

# College Football Playoff

## Media Conference

Thursday, January 7, 2021

Grapevine, Texas, USA

### Ohio State Buckeyes

### Chris Olave

CFP Media Conference



COLLEGE FOOTBALL  
**PLAYOFF**

**Q. Chris, can you just take us through that process of having the Big Ten title game taken away from you and working to get back and how great that felt to get your redemption there against Clemson?**

CHRIS OLAVE: It was tough. I mean, going into the week that was the best I ever felt. My legs were under me. I was practicing real hard going into the Big Ten Championship, trying to go against a good Northwestern defense and just trying to win that game.

To get that tap on my shoulder was tough. I called my parents right after and had to go into quarantine for 10 days in the hotel. It was tough. I didn't really do much in the hotel. Just tried to stay in shape. We couldn't really go for a run, so we just had to work out with bands, do a lot of situps, pushups, staying there.

But when I did come back out it was tough in practice, being real tired in practice and just sleeping a lot and I didn't really get my legs back until towards the end of the week.

I think Wednesday or -- yeah, Wednesday was the day I started to feel good, and thankfully I had a good game on Friday.

**Q. DeVonta Smith has got a lot of the headlines going into the game as the Heisman winner. Do you enjoy having the opportunity as a competitor to kind of go head to head with him in this game?**

CHRIS OLAVE: I don't really look at it like that. I just want to win this game. There's a lot of talent on the field. He's a great player, Heisman winner. There's a lot of talent on the field, like I said, and I'm just looking forward to winning the game.

**Q. I wanted to know given that you are a person that firsthand dealt with coronavirus and have seen many teammates go through it all throughout the season,**

**kind of what it was like mentally and in the moments when you weren't at practice to kind of go through the season and know that there were going to have to be sacrifices made but there's still going to be tough points that you have to go through, as well?**

CHRIS OLAVE: It's tough. I mean, we -- outside of football we're kind of at the house so we can't really do much, but to catch it this late in the season, it's tough. I mean, it's terrible timing, and I know mentally I was messed up, especially catching it towards the end of the season. I mean, you can't really control that. Just try to control what you can control and do what's best for the team.

That week I was just trying to hype my guys up. I'm just glad that we came out with a win that week.

**Q. Sort of a question on the opposite side of that, how much have you -- you can speak for yourself or the whole team. How much have you sort of been perceptive of the toll this has taken on Ryan Day or the rest of the coaching staff, and how have you guys tried to help them? Or has it been more the other way around, that they try to hide how much this might be affecting them for the sake of you guys?**

CHRIS OLAVE: I mean, it's taken a toll on everybody. I feel that. Playing a season through the middle of a pandemic, nobody expected this to happen. But at the end of the day we just have to control what we can control and just be there for each other at the end of the day. I mean, we're all going through it. We haven't seen family in so long but we've got each other here, so we had to make so many sacrifices this year.

It's come down to the final game, and we're in the National Championship. We're all blessed and we're thankful for the opportunity to play in this game.

**Q. You're likely to be seeing a lot of Patrick Surtain. He's a finalist for the Bednarik Award as you probably know. I'm wondering what you see on tape from him, what he does well, what you're going to have to do to beat him.**

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

CHRIS OLAVE: He's a great player. I mean, he's a great player, long, fast, physical. Can't really ask for much in a DB. I know he went against Okudah last year. He's damn near equal to him. He's a great player and they've got great DBs, great linebackers, a great defense, talent all over the field.

We're going to have to find a way to beat them. I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. I remember talking to Justin last year about when he first got to Ohio State, and it was obviously such a new experience for him being away from home. I think he's sort of a little bit more of a reserved guy to begin it and he was talking about how homesick he was and wondering if he made the right decisions. How did you guys as teammates embrace him and how have you seen him come out of his shell in the two years you've been together, and do you feel like the performance he put on against Clemson under such an adverse scenario is sort of the culmination of how much he's embraced being one of your teammates and wanting to win for you guys at all costs?**

CHRIS OLAVE: That's the kind of guy Justin is. He's kind of a shy guy first, but once he gets comfortable, he's comfortable. To have that game, for him to have that game, he had a couple of bad games under his standards, and to have that game, especially in the playoffs, is huge for him and for the team.

I'm definitely happy for him. I'm always on his side and always have his back.

**Q. What is the secret for you guys to catch that lightning in a bottle like y'all had last Friday night as an offense where everything started clicking, the passing game, Justin was on point? Do you have to go into a game and just let it happen, or do you -- you know what I mean? How do you keep from pressing for that to happen again?**

CHRIS OLAVE: That just doesn't happen. The chemistry we have, the trust we have in each other, we all knew we all had trust going into the game in each other. We all wanted to put it all on the field and leave nothing. Coach Day dialed up some things and we went out there and executed, but that doesn't happen just that week.

That happens all in the off-season, all grinding together, all blood, sweat, and tears. Just to come to that game and perform.

Like I said, we've dreamed of that since we were kids and now we were in that moment, and we've got another game

to have fun and cherish.

**Q. When you guys go deep on those play action passes, can you tell pre-snap when you're going to be able to be the guy off the line of scrimmage and get a step on them?**

CHRIS OLAVE: Yeah, pre-snap I could see coverages. I could see where guys were going to be. I'm on the same page as Justin, so whatever he sees I see. Definitely on the deep balls, on the play action balls, I definitely know when it's coming to me or when it's going to somebody else pre-snap.

If they switch it post-snap I can see that, too.

Like I said, we're all on the same page and we know where the ball is going to go.

**Q. Is there anything in common you see from defenses on some of those players?**

CHRIS OLAVE: No, it's just the coverage, personnel. Just a lot of different things, but that's pretty much at the top.

**Q. So much of the buildup to the last game when we were talking to you was about beating Clemson and whatnot. How much is that your motivation rather than just to get redemption in that game?**

CHRIS OLAVE: Yeah, that's what you come to Ohio State for, is to go to the National Championship, win a National Championship. I know in recruiting that's why I wanted to come here and play with the best. We get to do that on Monday, and I'm thankful for the opportunity and I'm truly blessed.

**Q. As stated before, you'll be lining up against one of the top cornerbacks in the country in Patrick Surtain. How have your match-ups against Shaun Wade in practices helped you prepare for these kind of high-caliber match-ups?**

CHRIS OLAVE: I mean, since my freshman year there's been a lot of DBs here, Harnish, Jeff Okudah, Kendall Sheffield, Shaun Wade, go down the line. But Surtain, he's a great player, one of the best players in the country, I believe, and it's going to be a tough match-up, but we've got to compete. It's going to be fun. I'm just happy to be in this opportunity, and I'm blessed.

**Q. I know you and Garrett have caught a fair share of the passes. I'm curious if you feel Jameson Williams is underrated. He had that big touchdown touch against Clemson so I'm curious what you've seen from**

**him.**

CHRIS OLAVE: That's my job. Me and Jameson, Garrett, we all competed in the off-season. We still compete to this day. But he's really underrated, I think. He can take the top off at any time, one of the fastest players I've seen. He's my guy, and I'm happy he had the game that he had last week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

