

College Football Playoff

Media Conference

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Alabama Crimson Tide

Christian Harris

CFP Media Conference



COLLEGE FOOTBALL
PLAYOFF

Q. When you're going up against an offense like this that's had as much success as it's had, both in the pass and in the run game, how do you handle that in terms of making sure you're equally prepared for both areas?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: Just making sure, you know -- like you said, they're very explosive in the passing game and very explosive in their run game, and just being very disciplined and just executing whatever Coach's game plan is.

I just think being disciplined is a very big part of that.

Q. Dylan recently opened up about some of the difficulties of the season for him. What's it been like in that room with him, and what have you been able to do to help him along?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I mean, I think Dylan has done a really great job throughout all his injuries and stuff that he's been dealing with. Sometimes I think I probably just communicate a little more. You know, we'll switch out spots on the field sometimes, stuff like that.

There's not really too much that's changed. He's still a great leader for us each and every day no matter what he's going through, so I think he's done a pretty great job.

Q. Obviously this year has not been what anyone expected with COVID popping in and out, but your team has still managed to break a new record it seems every week, and now you're looking forward to playing in the National Championship on Monday. I guess my question is would a National Championship win to cap off everything y'all have accomplished this year maybe be a little bit more special than a regular year, or how will winning on Monday kind of be a bigger accomplishment?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I mean, I just think getting an

opportunity to play in the National Championship, regardless of whatever year it is, whatever you had to go through that year, it's a great opportunity.

I think you just have to go out there and take advantage of it. I can't really answer for that. Like I say, we'll just see what happens on Monday.

Q. Just wondering about the Ohio State running game. You mentioned you have to be disciplined. What have you seen so far that leads you to think -- why have they been so successful this year based on what you have seen on the ground?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I think it starts with them up front. Their O-line is really physical. They do a really good job of just, like I said, executing whatever their coach's game plan is, especially getting to the second level.

The running back does a really great job of hitting his seams and cutbacks and he has a really great stiff arm. He's just an all-around great running back. You have to make sure you're really sound in your gap control and really physical.

Q. What has Dylan meant to this defense and to the younger guys? He's obviously been through a lot, and the fact that he's playing hurt and playing through bumps and bruises, what has he meant to you guys?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: He's a great leader for us, somebody I've always looked up to since I was little. Dylan is like a big brother to me, and he's very vocal out there. He also leads by example.

But he's a very great leader. We all look up to him on the defense. Whenever the energy is low he picks us up, whether that's him saying something or leading by example by making a big play in practice or during a game, something like that. So I think he's doing a really great job.

Q. I was wondering if you can tell me about No. 88 for Ohio State. He has 12 catches but five are for touchdowns, Jeremy Rucker. What have you seen from him that makes him so explosive?

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CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I think all around he's a great player. He's also really physical, which also causes a lot of challenges. Because a lot of tight ends, they may be really physical but not that effective in the pass or only effective in the pass but not effective in the run, but I think he can do both of those, which like I said, sounds really -- have to be really disciplined, because like I said, he can kill you any moment of the game, whether it's the run play, put you on your back, or the pass; he's a great route runner. He's also got some size on him, so it's really hard to get around him when he's trying to make catches, so his catch radius is also well.

So I think he'll present a really good challenge for us and he's a really great player.

Q. With this Saturday's Washington football game there's a lot of players on Washington that are on the defensive side of the ball. Sort of what does it speak to the way you guys prepare at Alabama to be NFL-ready by the time you guys are done with your playing careers?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I think the coaches here at Alabama do a really great job of developing players to give them the best chance to play on the next level, and also be successful. Not just get there, but to be able to get there and stay there and be consistent.

I think just seeing those people on the Washington Football Team get out there and play just shows how great our coaches and how great this program is here at Alabama.

Q. Christian, certainly this offense has gotten more than its share of publicity, and deservedly so, and the defense has had a few more growing pains. Is this a great chance for you guys to make a statement against a high-powered offense like this, to say, Hey, we play pretty well on this side of the ball, too?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I think each and every week we try to go in making a statement. We know we have a really great offense. We know we have times where we were a little bit shaky on defense.

But you're only as good as your last game, so we try to bounce back, and like I said, just execute whatever Coach's game plan is and do whatever we can to win.

Q. What have both you and your team faced this season to help you prepare for this Ohio State offense?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: You said what have we faced?

Q. Yeah.

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I think just great running backs, great tight ends, different pieces from other offenses. You kind of look at their offense, they can literally do anything. They can run the ball at any point; they can throw at any point; they have great explosive receivers; they have a really explosive quarterback who can sit in the pocket, take a hit and throw it. He can run out of the pocket and scramble and throw it, or he can take off for 50 yards.

So like I said, they present a really great challenge for our defense, and we're really psyched for the challenge.

Q. I hear Coach Saban a lot talking about affecting the pocket in particular on the defensive side. How much bigger of a challenge is affecting the pocket with a guy like Justin Fields who has that scrambling ability?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I think you just have to be disciplined, not rushing too far up the field past the quarterback, giving him a chance to step up in the pocket to get out to extend the play. Because, you know, that happens a lot whenever you're facing a quarterback who has the ability to scramble.

So I think just staying disciplined with that and trying to close the pocket is very important.

Q. What do you do to calm your nerves while you compete in big games like this one?

CHRISTIAN HARRIS: I mean, I think it all starts from before the game. I have like this little ritual where I eat Skittles and stuff, so I kind of keep my little ritual the same. It kind of keeps my calm.

Like I say, I just have a lot of confidence in my team, as well, whenever we go out there that we can go out there and execute each and every play. I think it all stems from the confidence that I have in my team and everybody around me.

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