

Big Ten Conference Football Championship Game: Michigan vs Iowa

Sunday, December 5, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Michigan Wolverines

Lucas Oil Stadium

Blake Corum

Andrew Vastardis

Cade McNamara

Press Conference

Michigan 42, Iowa 3

Q. (No microphone.)

BLAKE CORUM: I think so. I mean, 42 to 3, you tell me. I think so.

Q. (No microphone.)

BLAKE CORUM: I saw a hole. I saw the corner try to crash down. I hit him with a jump cut. Then it was green grass. And I saw JJ come by me. I slowed down for him so he could get in front of me. I think he took out like two people. And it was over from that. It was a great play by JJ. That was awesome. I ain't never seen a quarterback do something like that.

Q. (No microphone.)

BLAKE CORUM: You know, I think just the commitment from both sources. You know, Coach Gattis and then us believing in him. You know, he committed to the run game early. In the interview, he said like last year he didn't really focus on the run game. But, you know, he's been a tremendous play caller. It has been great.

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: So the beginning of the year, the odds -- I don't know, whatever it was, 2 percent likely we'd win the Big 10 Championship. That was preseason predictions. I don't know how it works out.

But, you know, we believe in each other. We believe in



ourselves. But, you know, there's always that little external motivation. So, you know, internally motivated, bring each guy along. But sometimes just some of the stuff that's out there, you just take it and ride with it and fuel to the fire. So that's where that was from.

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: I think so. It's the framework for how a team should be, relational, giving everything you got for the guy beside you.

You know, the expectation for how the season goes is going to be high. But I think the framework, the expectation is more so how the team operates within itself, like the brotherhood, the family, the relationships.

And, I mean, it's been -- we've put on a clinic of that this year with our brotherhood, how we care about each other, how we play for each other. And obviously goals, like accomplishments, all that outside, I think the framework to accomplish all that is what I just talked about.

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: I think it's pretty self-explanatory. I think he deserves to be the Heisman Trophy winner. He showed out every week, been a game changer, not just Saturdays. That guy puts it on the line every day in practice, every day in meetings. More dialed in, more committed and more dedicated than any guy I've ever been around. So, you know, how can you not root for a guy like that that in our opinion deserves it fully.

BLAKE CORUM: I agree. He should win the Heisman. He comes in the facility every day. He leads by example. And he just gives it everything he has every time he steps on the field. Meetings. It doesn't matter what it is, you know.

I think he's proved to the world why he should win the Heisman. You know, he's just a tremendous player. Probably going -- I think should get drafted number one. But, you know, it's great having a player like that on our team.



Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: I think just top down, coaches and players. Leadership amongst each other, knowing that we couldn't ride that high from last week and, you know, win that game but let them beat us this game. Everyone was dedicated, fully focused on Iowa.

And we had one job to do. And that was to come out here and execute and win this game. And the message last night, all the pressure -- I don't know if it was pressure. This game meant a lot, for this program, this team, this family, these fans, everyone that has had hands on this thing.

And on top of it, we wanted to play for 42, all those that tragically lost their lives in that community and everything. It's up to God, man. We scored 42 points, man. So it's just kind of -- gave me chills when I noticed that.

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: You know, we came in. Coaches talked, had a great plan and, you know, just said we're going to go out there, we're going to see what they're in, we're going to adjust. That's what we did. Just stayed in our stance a little bit longer. Stay in that squat.

But, you know, everyone was dialed in. Great communication. And just went out there and knowing that was 30 minutes to accomplish our dreams, accomplish our goals. And whatever it was going to take. So made good adjustments and executed really well.

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: Honestly, no one even thought it was a tough first half. He was just you're calm, cool, collected. What are we going to do to win this game. And that was the message all around.

Q. (No microphone.)

BLAKE CORUM: You know, I think everyone is just bought in from the jump. You know, it didn't matter who was coming in. You know, like everyone bought in. Everyone saw a goal. Everyone realized how many people were doubting us. Like you said, 2 percent.

But we believed in each other at the end of the day. And every coach that coach has brought in has been tremendous. We play for those coaches, they play for us. And it's been great, you know. I love all of those coaches that he's brought in. You know, Coach Hart and everyone

else, Coach McDonald, all those guys.

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: Hey, however it shakes down. I'm just excited to go out and play more football.

BLAKE CORUM: That's right.

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: Do you mean like before we all came here?

Q. (No microphone.)

ANDREW VASTARDIS: I mean, shoot. I've been a Michigan fan since I was little, you know. Just always loved this team, loved this program. Always wanted to be a part of it.

And just coming in at a time where energy was high like that where we fully believed that at some point or another during our legacy something would happen, something would put Michigan back on top.

And I think just every guy that's come in after I've been here -- because I'm the old head, apparently. But every guy that's come in here after I got here has just bought into that and done everything they can to make that happen.

