

College Football Playoff

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Ohio State Buckeyes

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL
PLAYOFF

Q. I know your role on that team in 2018 was just totally different than what it is now, but you did get an opportunity --

JUSTIN FIELDS: 2019?

Q. 2018 when you played Bama when you were still at Georgia.

JUSTIN FIELDS: Oh, yeah.

Q. It's a different role. Obviously it's more than just you coming in for a couple series or a couple snaps. Do you remember anything from that game, because a lot of those guys still have a role? Is there anything you can take from that and actually use it as experience?

JUSTIN FIELDS: I remember it. A freshman playing in that game, I was just like, I'm actually in this moment, but that's pretty much the biggest thing that I remember, of course from that game, and of course the two plays I went in.

I took a lot from that game, first playing Alabama and playing those guys. But, yeah, just being at this stage, I feel like that's the biggest thing that I remember.

Q. I'm wondering since you and Trey are both from Georgia how well you all knew each other, whether you had a relationship or friendship before he got there, and just how you've seen him really turn things on the last few games?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, I think I've known Trey since my junior year in high school. We actually played against each other my junior year. He was a senior at the time. I think we beat them -- yeah, we beat them by two or three touchdowns.

But, yeah, I've known Trey for a long time. We have one of

the same trainers that -- you know, we've been working out together since probably like my senior year of high school. We've known each other a long time now for sure.

Q. I remember talking to you before about when you were leaving Georgia, and you had talked to Coach Day but you had not yet actually set foot on campus at Ohio State when you committed there. I know maybe the first week or two was probably not the easiest for you, either. What was it about your connection with Coach Day that made you confident that you had made the right decision to go to Ohio State, and when did it sort of click that, yeah, this is going to work out okay?

JUSTIN FIELDS: I think the connection that me and Coach Day had from day one was genuine. Of course everyone knows he's a great offensive-minded coach, and I knew that he was going to make me a better player. That's all I was really worried about when choosing a school.

And when I knew it was going to work out was the first touchdown I scored against FAU during the first game of last year. So, yeah.

Q. What do you remember about that fake punt against Alabama, and do you still hear about that now that it's two years down the road?

JUSTIN FIELDS: No, I don't really hear about it anymore. All I remember is that I went out on the punt. Everybody was yelling my name and the punt didn't go the way we wanted to. That's the only memory that I have from that one play.

Q. I'm not sure if this is something more instinctual or something you've worked on with quarterback trainers and coaches, but it looked like in the second half after you had absorbed that big hit in the Sugar Bowl you kind of adjusted some mechanics with your throwing and you were taking a bigger stride into the throw and relying less on your upper body. Is that something that you worked on specifically or how were you trying to manage that?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, I think it just comes naturally, of

... when all is said, we're done.®



course, when you're trying to complete a pass in a game and you might not have all of the body parts working like you would, I guess, want them to. You would have to alter another thing to get the ball where it needs to go.

I might have been altering my footwork or motion a little bit, but that was just coming off of the injury, so of course I was dealing with that.

Q. Did you tell your teammates to stop slapping you on the back when you were making big plays on the sideline?

JUSTIN FIELDS: No, I don't think they smacked me right there in the side. Not right on the side. But of course I think those guys were conscious of my injury, so I didn't really get a lot of slaps or punches to the side.

Q. I want to follow up on the question from a minute ago. What more can you say about your relationship with Trey, how that's kind of grown, and have you guys kind of compared your journeys at all starting out at other places, ending up here in the National Championship game and being two Cobb County guys trying to play for a national title?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, it's definitely crazy just seeing the position that we are, where we are right now. But yeah, I've known Trey for a long time. He's always been a hard worker. I think we'll talk about this in a few years from now, but I think right now we're more so living in the moment. So yeah, we haven't really looked back on it.

Of course I tell him after every big game we win, I usually go up to him after the game and say to him, I told you that you should have come here. But yeah, other than that, that's all we talk about. We don't really talk about how this is all crazy and stuff like that.

But I definitely think for sure down the line we will.

Q. Under any circumstances you'd be gratified to get to this game, but looking at the arc of this season, when you even had to speak out just so there would be a season, being here, is that any more meaningful to you?

JUSTIN FIELDS: I mean, it's definitely more meaningful because this is where we wanted to be before the season even started and when our season got canceled. I think all of the stuff we've done in the past, all of the workouts, all of the getting the games canceled, saying we're playing and saying we're not playing, that messes with your mental.

