

# College Football Playoff

## Media Conference

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### Alabama Crimson Tide

### Pete Golding

CFP Media Conference



COLLEGE FOOTBALL  
**PLAYOFF**

**Q. Justin Fields said you guys probably didn't use (indiscernible) in 2018. What does he look like today when he was just a freshman in 2018?**

PETE GOLDING: Yeah, obviously I think he looks much more veteran. I think he does a good job of getting them in and out of plays. Obviously they're a big check-with-me team, and based on the shell and the front he can control the run game and the pass game.

So I think he's come a long way obviously of understanding coverages and fronts and the how they fit together. He does a really nice job of getting them in and out of plays. Obviously I think he's got a really good arm, a really strong arm, another one. He threw on his back foot 68 yards last week for the touchdown, but I think his accuracy has improved.

I think he's done a better job of keeping his feet in the pocket and keeping his eyes downfield, but he still has the ability to be able to hurt you and tuck it and run. So I really think he's become a complete quarterback, not labeled as an athlete.

I think he can make the throws, can make the checks, understand his coverages, so I think he's really grown up.

**Q. Along those lines, Coach Saban was mentioning that Ryan Day is a very good play caller. What does that mean to you? What are some of the things as far as play callers that can put stress on your defense? And what, if anything, that you've seen from Ryan on film makes him good at it?**

PETE GOLDING: Yeah, I think he does a really nice job of manipulating things by formation. I think a lot of formation into the boundary, they'll shift their motion, do a lot of different things out of the same personnel grouping.

He does a really nice job moving guys around in certain spots and isolating guys and trying to get them on a

linebacker or get them on a safety. They do a really nice job in the run game of creating the extra gap, making you account for the quarterback.

But I really like their look system. They're in the right play a lot of the times based on looking to the sideline and checking the play, and then they complement that with a fake look to now they go tempo off of it to where you're kind of caught in the middle. Hey, can I look to the sideline and be able to check what we're in, and then now they snap the ball, you're not ready, and it's an explosive. Or you're saying, here's what we're in, here's my hand. We're either better than you or we're not.

I think he's done a really nice job of complementing those two things and staying pretty balanced with it. And then mix in the tempo game on top of that to where they'll create an explosive play and then they'll hurry up, and then now they'll hurry up and then they'll snap it and go. And they they'll go hurry up, kill, kill, kill, what are you in, let's call the right play. Here is two out, here's a quarters beater, let's run double posts and take the shot.

Obviously I think a lot of things complement each other in the look and the run game and the pass game, and based on what you're in, they've got the best play for that front in the run game or for that coverage in the pass game.

So I think you've got to do a really nice job of changing that up. But yeah, he does a really nice job.

**Q. Pete, you guys, the two best offenses you faced this year, Ole Miss had 48 and Florida had 46. Just wondering how much does that concern you going into a game against Ohio State, and what do you think you can do better than you did in those games?**

PETE GOLDING: Yeah, I mean I think the biggest thing is fundamental execution. I don't think we ever come out of a game looking up how many points was given up how many did we keep them to. There were several games to where we kept them low in scoring but still didn't execute, they just didn't take advantage of it.

So I think the biggest thing going in is evaluating ourselves and the things that we've got to be able to clean up and



... when all is said, we're done.®

execute the individual jobs within all 11, and then collectively get all on the same page.

So I think the biggest thing on teams like this that go tempo, that are multiple, is having all 11 guys on the same page with their cleats in the turf, and you've got to be able to play and you've got to be able to make them execute and you got to be able to contest every play.

A lot of their chunk plays come up in the run game when there's a gap short because a guys misfit it or they weren't set, they weren't ready because of the tempo with it. And you can't give these guys those plays. They're going to make enough contested plays because they've got really a lot of good players at a lot of spots to where you've got to contest everything.

We've got to be sound in the run game. We've got to try to stay ahead of the chains, put them in obvious passing downs, because they're really -- I mean, they're balanced and they do a really nice job in multiple different down and distance of staying balanced based on what you're in.

So obviously games like this, obviously from a mental errors standpoint they've got to be small in number, we've got to do a great job attacking the line of scrimmage up front, trying to control the run game, be gap sound.

