

# CFP National Championship: Ohio State vs Notre Dame

Saturday, January 18, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

## Ohio State Buckeyes

## Jeremiah Smith

### Press Conference

JEREMIAH SMITH: Carnell bring a lot to this team. You see me and Emeka, we get all the attention, but Carnell comes in every day and give his all. Carnell is a great receiver. He gets overlooked, but we know what Carnell can do, and he's going to definitely show it this week, this Monday coming up for sure.

#### Q. Talk about his talents.

JEREMIAH SMITH: Just how smooth he is, the way he's able to track the ball in the air. Got very strong hands, can run every route in the route tree. It's crazy, I try to take some of the stuff from his game and put it in my game but Carnell has always been somebody I looked up to coming in. He was a grade above me. Playing with him at South Florida, just being on his team in college is something that I dreamed of for sure.

#### Q. What do you try to take from (indiscernible)?

JEREMIAH SMITH: Just how smooth he is, the way he's able to run routes. I'm kind of bigger than him, but Carnell is just smooth at everything that he does for sure.

#### Q. Last week were they just trying to tighten you down so much --

JEREMIAH SMITH: I'd say being a decoy, opening things up for my teammates, opening up the run game, opening up and getting Carnell and Emeka open. Them guys came in and did their job and capitalized on it for sure.

#### Q. (Question on Jackson)?

JEREMIAH SMITH: You watch the film, they doubled, tripled me, dropping into flats, as well, but just being a decoy out there helped us win the game for sure.

#### Q. What kind of adjustments (indiscernible) do you think has created that connection?



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JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, him just saying before the playoffs started, I've just got to throw it out there and give you guys a shot. I could say the Tennessee game, we were in the locker room before we go out, he was like, I've just got to give you guys a shot. Just connect on the deep balls just been a part of the reason why we're having this run in the playoffs.

#### Q. Is it frustrating to have such a big game (indiscernible)?

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, it's pretty frustrating, but I've got to do what's best for the team. I can't be selfish. We've got other guys on the team that can do what I can do. But I'm not a selfish player. It's not just all about me. It's about the whole time, as well. If I've got to be a decoy this game, as well, all I want to do is win, so if that's what it takes, to be a decoy to win the game, that's what I'll do. It doesn't matter.

#### Q. Talk about the challenge going into this game.

JEREMIAH SMITH: I feel good going into this game. I know they play 80 percent man, so we're just ready for the challenge this upcoming Monday.

#### Q. Talk about what you've done as a freshman this season. What makes you most proud?

JEREMIAH SMITH: I don't think nothing really made me proud for sure. I think I just went out there and played football, something that I've been doing since a very young age. I'm just happy to be on this stage right now, just being able to be competing for a National Championship.

#### Q. (Indiscernible.)

JEREMIAH SMITH: Yeah, for sure. You got guys like Cris Carter, guys like Michael Thomas, them guys for sure. Michael Thomas was talking to me before the game or the Rose Bowl, and Cris Carter, after the game, as well, just them giving me advice, telling me keep the offense and keep doing what I've been doing all year. Them guys are Buckeye legends, so definitely looking at them guys for sure. Major respect.



**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: It means a lot. Just a kid from Miami, just to be able to play in the National Championship as a freshman is something that I dreamed of as a kid. And I'm here now and can't wait to put on a show Monday.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, the attention has been crazy each and every week playing, but you can't let it get to my head I should say. It's just football at the end of the day, but just happy to be in this position.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: None of us think we can be covered. I mean, we actually talked about this yesterday, as well. If that's what they do, that's what they do. We're just going to go out there, play our game and show the reason not to play man on man.

**Q. What is your mindset like as a freshman going into (indiscernible)?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: My mindset is just go out there on Monday and dominate the person that's in front of me, just do what I've been doing for the last two to three weeks, I should say. But they play man on man, so I'm just ready for the challenge.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: It feels good playing man on man against Ohio State receivers, it's something crazy. We're just ready for the challenge. They said they're not changing their game plan, but we've got to go out there and show them the reason why not to play man on man.

**Q. There was a recent announcement (indiscernible).**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, if I be uncovered, I be uncovered. It's not a big deal for me. It would definitely be great to be able to cover a game, but it's not really a dream of -- it's a dream of mine, but I don't really think too much of it.

**Q. Talk about playing in the National Championship (indiscernible).**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, no, not yet. It'll probably hit me after the season, just playing in the College Football Playoffs as a freshman, playing in the Rose Bowl as a freshman, playing in the Cotton Bowl, now in the National

Championship. It's a blessing for sure, but it hasn't hit me yet.

