

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

Saturday, January 1, 2022

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

Michigan Wolverines

Aidan Hutchinson

Brad Hawkins

Press Conference

Georgia 34, Michigan 11

Q. How will you remember and reflect on this team and what this team meant to you guys?

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Yeah, this team has been so great. We were so bonded from day one. It sucks it's got to end this way, but nothing is going to take away our accomplishments this year and what we achieved for what we were expected. I'll forever love this team. We did some amazing things, some historic stuff.

BRAD HAWKINS: Yeah, just to piggy-back on what Aidan said, this 2021 Michigan football team was amazing. I wouldn't trade it for anything. I love these guys. We bought in since January with the leadership and the young guys buying in with us and allowing us to lead them in the right direction.

Yeah, this 2021 Michigan team will forever be remembered. I love those guys, and I will forever just think about these guys, and I love this university.

Q. Coach Harbaugh told ESPN that he told you guys, hey, this is just the start. What does that mean to lay that foundation, to be a part of the beginning of a new era for this program?

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Yeah, we climbed mountains this season that no one thought we could. We did some things that nobody expected this Michigan team to do, and I think we set the standard for the future of Michigan football, and we really helped this program tremendously for the future. All those young guys, they've got this scar tissue now being in the playoffs, losing and having to feel this, so I know they're going to bounce back next year and give



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them hell.

Q. Aidan, you're described as being the kind of leader that galvanized the team, getting Michigan to this point where it was able to beat Ohio State and to get to the playoff. Is there any way that you can pass on that leadership to any of those players that you know are returning? Is there anyone you've been mentoring to play that role, to keep it so the team continues to have this level of success?

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Yeah, I think we've got a lot of guys on this team coming back who really -- that they listened to us leaders this year. They learned from us. They were with us through the thick and the thin. I know Michigan football will be in good hands next year with one of those guys. They're going to step up. I already started talking to a couple of them that I know are going to be leaders next year.

Michigan football will be in good hands, and they've learned this whole season what leadership is and how it's supposed to be.

Q. How do you balance the disappointment of a loss and the success of the season?

BRAD HAWKINS: Yeah, today didn't go our way. That's life. Of course we had a great season and got some big wins and just did what we were supposed to do, but this one hurts. But these guys are going to continue to grow. They're going to grow from this win. Kind of like Aidan said, we set the foundation. These guys of course are disappointed, and this little scar tissue is not going to stop them. Starting a new year, it's a new season, and they're just going to continue to grow and continue to get better.

Q. When you were on the field today, did you perceive there's another level to get to, like step to take?

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: I don't really think conferences matter that much. They were a talented team that happens to be in the south, and I don't think it's really Big Ten versus SEC. They're a very good football team, and they executed more than us today. I think that's what it comes

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