

# College Football Playoff Media Conference

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Grapevine, Texas, USA

## Alabama Crimson Tide

### Phil Mathis

CFP Media Conference

**Q. Phil, Coach Saban has had a number of great teams come through the program, but he mentioned after the SEC title that he loves this team. What is it about this team that sort of grabbed his heart?**

PHIL MATHIS: I really just think the way we have discipline around here. We all work together. We try to do everything right, everybody staying out of trouble. We try to follow the protocols of coronavirus, and we handled it well. I can say that's probably one of the reasons.

**Q. Give us a general feel on how you stop Justin Fields.**

PHIL MATHIS: Just do what we've been doing all week in and week out at home. Just trying to get back there and do our job. Just running calls that Coach calls from the sideline and just try to go out there and dominate him.

**Q. How much has Nick Saban talked about the 2009 team and that team going undefeated and the chance for this team to go undefeated, as well?**

PHIL MATHIS: He really hasn't been talking about it much because we've just been focused on what we've got to do now. That's in the past and we're here now, and we're just focused on what we've got to do now to bring home the W.

**Q. What would a second National Championship do for the legacy of your 2017 class?**

PHIL MATHIS: I think it would bring a lot of spark for the team that's coming back next year. It would be a lot of motivation. And as for the '17 class, it'll bring a lot of -- I don't know, I guess love, a good feeling that we did it two times, especially with the guys that was there freshman year.

Also with Smitty catching that big catch, and obviously whatever we go out there and do come Monday.



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**Q. What's it like watching Ohio State's offensive line on film? What kind of challenges do you see that they're going to present to you guys?**

PHIL MATHIS: Oh, those guys are pretty physical. They move pretty good. We've just got to accept the challenge up front and just try to dominate all night.

**Q. Who or what is something in your life that motivates you on a daily basis as a student-athlete?**

PHIL MATHIS: I can say my father. He's always in my ear. Even when I play good or play bad, he's always motivating me, telling me that I've got it and I can do it, just keep pushing.

Also my mom. She's always texting me, also, even though she can't be here because of coronavirus and stuff like that. She's always letting me know that she loves me and I can do whatever I put my mind to.

**Q. When you guys are watching film on Trey Sermon, I don't know how far back you guys go, but have you ever caught yourself wondering what the heck happened with this guy between maybe the first three or four games to what you guys may be preparing to see in the College Football Playoff now?**

PHIL MATHIS: Can you repeat that?

**Q. What I'm asking is, from your standpoint as a defensive lineman who's gone up against some pretty good running backs, have you seen a difference in the Trey Sermon you've seen on film from the first two or three games of the season to maybe the film from the last two or three games where it seems like he's running for 200 plus yards every night?**

PHIL MATHIS: Yeah, he's a good back. He runs pretty hard. You can see that it means a lot to him. He's got something to prove. That's something I love about him.

But obviously we've got to go out and just do our job and wrap him up.

**Q. Another question about the Ohio State offensive**

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**line. Their two tackles are not the guys who have maybe gotten national accolades and things like that, but what are you seeing from them especially that makes them a tough match-up for someone coming off the edge?**

PHIL MATHIS: I mean, they do a great job in the passing game, also in the running game for Trey, and like I said before, we've just got to take on the challenge and show up with the same intensity that they bring.

**Q. Overall how do you plan to get past the Buckeyes' outstanding offensive line headlined by Wyatt Davis and put pressure on Justin Fields and Trey Sermon?**

PHIL MATHIS: I'd just say don't change nothing that we have been doing all year long. Just stick to the plan, take what Coach gives us from the sideline, and go out there and execute the call.

**Q. When you look at this Ohio State team on tape, whether it's personnel or scheme or talent, do they remind you of anybody you've played this year, whether it was in conference or even the Notre Dame game? Any similarities you see?**

PHIL MATHIS: Not really. I mean, when I watch film, I see that team. They do what they do. They do what they do best, and I can't compare nobody to those guys because that's their team, and I feel like it would be disrespectful if I tried to compare them to someone else.

Ohio State is Ohio State, and they do a good job at what they do.

**Q. Even if you're not going to compare players or teams to each other, from a scheme perspective, what you see the offense do for Ohio State, do you feel like you've seen that style of offense in other games where maybe you guys as a defense feel like, okay, maybe this isn't totally new to us?**

PHIL MATHIS: Most definitely. Their offensive line, they try to get sideline to sideline like Notre Dame. I think that'll be something I can compare.

**Q. I can't help but ask about you. Where do you think you've grown the most this year as a football player, and where do you think you can improve the most moving forward?**

PHIL MATHIS: The most I think I've grown is just having confidence in myself, and also just becoming a leader on the team and just being the best that I can be whenever I'm out on the field and just taking away that nervousness from

what I had last year and just being the best that I can be.

**Q. On the subject of being a leader, though, is it more by your actions or are you a vocal leader on this team?**

PHIL MATHIS: I try to lead by my actions, just by doing the right things on and off the field. Just showing the young guys that you don't have to be a tough guy or anything to do the right things around here. It doesn't take that much. All it takes is just buying in to the team and just staying focused.

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