And, gosh darn it, I'm just so excited to have people around me that care, love each other and just put it all on the line for each other because, I mean, that's what it's all about.

Q. (No microphone.)

CADE McNAMARA: Yeah. I mean, by the end of the first half, you know, they started bringing some more pressure, you know, and a lot of those -- a lot of the drop-back game that we had going on was a lot of five-man protection. And they were bringing one more than we could handle.

They had some success with it. So, you know, we were doing some check with me stuff to make sure that we were in the right play. You know, obviously when I'm hot, that's not a good situation.

So we did the best we could. And it required the offensive line to be in their stance for a pretty long time. So I know those boys were battling, and we appreciate them. And we were just able to play Michigan football. I don't think we played our style of football in the first half. And, you know, we knew that. And, you know, we regrouped and we had a good second half.

Q. (No microphone.)

CADE McNAMARA: Schoony, yeah. Schoony had a big game. I mean, the tight ends had a phenomenal game.

That was a huge play. You know, I'm just so happy for these dudes, you know. It's just -- you know, I'm so happy to be a part of this team. And, you know, you could choose any guy who played today who contributed to this game. And the tight ends did for sure.

Q. Other guys talked about 2 percent, that was your chance to win the Big 10. We haven't really heard that during the season. Was that simmering below (no microphone.)

CADE McNAMARA: Well, we didn't find out the exact statistic until this week. But, yeah, 2 percent for the last week. We thought about 2 percent the last week. And, yeah, I mean, we knew that this team -- guys on this team, this team is just -- you know, we've gone under some scrutiny. We know that. And we've battled through. We've -- you know, we're just such a great group of guys who just care about each other.

And, you know, it's -- we've really had the mentality of Michigan versus everybody. And, you know, I just don't know much to say other than I love these dudes, like, really.

Q. (No microphone.)

CADE McNAMARA: I love the identity that we've created on offense. I think, you know, whether -- you know, Coach Harbaugh said whether you travel through the air or on the ground, it doesn't matter, as long as we're scoring touchdowns. And I just love -- the physicality of this offense, you know, I think is the greatest attribute.

BLAKE CORUM: It's crazy.

CADE McNAMARA: And, you know, toughness is something that, you know, we -- that we take to heart and that we have made our identity that. And I really -- I just love the identity that we've created, no matter what the style of football is at this day and age.

Q. (No microphone.)

BLAKE CORUM: Hassan has performed all year, even before I was injured, you know, he was performing. But it just took a lot of hours in the training room with the trainers, you know, a lot of rehab. You know, I was trying to do everything to get back.

I'm still not, you know, 100 percent yet. But I'm still going to get back into the training room and rehab and rehab until it gets back to 100. But it was tough, you know, because, you know, I want to be out there with the guys. You know, I want to be running behind V and I want to fade and blocking for Cade, making sure I pick up a block.

But, you know, watching those guys like Hassan and Donovan come together and perform, it -- I loved it, you know. I always want to see other people be successful. And that's why I think the team is so special because we all want each other to be successful. We don't care who scores the touchdowns. We don't care who gets the rushing yards or the tackles, whatever it may be, you know. We just want to win. And when you want to win, you don't care.

Q. (No microphone.)

CADE McNAMARA: Yeah. I think, you know, a strength of this team is our ability to play complementary football. It just seems like when we need a stop, the defense makes a stop. When we need a touchdown, we score a touchdown.

And I think, you know, as you mentioned, just, you know, the magnitude of that drive, it set the tone for the second half. And, you know, it was just -- Michigan football playing Michigan football. And we were -- obviously, once we get back on track like that, you know, it's a good feeling. And, honestly, it's a feeling that we feel that we just can't be stopped. We just need the opportunities.

And, you know -- yeah, I'm just glad that we were able to make the adjustments. The coaches did a great job of prepping us. And it was a big drive for us for sure.

Q. (No microphone.)

CADE McNAMARA: Yeah. I actually -- one of the first things I thought of after, you know, we won was Coach Harbaugh. And I think, you know, that happened against Ohio State. That happened, you know, here today again.

It's just, you know -- after last season, you know, it was so tough and not just for us players but for Coach Harbaugh as well. And we know that there's not one person who cares about Michigan more than Coach Harbaugh. And, you know, this team -- you know, we came together. And we want to win for Coach Harbaugh too. And, you know, we're just so happy that we were able to give him that joy because he deserves it.

Q. (No microphone.)

CADE McNAMARA: He dropped dimes. I was shocked. He hasn't thrown a ball like that in practice, let me tell you, or else I might be second string. But -- but, yeah, he's just an extremely athletic player and, you know, he contributes to the offense in his unique way. Yeah. He's a gamer, I guess, with the arm.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And he can pass.

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