And then you've got to tackle in space. They're going to create some match-ups in space to where we got to get them on the ground and we got to be able to play well on 1st and 2nd down to get them in 3rd and long situations, make obvious passing downs.

Because I think that's one thing you looked at, whether it was Florida, Ole Miss, or even a couple times last week versus Notre Dame, you've got some opportunities on 2nd and 7 and 10 to make them 3rd and 8, 3rd and 10s, 3rd and 11s. You miss a tackle in the backfield, you get a penalty, you look up, now it's 3rd and 2, 3rd and 3, 3rd and 1, and you got five of those, and those are hard to stop.

So then they move the chains and now they've got another set and here we go. So I think we've got to do a great job on 1st and 2nd down by controlling the line of scrimmage, tackling well in space, being on the same page, and then you've got to execute on 3rd down. You've got to be able to get off the field.

**Q. Pete, Ohio State used its tight ends in the passing game a lot early this season, and then for about two months didn't really throw to them really at all. Last week they were a big red zone threat. As the guy who's trying to scheme against that, how do you approach that going into a game where a team has**

**kind of shown its strength there but has also kind of ignored it at times?**

PETE GOLDING: Well, I also think it goes back to, you know, we were talking about him as a play caller. What are they giving him? I think they do a nice job based on what you're in of what do they need to attack. They're going to try to attack that one-on-one match-up.

So I think lately people have been trying to take -- Hey, let's take 2 out the game, let's take five 5 out the game. Now you're isolated one-on-one on a bigger body and a lot of that is in the red zone.

So I think you've got to do a great job changing that up. You got to change the picture. You've got to change who you're doubling if you're doubling, all that. I think the big piece -- you've got to account for them all. Like you said, there are several games where they don't have a reception and then the next two games they come and they get in that red area and they target them and they do a nice job with them.

So they've got a lot of weapons. This is a game you go in and say, Hey, I just stopped this guy; we're going to win the game. That's not the case. They're very multiple. They've got a lot of really good players at multiple spots that you've got to defend.

So you've got to do a lot of different pictures, show them different things, play different coverage variables, to be able to take away certain things at certain times.

**Q. When you're preparing for Trey Sermon it's almost been night and day versus what he has been the last month versus what he was basically the whole season. I don't know how far back in the film you guys go, but are you at all perplexed on what Trey Sermon might show up on Monday?**

PETE GOLDING: I think we'll get his best. We normally get everybody's best, and I think he's playing at a really high level. I think he runs the ball effectively, he runs behind his pads. I think he's explosive. I think he does a nice job understanding their blocking structure up front and follows blockers and has patience when he needs to.

But he's one of those guys where you give him the seam, he can take it. I think he's got breakaway speed, and then he still has the ability to catch some out of the backfield.

So I think he's playing at a really high level. I think we'll get his best on Monday. Obviously I think they're going to give it to him a fair amount, and we've got to do running our feet on contacts and peppering the ball carrier and getting 11

guys to the ball, because he's a really good player and they've got a good front to block for him.

**Q. Dylan Moses obviously kind of opened up on social media about some of the things he's gone through this season. Could you tell or did you all have some talks earlier in the season that he was going through some adversity, and how much has he progressed on the field as the season has gone on?**

PETE GOLDING: Yeah, obviously I think we all have gone through some adversity this year. But no, I think like any young player coming in and going through this year and having some things from his family standpoint, like a lot of us had this year, some deaths in the family, stuff like that.

But it was hard, and I think he fought through it. When he was in this building every day he locked in, had the ability to focus. I think that shows his maturity and him growing up and him being a senior this year and coming back for that fourth year.

It never became a distraction to where you were ever like on the field, What's wrong with Dylan? It wasn't that by any means. I think that was kind of him just letting everybody else know, Hey, some of the best players in the country go through the same things that everyday people do, and you've got to be able to fight through it and push through it, and at the end of it you are going to be appreciative that you did that.

I think it was more that line of him trying to kind of use that as a lesson for our young guys than it was really him saying, Hey, I can't handle this or anything like that.

