

CFP First Round: Notre Dame vs Indiana

Friday, December 20, 2024

Notre Dame, Indiana, USA

Notre Dame Stadium

Indiana Hoosiers

Aiden Fisher

Jailen Walker

James Carpenter

Postgame Press Conference



PLAYOFF FIRST ROUND

the front four, just good lanes, good pass rush lanes, stuff like that. And we just didn't do a good enough job of that tonight.

Q. Aiden, the theme has kind of been you guys set the foundation for what's to come next year. Do you believe that this year set that foundation for a better future for Indiana football?

AIDEN FISHER: Yeah, for sure. You look at the track that Indiana football is on previously before we got here. Then you look now, it's kind of a full 180. I think we've laid a foundation of what Indiana football can be and what it is now, and I expect to be right back here next year.

Q. Jailin or James, either one of you, you talked so much about the identity you brought from James Madison. Aiden talks about leading the foundations there. Do you feel like you leave behind you, not just the success of this season, but the identity of this defense, the way you were able to pressure quarterbacks, stop the run, be aggressive the way Coach Haines talks about, do you feel that's something that imprints on this program and stays even as you guys move on?

JAILIN WALKER: 100 percent. That's the image of the defense being fast. When James and I are leaving, we still have Aiden Fisher and Mikail Kamara, we still have leaders on this team that's been with the system. It will still keep going. We're not letting up.

JAMES CARPENTER: He said it well. It's kind of our identity of the defense, play fast, get up field, make plays in the backfield. That's kind of what this defense is built on, and I know Coach Haines will keep that going.

Q. Aiden, when you look at the only two losses this season against Notre Dame and Ohio State what's difference about those teams and what makes them so good and tough to play?

AIDEN FISHER: Definitely two great teams. They definitely played a great football game tonight, as did Ohio State. We played them. I would just say we made a lot of critical errors that was hard to play two teams playing

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Q. Aiden, what did you sort of see on the 98-yard run there early in the game?

AIDEN FISHER: Just a misfit on the front seven really. We knew what we were going to get. We played it a little too aggressive. Some guys jumped out of their gaps. I'll take the fall for that one. We have to play our gaps better and play more disciplined.

Q. James, you get called for penalty, how tough is it in that moment on this big stage to have that happened and then stay focused credit for the blocked field goal, what were the emotions like in that second half, the ups and downs, highs and lows for you?

JAMES CARPENTER: It was disappointing, I can't be doing that. It was full speed, kind of bang, bang play. But as a senior leader I can't be doing that. But this team, we don't quit. That's what we're built on. And, yeah, I mean, we're going to fight until the end.

Q. James, Notre Dame was good on third down tonight especially in the first half. When you have a quarterback like Riley Leonard, how difficult is it to account for that as he's kind of keeping plays alive and keeping things going?

JAMES CARPENTER: One of our main focuses going into this game was to limit him on the ground. When the play breaks down we know he can get out. He's super athletic and super fast. It's a big part of his game.

We didn't do a good enough job of that tonight. You really have to be sound when it comes to that. It's (indiscernible)



against yourself and playing against the opposing team.

A lot of things I think we could control and we kind of let it affect us a lot. Just looking back on it, just two great teams. I'm not really going to compare them. But they'll both be making a run here in the playoffs. So good for them; they deserved to win today, they played a better game today than we did.

Q. James, last week you called it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be in a position like this. Obviously it didn't go your way tonight. On the whole, what will you remember about this season and this group of guys and what should everybody else remember most about this team?

JAMES CARPENTER: Coming into this year, no one thought we'd be here. A lot of doubters, a lot of haters. For us to kind of make this run, get to this point, it's been surreal. It's been unbelievable. Something I'll remember for the rest of my life. These guys up here, the rest of the guys on the team, hopefully they'll be at my wedding, brothers for life.

That's the kind of bond we have. And this program is only going up. Coach Cig is just getting started here. He wins. He's going to get it done and this program's on the right track.

Q. Aiden, just big picture, the way you guys played defense all year, why do you feel you were so successful? And what are the things that need to stay for the defense to sort of make this a level you maintain?

AIDEN FISHER: First, you start with the scheme. We had a really good scheme. Coach Haines puts us in, he puts us in positions to succeed. We're a fast defense. A lot of people look at our defense, you know, we're not the biggest guys. But we do have speed, which kind of combats a lot of the things that these offenses do.

And then moving forward, I would just say we've got to stay disciplined. You look at the two losses we had last year, we're just getting outleveraged in angles.

We're just one guy just trying to do a little too much and he doesn't need to. We got to this point just being ourselves and playing the way that we play, and in these big games you can't defer from that; you've got to just play your game and just be disciplined in the way you play, and just things like that, just the little things that ultimately amounted to the big things.

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