

College Football Playoff Media Conference

Wednesday, January 6, 2021
Grapevine, Texas, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide Miller Forristall

CFP Media Conference

Q. Could you talk a bit about a guy on the other side of the ball on your team, Dylan Moses. You've seen him in practice for years. What's he doing well, his leadership and his play on the field?

MILLER FORRISTALL: I think -- well, good morning. I think Dylan is a great guy to have on your team. Besides the fact that he's an outstanding player, an outstanding athlete, he does everything right on and off the field, and I couldn't be more thankful to have a guy like that on my team and to be able to play with him.

It's been fun playing with him the last three years and I'm super thankful for the experience to go against such a good player in practice every day.

Q. Looking at Ohio State's defense and how they've matched up with tight ends this year, it's been some safeties, some corners, sometimes a linebacker. What have you seen from those match-ups in previous games that you can take into this one?

MILLER FORRISTALL: I think when you turn on the film the first thing that strikes you is, man, they're a really good football team. They are disciplined. They do what they're supposed to do. Not only that, they're super athletic, as well.

So they pose a really good match-up problem for us to look at, and to kind of go across the board and make sure we have a really good game plan going into this game.

Q. You'll have a lot of good football stories to tell your kids and grandkids. When you tell them you played with a Heisman Trophy winner, how will you describe DeVonta Smith to them?

MILLER FORRISTALL: I think I'll describe DeVonta Smith as a fighter. But in the ultimate sense. A guy that continued to put his head down and go to work no matter what. A guy that was continually about his team. A great



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teammate.

That's how I described him to my high school coach the other day. He asked me about DeVonta Smith. He wanted to know -- it's the same high school coach as Trevor Lawrence. He goes, Man, I want to root for Trevor, but tell me about this DeVonta Smith guy.

I said he's a great teammate and that is something sticks out to me, not only as a guy who is so incredibly talented and a great player, but also a great teammate.

Q. More about Dylan. He posted earlier this last week that he was going through a tough time this season. How do you help out a teammate when he's going through a time like that? What are some of the steps you do to kind of bring your teammates up?

MILLER FORRISTALL: Dylan is a guy I can relate to a lot in that sense. I had an ACL just like he did, and everyone you think comes back and you hear all this, Oh, you're going to come back bigger, faster, stronger immediately, and you just don't all the time.

I struggled coming back from my ACL a little bit. Took me a while. Honestly, it took me two good years to feel like myself again. Dylan and I have talked on and off a lot about encouragement, man. Sometimes you don't always feel like you used to, but you can still play better and you can still be better than the player you were.

So we talk about that a lot actually as a guy who's had an ACL and I think I'm old here, so I try and impart the little wisdom I have to these guys that have been here not quite as long as I have.

Q. You've been around here for a while, and there's a lot of talk about legacies of teams and teams that of -- the 28 team was one of the best teams that came around here and didn't win a championship, so it kind of loses that legacy. How much are you thinking about that with this team and what do you hope the legacy of this team will be?

MILLER FORRISTALL: To be quite honest I haven't quite thought of the legacy of the team. I know coach mentioned



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a little bit how we have the opportunity to do something special that no one has ever done before, but honestly I think everybody is just kind of focused on Ohio State, as cliché as that sounds.

I don't think anybody is looking forward to, Oh, what a legacy we could have. We just kind of want to do what we can do today, not necessarily what we could do down the road.

Q. Just want to ask you about Sark, just how happy you guys are for him to get the job at Texas, but also the fact that he's able to stick around and finish the season out with you guys.

MILLER FORRISTALL: It's awesome. We're excited for this game and we're focused on this game. We're glad he's going to be here and be a part of that with him. Like I said, we're super excited for him and that's a great opportunity, but I know he is and so are we both focused on Ohio State and what is to come and what is a Tuesday practice today.

That's first and foremost, but we're super excited for him.

Q. Kind of along those lines, schools from all over the country try to poach Alabama assistants and analysts and whoever to build their own staffs. What is it about y'all's internal formula or magic or recipe, whatever word you want to use, that other people so badly want to steal and recreate?

