

College Football Playoff

Media Conference

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Alabama Crimson Tide

DJ Dale

CFP Media Conference



COLLEGE FOOTBALL
PLAYOFF

Q. DJ, when you looked at the interior of this Ohio State offensive line, centers and the guards, what do you see out of that group, and what is the challenge that they provide?

DJ DALE: They're athletic. They're physical. They do a good job of controlling the line of scrimmage, knocking you out of your gap.

As a whole, the offense does a good job executing, and the offensive line does a good job.

Q. Just talk about -- everybody has been talking about Justin Fields and the running backs. What do you see that's different with Ohio State that people are not talking about? Are they talking more about the wide receivers or are they talking more about -- what do you see in your prep for this team?

DJ DALE: I think the whole offense needs to get some credit, from the offensive line, from Justin Fields, the running back, the receivers, the tight ends. The tight ends played well in the last couple of games.

So I feel like the offense as a whole is just a challenge to take on, so I feel like the whole offense needs to get credit for what they've been doing.

Q. Christian Barmore has always been kind of a big-time player, but in the last few games he's really been just incredibly disruptive. What does he bring not just in practice but on the game field where he's able to flip on that switch and just attack quarterbacks the way he does?

DJ DALE: It's not really a switch. That's just him, whether it's in practice or in the game. That's just him.

The thing that separates him is just his mindset and just his will. The only thing that can stop him is will. It's just his mindset and how he carries himself. That's just him. It's

not really a switch. Even outside of here, he feels like he can't be beat in anything, whether it's football, basketball. That's just him.

Q. I'm curious if you could elaborate maybe on how your ability to practice good-on-good, the fact that you guys are going up against your own teammates who you feel are some of the most players in the country, prepares you and maybe excites you for a match-up where maybe Ohio State feels the same way, they've got elite talent on both sides of the ball. Does that heighten your excitement level for a game like this, knowing that the stakes are certainly high because you're playing for a National Championship, but you truly get to play against some of the best players in the country?

DJ DALE: Yeah, I feel like more than anything it just prepares us for any opponent. Different teams do different things, but going against our offense and our offensive line, I feel like we can take on any challenge that any offense gives us.

Q. I was hoping you could speak about the overall front seven, at least the growth that you've seen out of the front seven, and overall collectively, how do you think you guys have improved throughout the season?

DJ DALE: From starters, I feel like we've done a better job of stopping the run. I think the biggest thing was just communicating. It's been a very long season, and over time we've done a good job of just gaining chemistry together. You kind of get a feel for everybody around you. You start to figure out how everybody plays and how you have to communicate with different players a certain way and give them calls a certain way.

So just the chemistry and just the bond that we've created and grown to over the whole season has just been the biggest difference.

Q. Before college, what made you want to start playing the game of football, and did you play any other sports as a kid, too?

DJ DALE: I started playing football when I was four years

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old, and before football I started playing baseball when I was three, and I played basketball. But football has just been something that's always been around me like growing up, like from my older brothers, my uncle. I don't even remember like me actually wanting to play football. As far as I can remember that's something I've always done.

But baseball was my first sport and probably my favorite sport, but football has just always been there.

Q. I was asking Phil Mathis about this before you came. How do you plan to get past the Buckeyes' outstanding offensive line and stop their great rushing attack and passing attack?

DJ DALE: I just believe in all the calls the coaches want to put us in and just executing them. If we execute the calls, then it's going to put you in the best position to make plays.

Yeah, I don't really -- I'm not really focused on just like me personally, but just executing all the calls he gives us, and they put us in the best position to make plays.

Q. With the Saturday game for Washington Football Team in Tampa Bay, there's a lot of players in Washington on the defensive side of the ball. What does that speak to the preparation you get at Alabama on that side of the ball?

DJ DALE: Can you repeat that?

Q. In this Saturday's Washington football game there's a lot of players in Washington that are on the defensive side of the ball that are from Alabama, so kind of what can you speak to the preparation you get while you're with the Crimson Tide?

DJ DALE: Oh, just the buy-in. You see where it can get you. There's a lot of guys on the Washington Football Team that came from Alabama and even on the defensive line, so just buy-in and do what the coach asks you to do. You can see where it gets you.

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