ability to throw a football, and obviously I want to get better at it, but I think my throwing motion has evolved, and I'm doing the best I can to make it as efficient as possible.

Q. You both have sort of mentioned the culture change and how different it is just in the last couple of years. Was there something or someone that sparked that change initially?

CADE McNAMARA: Honestly I really think it was the players, the leaders on this team have had enough, and we knew that something had to change following last season, that we had to be different. We had to change the way we were doing things, whether we thought that we were too cool or whatever the reasons were. I just felt like there were some issues on the team that we had to handle, and we had to come together.

I really think -- it's been mentioned that this team is really player driven, and I think that's true, that the guys on this team care about what this team looks like, how this team carries itself, and the combination of the change that Coach Harbaugh wanted to make, I think it has created a result and a really great culture that we have here.

HASSAN HASKINS: Yeah, to add to that, like Cade said, the team is pretty much player driven, and the culture is bought in with that. The culture has just been great. Cade pretty much explained it all.

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