

Big Ten Conference Football Championship Game: Michigan vs Iowa

Sunday, December 5, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Michigan Wolverines

Lucas Oil Stadium

Head Coach Jim Harbaugh

Aidan Hutchinson

Press Conference



was really hard after such an emotional win last week. I mean, that was just -- it was insane. But, you know, we had to refocus. It was honestly hard a little bit, you know, personally to get over that just because it was something that you've been thinking about for years. But as you can see, you know, we got our game plan, we focused on that. And, you know, we had a very dominant win today.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: Yeah. It would be the same answer, Brad. You know, like when did you know that this was going to be a special team? Or how did you know that they would refocus? And it's the same qualities -- I love this team. There's no team I love more than this team. But it's the same qualities. I think back to the USD team we had in 2005 and 2006 and the Stanford team in 2009, 2010 and the 49er team, '11, '12, and '13.

It's just the way they approach it. They give it their best every day. And then you just -- just that simple thing. Nobody ever thinks it's that simple, but it's that simple. There are a thousand other little things that go into it, but when you're around a group of guys and you watch them making sure that they give it their best, their very best, you know, every single day.

And Aidan did lead that. That was -- you know, from January you could see, you know, when he went into the weight coaches and said I'm coming back, and every time I step into this weight room, make sure you wring me out, get everything out of me. You could tell he was hungry. And the weight coaches said, yeah, this can be an all you can eat buffet in here. And he ate it up.

And I think that's contagious and others followed. But, yeah, this is who they are. They give it their very best every day.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: Yeah, we -- we knew first of all Donovan Edwards, we had that play. That was ready for prime time. It's been ready for prime time about seven weeks. First put it in before he hurt his ankle. And then when he came

Michigan 42, Iowa 3

Q. (No microphone.)

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Yeah. I read a couple of those, a couple people in the crowd I remember, their predictions for what we got. Man, we defied all expectations. Nobody thought we could do this. Nobody thought we could ever do this, especially not this season. And, man, we did it. And we did it in a very dominant fashion.

Q. (No microphone.)

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Man, it's just so cool to have -- to see my teammates have my back like that and see them supporting me and doing all that, man. That was such a cool moment. And, man, it was so great just to see that and experience that.

Q. (No microphone.)

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Yeah. I really think it was a consistent belief, really, from week one. You know, we saw what we were about against Western Michigan. I knew we had something special off the jump so -- you know, really, the whole time, I knew we had something special.

Just the way we built the team, the foundation, the high energy throughout the whole off season. I mean, that doesn't amount to wins, but, you know, it amounts to the culture and the investment of the guys on the team.

Q. (No microphone.)

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Yeah. We all just refocused. It



back, started greasing it up again and knew that that one was going to work. We had it planned early.

As soon as we got into the left hash after the fourth play, we were going run that. And he's never missed on that throw. Sometimes he throws it off his left, his right foot. He's always on the move running when he throws it. And every time it's a dime.

And Roman did a great job tracking it down. And that was big. So we hit some big plays. Blake -- Blake's huge run in the first half. I don't think Iowa's had a run over -- against them over 30 yards, you know, all season. So that was big. I mean, they're -- the 9th ranked defense in the country.

And then second half, we went exclusively pretty much to check with mes at the line of scrimmage and felt like we knew when they were blitzing, what they were doing.

You know, great job by Josh Gattis. Great job by Mike MacDonald and the defensive staff. Great job by the offensive staff. Great job by the special teams. How about the blocked punt? I don't know how Cornelius Johnson was able to -- he didn't look like he was near position to block that punt. But somehow he contorted and got his left arm and hand in there to block that punt. But it was great complementary football once again by the Michigan Wolverines.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: Oh, yeah, I could feel it. We all could. We talked about it last night. What more -- how much more can we pile into one game, the importance of one game.

