

# CFP First Round: Notre Dame vs Indiana

Friday, December 20, 2024

Notre Dame, Indiana, USA

Notre Dame Stadium

## Indiana Hoosiers

### OC Mike Shanahan

#### Postgame Press Conference



## PLAYOFF FIRST ROUND

Notre Dame - 27, Indiana - 17

**Q. Kurtis Rourke, his struggles through first three-quarters of the game, what do you attribute to that, them getting pressure, him not feeling comfortable in the pocket? What did you see from Kurtis tonight?**

MIKE SHANAHAN: I thought we actually did a pretty good job of protection for most of the game. They made it really challenging on you to get completions and get him in rhythm.

I think we had a drop early on on an RPO. And credit to Notre Dame's defensive backs. That's a really good unit, one of the better units we faced all year long. And we weren't able to win some of those 50/50 contested catches that we knew we were going to have to win a good amount of those in this game to have success.

Again, credit to Notre Dame. They challenged us and they got the better of us on those kind of throws.

**Q. I know that everyone -- you respected Notre Dame's defensive line, but tonight they just looked quicker as opposed to out-manning the offensive line and causing those problems they were causing for Kurtis.**

MIKE SHANAHAN: That's a good unit. They're just a really good defense. They did some movement stuff up front. They were blitzing one or two backers a lot throughout the game as well.

And I thought we cracked some runs. It made it hard whenever we got behind schedule. And we were trying to run the ball at times on third down to get us in a fourth-and-manageable or obviously we felt like those runs could convert as well.

It was a combination of some of the movement and the

blitzing that they had in their plan. And I thought we were a little bit inconsistent in picking that it up at times. But I know our guys up front battled. They made it hard on us, they really did.

**Q. Not asking you to second-guess necessarily, but you guys have been so good at getting Kurtis in that rhythm that you talk about, especially with the RPOs, letting him make those decisions and just get a good feel of the game. As a play caller, what's the difficulty in maybe the balance in a game like this where you see your quarterback's not in rhythm between persisting with what's gotten him all season versus trying to change something up, trying to throw something different at them, maybe seeing if that maybe breaks his funk.**

MIKE SHANAHAN: All year long, we tried to have that good balance of RPOs but run at runs where he might be reading somebody or we're using a receiver in motion to block, the extra hat in the box and create misfits.

Along with RPOs, along with the quick game, along with us trying to throw the ball down the field and create explosive plays in that way, that was our plan in this game as well.

I thought Kurtis made some good decisions. The D line batted one or two of his passes away where he had guys open, and that's sort of the give and takes at times that you have.

But I felt like Kurtis was seeing it well out there on the field. I thought he was making the right decision. There may have been one or two throughout the game, especially early on. But once he got settled in, I didn't think his decision-making was the issue at all.

Again, they did a good job switching up their coverages. Just when we thought we had something, then they would change it up. And that was that cat-and-mouse game that we were playing?

**Q. You guys got the interception and the pass to Elijah early on and got down in the red zone. Went pretty quick on the next play and he threw the pick. Looked like there was double coverage there. Did you**



**mean to go that quick? And what did you see and what happened on the interception?**

MIKE SHANAHAN: Part of our plan was to change up the tempos. And that's something that we do every game. And you just want to keep the defense on their heels. If I remember correctly, I think they subbed -- they were in their third down defense, and we were trying to catch them in a substitution after a big play.

Kurtis, I think, the first read was there. He worked through the progression. And he has made that throw a thousand times, a little bit off the target. And No. 0, he's been making great plays all year long for those guys. And he made another great catch.

That was the one thing about that first half. We had the ball, I think, in the red zone twice. Came away with three points. And against a good team like this you've got to capitalize on those things.

**Q. You mentioned red zone, but you guys were at the 50 or in Notre Dame territory four drives in that first half. What did they do to prevent you from getting into scoring zones or making the most of those opportunities?**

MIKE SHANAHAN: I think it refers back to the question earlier. The D line created some penetration. We were trying to establish the run, which we were doing a good job of. We had some runs come out early in the first half. And whenever we went back to it, maybe it was a one-yard gain or they were in the backfield for a TFL. Kind of got off schedule there, and weren't able to overcome whenever we got behind the chains.

Again, credit to their defense and their plan. Yeah, that was tough whenever we couldn't capitalize on good field position.

**Q. Big picture, with everything this team accomplished this season, how should this team be remembered?**

MIKE SHANAHAN: I hope they're remembered for the way they played all year long and not just this one game. But I know that these guys have really battled and I think you saw that there in the fourth quarter. There was no give-up.

And just really proud of the way they came in and approached their work all year long. It was a really fun group to coach. Everybody bought in.

But I guess the record and the history books kind of speak for themselves. And hopefully they're a team that's

remembered for a long time.

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