But just all of the stuff that this team has been through and

all the stuff that everybody has been through here is just a big sacrifice just for this moment, so we're just glad that we have the opportunity to play.

Q. Playing off the question you had earlier about what connected well with Coach Day, was there anything in particular about the offense or anything you remember talking, Hey, here's how we're going to play that made you feel like, oh, yeah, this would work for me?

JUSTIN FIELDS: No, not really. I feel like I'm able to adjust to, I guess, any kind of offense. But there wasn't, I guess, one specific thing where -- that kind of jumped out at me. It was just Ohio State's -- their success with quarterbacks on the college level and just the amount of success that I would have under Coach Day and being able to learn from him, because of course he's been in the NFL, he's been to the level that I'm trying to go.

I've definitely learned a lot from him.

Q. How are you feeling and how do you think you might be affected? And do you want to clarify anything you said after the game about how everything was handled?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, I think what I said after the game was kind of taken out of context. I just want to make one thing clear, it's that I have my full trust in the trainers here at Ohio State and Dr. Borchers.

I wasn't, you know, I guess hesitant on taking anything that they would give me, but I was just trying to do whatever I could do to get back on the field. I think those guys handled it the way I would have wanted it to be handled.

I just put my full trust in those guys and I see how they deal with guys here, and I have personal relationships with all of them. I just don't want anything I've said in the postgame interview to kind of get taken out of context and to be like, Oh, they just shot him up and sent him back out there.

No. It wasn't like that. I think they did a full, I guess, analysis of my injury and how it was, and they thought -- they did what they thought was best. Yeah, I was fully comfortable with that.

I'll be good come Monday night.

Q. You don't think you'll be affected at all?

JUSTIN FIELDS: I'll be good by Monday night.

Q. I realize that the number of Buckeyes that have played for a National Championship in their career is



certainly an elite fraternity within your own program. Have you personally or as a team, have any of you guys heard from former guys that have played for National Championships, and have they shared anything with you that you could share with us?

JUSTIN FIELDS: No, I haven't heard anything from the recent players, but I'm sure I will hear some things from them as we get closer to the game. But from this point, I haven't heard from anybody that's played in that game before.

Q. I know you're not going to talk specifically about how you're feeling, but Coach Day said that maybe on Saturday you woke up feeling better than you expected. When you went to bed did you have any doubts about your body holding up well enough to get to Monday night?

JUSTIN FIELDS: Yeah, I think the day after the game I woke up definitely better than expected, but the days that I didn't expect to wake up kind of hurting was two or three nights after the game.

I mean, I really haven't thought about how this injury is going to affect how I'm going to play. I'm just thinking about getting as much treatment as possible and trying to get my body right so it's 100 percent to be able to perform at a max level come Monday night.

Q. What did Northwestern do that night, and how much do you give them credit for how they approached your offense and how much you put it on yourself that night? And another question, do you ever check the amount of signatures on that petition, because there's quite a few now?

JUSTIN FIELDS: No. I mean, I stopped probably checking it probably when they said that we would have a season. You know, at that point, that was the whole goal of it was to have a season. After they said that we were able to have a season I was just fine with whatever number that was up there.

Q. Just going back to what you were saying about the injury against Clemson, was part of the discussion at all about how well you could protect yourself, just because you looked like you were -- you obviously played really well, but you weren't able to move like you probably would normally.

JUSTIN FIELDS: What's the question again? I'm sorry.

Q. Was part of the discussions that you had with Dr. Borchers, and I don't know if the coaches, did it ever

come up, not just a pain tolerance, but could you move around well enough to protect yourself?

JUSTIN FIELDS: I mean, I feel like me and Coach Day probably had some conversation about it, what certain plays we could run and couldn't run.

Other than that, if I can't protect myself then I don't need to be out on the field, so I thought personally that I was able to go out there and protect myself if something bad would happen.

Q. Just going back to your last game in high school when you got hurt and then you weren't able to go on, does that in any way, I guess, motivate you, some of the injuries that you've had in college and just have played through? Or is it more just the types of injuries where that was something where it just really impacted how you could throw the ball?

JUSTIN FIELDS: No, not really. I wouldn't say that motivated me, but to be honest, I just look at injuries like it's a part of football. It doesn't matter who you are. You can get injured on one play and never be able to play football again in your life, but again, like I said before, it's what we sign up for. We know the risks coming into this. That's why we just try to, I guess, stay as safe as possible when we're playing the sport, and that's why we have rules set in place.

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