It's a lot, yeah, the championship, chance to go to the playoffs. To walk past the sign we all walk by, "Those who stay will be champions." To make that valid and that true. You know, for guys to -- to live on, really, in Schembechler Hall forever. I mean, this picture is going to be up there on the All American wall. Every guy on the team in the team picture is going to be up there as part of Big 10 Champion. We've got a banner in Glick Fieldhouse that's going to say Big 10 Champion.

And, you know -- and, also, I knew that they would -- I just knew they would handle it because they give it their very best every single day whatever they're doing.

And so, you know, when the players -- when Aidan came to me -- and it was Aidan who came to me and wanted to dedicate this game to Tate Myre, you know, yes, let's do that. Let's -- let's do that. That was -- that was huge. And

then when it was 42 -- when it was 42 points and we all looked up there, we were like --

Q. Describe that.

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: God works in mysterious ways. Man, it's crazy.

JIM HARBAUGH: When you read all the accounts and talking to Coach Line at Oxford High School, Tate was a warrior, football player, wrestler, best athlete in the school. And, you know, best athlete in the school could have easily made it out of that school and been the first one out.

But you just know that he was -- while people were running away from that fire, he was running into it. And he's a hero. I'm glad that -- our players got soul too. They got big hearts. Credible guys led by this young man right here.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: Can I just say one thing? On top of being great football players, they're even better people. And I've always felt that I've drawn the long straw here in being able to coach them. They're a joy to coach. They've been raised great by their parents. So I'm not taking any part of that credit.

But there's been zero distractions in Schembechler Hall, off the field. And that's going on, you know, three or four years now of no off-field incidents. Just guys that are -- of high character. Great football players, even better people.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: It was -- it was incredible. I mean, I give, you know, Ward -- Aidan came to me. I went to Ward. And, you know, they -- they put everything together. We just -- how could we honor him. How could we honor his memory.

You know, it's a community that needs all of our prayers, every one of them. And we just -- yeah, we wanted to offer that up. We wanted to offer our prayers. They're a community that desperately needs it and offer them up to the one who conquered death and also honor Tate Myre and his bravery, his courage.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: Nobody's owed anything. Nobody's entitled to anything. But, as I said, when you're around a group of guys that attack everything the way they attack their school work, their practice, and they want to give it their very best, you got a good feeling it's going to happen.

But, you know, nobody's owed anything. And they did a tremendous job earning it and really proud of them.

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Yeah. That was obviously one of the goals going into the season, but there's no guarantees in life, no guarantees that you're going to win anything.

But as we got closer and closer to that Ohio State game, you know -- I mean, that was the big test for us I think. And I think when we beat them, we knew, you know, we can -- we're a really good football team, and we got a really good chance to win this next game because, you know, Ohio State was a really talented team.

But, yeah, I think just beating Ohio State just for everybody's mental for sure, everybody's minds, we overcame them and we were moving on to bigger and better things, you know.

JIM HARBAUGH: And part of the beauty of when you give it your very best, then you're proud of whatever you accomplish. And, you know, it's awesome that you accomplished a championship. But that's the beautiful thing about giving it your very best, whatever you do accomplish, you know, you feel good about.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: Well, I've given you several already. Great group of guys, better -- great players, even better people. No distractions. They're great kids and great young men.

I call them my mighty men, mighty men and women of Michigan Football. That's what they are to me.

Why are they enjoyable on a daily basis? Because they've always got a smile on their face. They're always looking to get in. You know, they're not looking to get out of stuff. I don't have to talk them into things.

Sometimes I've got to pull them back, you know, because they've done too much. But, yeah, those -- you know, all those reasons.

And, you know, their mental is -- I'd argue that, you know, their mental health is great because they give it their very best every day. Therefore, they don't have guilt that they didn't give it their very best. They don't have regret that they didn't give it everything they had. I think a lot of people that don't give it their very best have guilt about that. They have regret. Not these guys.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM HARBAUGH: It was not. It was not until it was actually up there. You know, until Moody kicked the extra point and we just -- it hit me when I was -- hey, Aidan. That's 42 up there.

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Goosebumps.

Q. (No microphone.)

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: Sure. Do it.

JIM HARBAUGH: Absolutely.

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