So yeah, obviously we've had several talks. He's a great kid, and I'm proud of the way he's fought through it this year and battling injuries and everything else. He's done a really nice job of that, and I think that's the one thing obviously I've been most impressed with, is when he's here, he's in the building, he's on the field, he's locked in. All right, let's bring people with you.

Obviously we've got to practice well to play well, and there hasn't been any of that. From a senior standpoint I'm a little banged up. I can't go out and practice. That's not who he is. So I appreciate him for that.

**Q. What's the big takeaway from the Ole Miss game, and what from that game still applies for this game coming up?**

PETE GOLDING: Yeah, I think two things to me. Obviously you can go through that game and get a lot of things, but yards after contact, which is every game. I

mean, there was 250 yards after somebody made contact with the guy that had the ball. That's tough to win at any level when you do that. That comes with missed tackles, poor angles, not getting 11 guys to the ball.

I think we had 28 mental errors in that game, as well. Obviously not getting all 11 guys on the same page. Some of that you look back on from a call perspective. Were there too many options based on a formation or something like that to where when tempo gets involved they're not on the same page and we're not contesting plays.

But I think the biggest thing is locking in and being able to focus and dominate my box and do my job. I think there's certain games where people start scoring and you're not having success that certain guys try to press and they try to start making plays that aren't theirs. And then they fast flow over the top and they've got the backside A-gap. Well now it cuts back and now it's an explosive run.

And it's not that they didn't know they had it. It's just that they were pressing and trying to make a play for the team, but in turn ends up hurting the team. I think our guys have matured in that saying, Hey, do my job. My plays are going to come. When they come, I need to make them.

And then going back on those things that we didn't do well, showing them on tape, all right, now why and how can we correct it, and then putting them in that environment in a practice situation, whether it's a drill, what have you, all right, to be able to correct that and they know and get that muscle memory from it so we can prevent it from happening again.

So I think all those are good teaching moments for young players. But the bottom line, in this game, you've got to be able to tackle well in space and you've got to stay ahead of the chains. That's what the offense is trying to do. You've got to get them in obvious passing downs, but then when you do that, you've got to be able to execute and get off the field. We've got to do a better job of creating turnovers.

Obviously I think when you hold people to where they're not used to scoring -- same thing when you look at Ohio State, they're averaging 43 -- and when they don't, that's because they've turned the ball over. It's not because people stopped them. It because they made a mistake. People made them make mistakes and they made them pay for it, and they got off the field, whether it be a turnover on 3rd down.

So I think that's the critical piece of this game.

**Q. The Northwestern game stands out so much in Ohio State's season. Would you reach out to them to**

**talk to them, and can you give an example maybe in your career where you've done something like that? Coaches talk to each other all the time.**

PETE GOLDING: Yeah, I mean, absolutely. I think in anything, it's a copycat business, what do people do well that's working, and obviously you want to move to your business obviously to make it successful.

So I think the first thing is evaluating the tape, how similar are they to us on defense. Obviously because what they do in the run game and the pass game is going to be dictated on what you do.

So obviously a lot of that -- some of the things don't marry because defensively sometimes we're different than other people, but conceptually going in and trying to take things away and how you do it, obviously, yeah, we study just like any student does.

This is our profession. We want to be the best at what we do, so most of that comes up in the off-season, obviously in the summers when you're doing your studies and finding certain things that are better versus certain obviously runs and passes and how we can change things up.

But yeah, obviously you look at everything. Look at, all right, what do they do well? Who's done a good job of stopping the bread and butter? How did they do that? What do we have within our scheme that is that?

Obviously we're not coming up with something new that our kids aren't familiar with and don't have a lot of bank reps in and now we screw that up because you don't have obviously the bank reps and the practice to do it.

But what within our scheme is similar to that that was effective? And then obviously they're going to have a complement off of that, just like we do. We screw something up, we've got a mental error, well then Monday we're fixing it, because we know the next opponent is going to do the same thing.

They're going to go through our explosive reels. All right, what big plays did we give up? Why? Well, they're going to do the same thing. We see that every week in the openers. We're going to see plays that this team has never ran that have hurt us throughout the year or previous years that people go copycat, put into their scheme, to obviously try to identify the weakness of a defense and exploit it.

Absolutely, both sides of the ball do that.

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