MILLER FORRISTALL: I think it's the fact that we win, first and foremost, but it's the system and the process that Coach has instilled in not only his players, but every coach that comes here. There's a reason you get coaches from all walks of life, young coaches, old coaches, coaches on the back end of their career, the front end. They want to come here and learn under Coach Saban, and people want that.

People want Heisman Trophy winners and championship games and just to play really good football day in and day out. I think people are trying to get a taste of that from Coach Saban, honestly.

Q. Just as a fellow athlete, what is the thing that impresses you the most about Najee Harris?

MILLER FORRISTALL: Najee is one of the hardest workers we have on the team. I don't think people appreciate, that guy does a lot of work. And especially outside of our time here, he does a lot of work.

But I think physically his balance and flexibility are the two

things that impress me the most. Just the balance to stay on after hits and hurdle someone and continue to keep running. That physically is what's most astounding, I think, about his game.

Q. I was just wondering, if you had to describe -- nobody probably knows Nick Saban better than you do from a player standpoint. What is his magic? What is his secret? What is the potion he spreads around you guys?

MILLER FORRISTALL: Like I said, everybody hears about the process, and I think in really simple terms, it's kind of the ability to be excellent in everything you do one day at a time. Not necessarily trying to look ahead, but be excellent in what he's going to do today and the task at hand, and he does that better than anyone. To be excellent every day at the task at hand. No one does it better consistently.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Ohio State's linebackers. They play four of them quite a bit and any three of those guys could be matched up with you. What kind of problems or issues do they present for you as a tight end?

MILLER FORRISTALL: Any time you're playing in the National Championship game you know you're playing really good players, and this is no exception. They're old, they're veteran players who know exactly what they're doing, and then add on top of that, like I said earlier, they're really good athletes. They can strike and get off blocks really well, and they kind of run the show back there for the defense.

We kind of know what we're up against, really good players, veteran players, and we have to practice and prepare really, really well to be successful. That's kind of the mindset right now, is practice and prepare the right way so hopefully we can play how we want to.

Q. What are you going to take away from Nick Saban's leadership to apply to the rest of your life?

MILLER FORRISTALL: That's a big question. I've been here for five years, so I've heard a lot of things that I'll pocket for the rest of my life. But like I said earlier, just the way he goes about his life. And he does just attack all the little things with the same ferocity and intensity that he attacks the big things, whether it's how he's scripted goal line or how he's coaching the National Championship game. It's done the same way.

I really do believe that. He is better at the little things than anybody else, thus he's better at the big things. It's simple but really, really hard to do.

Q. What's John Metchie like as a teammate, and how has he grown over his time with the program?

MILLER FORRISTALL: Metchie was a guy not a lot of people knew about until probably the spring game, and he had eight catches and 104 yards and everyone was like, This John Metchie guy is going to be pretty solid.

It's been fun to see him grow and develop and mature a little bit. He's got this loaded receiver room year in and year out, so some names get glossed over, but Metchie is a guy this year who's put his head down and gone to work all summer. It's not like we had the weight room open or anything, but I'd see him at a field here or there just working his butt off, trying to find a place in this offense, and I really think he has, by the way he works and puts his head down.

He's fun and energetic to be around, a guy with a lot of energy and a smile on his face. So he's fun to have on the offense.

Q. If I can ask you an old man question, you mentioned about Coach Saban and what kind of influence he's had on you. I've heard from former players and current players on how much Nick Saban jokes on the field and the practice field. I'm wondering through five years maybe the cleanest joke you can tell us right here in the press conference or how much of the jokes is kind of -- does Coach need to get some fresh material on his banter there in the practice field?

MILLER FORRISTALL: He definitely needs some new material. I was talking to Ronnie Brown the other day, another Cartersville alum, and he mentioned a joke Coach Saban said to him when he was in Miami, and I said he used that one the other day. It's been a while since he was in Miami. Coach is a lot more lively and a lot more jovial than people just assume, the way he carries himself on screen, and he's a lot more fun to be around than people take him as.

People take that we have no fun and that he's no fun. He thinks he's funnier than he is, but he is pretty funny. I don't know if I have a joke to share. Josh Macton is laughing at me in the back. But that doesn't make it not true.

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