

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

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

Michigan Wolverines

Brad Hawkins

Jake Moody

Press Conference



**PLAYOFF
SEMIFINAL**



There's no negativity. We just continue to strive for greatness and continue to move forward with everything that we're doing.

It started in spring and moved on to summer, and now in the fall it's continued to grow as a unit, and we all continue to grow together. That's what we're going to continue to do, and I can't wait to get out there on Friday with my teammates and continue to grow together and get this game done.

Q. I had a question for both of you. Obviously a COVID positive test throws a wrench into everything. Can you just walk me through the anxiety -- I don't know if you're testing every day, but walk me through that 15 minutes while you're waiting for a negative test to say that you can still practice and play.

BRAD HAWKINS: I mean, of course there's anxiety, but I mean, we're all doing the right things, so it's not really that deep for us. We just continue to just do the right things and continue to follow all the rules in the right way, and we're going to be fine. That's just how we go about the situation.

JAKE MOODY: Yeah, just kind of like backpacking off of that, we're not like too worried because we're following all the rules and regulations that all the doctors and trainers set for us. It's not too much of a worry, but there's always a chance that you could get it, so I guess there's always going to be a little bit of anxiety.

Q. Brad, I asked you back in September if you could sense that there was something different with this team, and I also asked you at that point does it feel cliché to say it, you believed this team could be competing for a National Championship. What felt different that early in the season, and saying that is one thing, but now playing into contention is another thing. What's this ride been like with that belief?

BRAD HAWKINS: It's been awesome. I mean, like I said back in January, this team was different and it still is different. Everybody bought in. You have tremendous leaders. You have tremendous coaches, the staff. This is a player-led team. We just continue to grind day in and day out. Everybody is bought into what's going on.

Q. I just wanted to talk to you guys about how much fun you're having. This is supposed to be fun. You get a whole week in Miami. It's snowing up in Michigan. What fun things are you doing to enjoy this ride?

JAKE MOODY: Yeah, it's obviously -- the weather is a lot better than it is back in Ann Arbor, so just being able to go outside and enjoy the sunshine, that's kind of the biggest difference. And then also we've been doing some fun activities as a team, which is good for like team chemistry and stuff. Everybody is loving it down here, and it's been a fun trip overall so far. We've still got a couple days left, so we'll see what the trip has next in store for us.

Q. Brad, could you sort of describe a little bit about what the nickel or star position does in Mike Macdonald's defense and why that's such a valuable spot for a guy who needs to do a lot of different things?

BRAD HAWKINS: Yeah, that position is very valuable. You do a lot of things. You move around. You've got to think on the fly because you've got to change strength of the defenses.

It's all interchangeable really, so it's just the type of defense that we play. Everybody can be in every spot at one point in time, depending on what play it is. But yeah, that position is very, very valuable to the defense, and he does a lot, he thinks a lot. He communicates a lot. But yeah.

Q. Brad, just to follow up on that, how do you feel

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overall about the depth right now at safety, and what's Rod Moore done late in the season to play as well as he has?

BRAD HAWKINS: You know, I feel great about the depth of the safeties. Rod Moore is a tremendous player. He's a leader as a young guy. He listens. He wants to learn. He wants to get better every single day. He comes out here, he works his butt off. You know, for a young guy to be thrown into the fire like that and continue to grow and continue to play well, tremendous for him, and he's going to continue to grow as a person and as a leader on this team. So I'm just very happy for him and can't wait to see his success in the future.

Q. It's not an unusual deal, every time you get a bowl game you have to wait around a month to play at the end of the regular season, but particularly when you're going to play in this game, in this playoff with these stakes, how hard has it been to not psych yourselves out and be patient waiting for this game to come? It's been 24 days since you guys got told that you were coming here. How long has that time seemed?

BRAD HAWKINS: Yeah, it definitely feels very, very long. I wish we could just maybe take a week off after the Big Ten and then get going again. That's the rules and that's how it goes. It's definitely been anxious and ready to get out there, but it's also been great to have some time off, as well, after a long season, get our bodies right, get our minds back right, watch some extra film. So it's a plus-plus both ways that it goes. That's kind of how we all feel about the situation.

Q. Brad, how tough is Hassan Haskins to tackle?

BRAD HAWKINS: He's very tough to tackle. Strong, physical guy. Can't just try to run through his legs because he'll jump over you. He's definitely a tough guy to tackle. I've been tackling him for years now, so he's helped me, I helped him. That's kind of -- he's definitely a tough guy to tackle for sure, as you see every Saturday.

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