

College Football Playoff

Media Conference

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Alabama Crimson Tide

Patrick Surtain II

CFP Media Conference



COLLEGE FOOTBALL
PLAYOFF

Q. Patrick, I'm curious when you look at the way you guys have played on defenses of late, what has gone well and where have you guys gotten better the most in your opinion?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: We learned from experience what we need to do. I just felt like we prepared better each and every week. We've gotten better each and every week flying around to the ball, making adjustments and learning from past games where we struggled at, and sort of fixed and corrected what we needed to do.

Q. I know Malachi Moore didn't play against Notre Dame, but how has he looked this week in practice?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: He's looked fine. He's moving out there. He should be ready to go.

Q. Just your impressions of Justin Fields, what you've seen of him, kind of the growth of him as a quarterback, and obviously coming off the best game of his career, what you guys have to do to slow that passing attack down?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: Obviously he's a great talent. He's got a tremendous arm. Like I say, he's a leader on that team. Whatever he does affects the team a lot.

But we've just got to look at things to do to affect him as far as getting to the quarterback, pressuring him, different disguises in the back end, many different things to look at through the film room.

Q. How important is a game like this for you all in regards to recruitment in South Florida?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: You know, it's still an important game. I don't know what recruiting got to do with it, but at the same time, we're just focused on this game.

Hopefully they'll look at this game and see what they think

of it. But right now, I don't think that's out of the question, out of the picture right now.

Q. What are you looking forward to towards the most this week coming back to South Florida, playing in Hard Rock Stadium?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: Like I said before, I know it'll be a hometown game. I'm just looking forward to playing the best game with my teammates and just going out there and just winning the game. That's all I'm focused on really.

Q. The combination of Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson for Ohio State, are there any teams that you've already faced that you feel like you've seen a mix of this, where you have two receivers of that caliber between the slot and the outside that you have to deal with at the same time? And how do you try to match up with that?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: I'd say we've seen teams like that before. Just this team, they're very talented on both sides of the ball, even in the running game. So I feel like they bring a whole lot of dimension on the offense. They're great receivers, of course, which brings a tremendous amount of depth in their offense, so we're looking forward to the challenge.

Q. Overall how do you look to stop this Ohio State passing game that they have great receivers and then they can also attack with their tight ends?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: Like I said, it all starts in the film room and preparing each and every day in practice. But also looking at their top concepts, what they like to do, things like that.

As a whole defense and as a whole unit it's all about studying their tendencies and just preparing each and every day for the game.

Q. Talk about your father. Your father played in the NFL with the Dolphins and the Chiefs. What did he teach you about football growing up? And also, what is it like going back home to Miami where he was literally there for a long time when you were growing up?



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PATRICK SURTAIN II: I can remember him playing since I was in my earliest youth days. But he's taught me a lot about football, even more about football, afterlife of football. He taught me a lot of things going into the game. I just carried and learned from him, and just going back home, he's going to be there.

I'm just looking forward to impress him. I know they're going to be happy to see me. I'm going to be happy to see them. It's going to be a great moment.

Q. You already talked about the Ohio State receivers a little bit. You're probably going to be seeing a lot of Chris Olave. Can you talk a little bit about what he does so well and why he's hard to defend?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: I'd say his speed. He creates separation fast at the top of his routes. I'd say he also is very patient and fluid with his route running.

He keeps the defense guessing. I would say that much. But yeah, he's an excellent vertical threat for their team, and it's going to be a challenge, of course.

Q. Kind of along those same lines, as a corner, every wide receiver is different. They have their own special skill sets. But as a corner, when you know a guy that you may be matched up against on a specific snap is more of a deep threat than maybe yards after the catch or intermediate routes, are there any adjustments you make when you know that in your head?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: Of course you've got to look at certain things, what receivers like to do, their tendencies, and how they utilize them in the offense. As a corner you've got to expect that going into the game, his favorite routes, what he likes to do here and there. You've got to be on top of that as a corner.

Q. Along the lines of playing back home in South Florida and also your father, you talked about having memories from being a child, going to the stadium. What memories were there? Are there any specific ones? And also, from that first playoff semifinal that you played as a freshman, what can you remember from that? And what would it mean to you to potentially go out on top in the stadium that your father once called his NFL home?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: Well, I would say that I remember certain things when he was playing for Miami, like him making plays. They also had a great defense back then, with him, Jason Taylor, Sam Madison, Zach Thomas, all those guys.

I just remember him making plays out there, having fun, but also just knowing what it took to get here. It's a blessing, honestly, but just looking forward to this game.

Remembering the semifinal game, I just remember being a freshman out there, having fun, just winning the Orange Bowl. I just look forward to the game ahead.

Q. Obviously you mentioned your dad and what a great career he had. You're up for a couple of awards tonight. How much would it mean to you to win those awards to further show the mark that you yourself have had on this game?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: I'd be honored, honestly. Like I said before, I'm not so much focused on awards. I'm just focused on the game ahead. The awards come second to what we've got in store and what we've got to finish.

Q. I know you spoke a little bit about your time here in South Florida. Have you had a chance to speak to the other guys from South Florida, Jordan Battle, Josh Jobe? What is some of the excitement that you guys have as a unit and as a team coming back?

PATRICK SURTAIN II: We're all very excited to come back home and play in the National Championship. You know, all our families are going to be there. They're going to be excited, repping the hometown is an exciting feeling, knowing how much tradition you've brought into the South Florida world, we did.

But, you know, it's going to be an exciting moment and we're going to have fun out there. We're just going to enjoy the moment.

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