**Q. What's your favorite catch?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I would say when we played Michigan State, the one I caught with two defenders is probably one of my favorites for sure, or you could go the one from Iowa, in the end zone. Probably them two.

**Q. Being a Texas guy (indiscernible), how do you process that?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, like you said, it's pretty frustrating that I've been in the Rose Bowl and coming to the Cotton Bowl and them doing different things, changing their scheme up against me. But like you said, whatever I can do to help the team win, it's not really a big deal for me. As long as we win, that's all I really care about, and it got us to the National Championship.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: It means a lot. He put a lot of work in this season. We had highs. We had lows. We had people counting us out. But we're here now, and we're just ready to put on a show Monday.

**Q. (Question on Coach Day.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: First, to win this National Championship with Coach Day would mean a lot. You see everything he's been through this year, people saying he should be fired, this and that.

But you see everything he's been through this year, what people are saying about him on Twitter. I wasn't here when he first got the head coaching job, but I know this year for sure we've definitely got to win this for him.

**Q. Who's the most famous person (indiscernible)?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, it's a lot, a lot of people in the league. I can't really say who, but you had guys like Odell, you had guys like Stefon Diggs, Michael Thomas, Cris Carter, just a lot of guys that played in the NFL and stuff like that. Really them guys for sure.

**Q. What have they said to you?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Just keep going, you got it, you're next step for sure. That's really what they said.

**Q. You've got two of the top defenses in the country going head to head in this game. What do you see out**



**of their team?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: A physical defense. Like people said, they like to play man. They're not changing their scheme. We're just ready for the challenge. Like you said, probably the best defense we're probably going to see all year, and we've got to be ready to go out there on Monday and just put on a show.

**Q. After the Rose Bowl (indiscernible) what's your excitement to face Notre Dame in the National Championship game?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I'm excited for Will, him first coming here to Ohio State, our first workout we had together. Just everything that we've been through this season.

I'm just happy for Will, for him to be in this position right now. But we've got to finish the job, and that's to win the Natty on Monday.

**Q. Some people have said you would be a Top 5 NFL draft pick this year. How do you react to that?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: It's pretty funny them saying that because I'm just only a freshman. But it's a blessing for sure for people to even say that. But I've got two, three more years left of college, and I'm just focused on college right now. I'm not really even worried about the NFL right now.

**Q. Being so young and getting this opportunity early in your career, how special is that?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: It's very special for me just being a freshman, playing on the national stage. Competing for a national title is something that I dreamed of as a very young kid.

I'm just happy to be here, and I just can't wait to put on a show Monday for you guys.

**Q. When you were on the sidelines watching (indiscernible), what was that moment like for you?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: All the receivers, we were just sitting on the bench, and we just seen him hit the quarterback, the ball came out, and we got up and started jumping up and down. Happy for Jack in that moment, and we just knew that that moment we were going to the Natty for sure.

**Q. I was in Tallahassee when you won the state championship back in December, so less than (indiscernible). How does that feel to have that much success?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, it shows a lot, going from high school, winning three state championships, jumping up and down there, and then coming to Ohio State, just competing for a National Championship right now. Just shows that I picked two great schools. But I'm happy to be here, and I just can't wait to put on a show on Monday.

**Q. Who's the coolest person that's reached out to you?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: The coolest person? You've got a lot. I can't really say a specific person. You've got a lot of great guys reach out in the league, like Odell, guys like Stefon Diggs, a lot of other players that just can't come to my mind. But really those two guys for sure Odell and Stefon Diggs.

**Q. When you're looking at Notre Dame, what's something you've got on your mind to try to attack?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I mean, like they said, they play man, so I'm just ready for the challenge, and just getting ready to go out there Monday and put on a show.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

JEREMIAH SMITH: The advice Geno had gave me, just keep God first. I know the reason why I'm here, and like you said, just keep God first and keep the main thing the main thing.

And the best corner I've faced this year, I've faced a lot of great corners. I can't really say. But I've faced a lot of great corners. Can't really put a name on it.

**Q. What is your dream vacation?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: My dream vacation is Turks and Caicos.

**Q. (Indiscernible) is that the ultimate sign of respect or is it frustrating?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I'd say both respect and frustration, as well. But I doubt they come out there and triple team me. They'll be sticking to what they've been doing all year, and that's playing man coverage. And we're just ready for the challenge.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Pretty good group. Christian Gray, 29, is a great corner. No. 15, Leonard Moore. Two great guys out there, very physical. But we're Ohio State

receivers, so we're ready for the challenge.

**Q. Where do you feel like (indiscernible) the most as a player?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: I'd say just understanding the defense, understanding the game plan, understanding what Coach Kelly is trying to get done. Just coming in, I've felt I've progressed from our first game until now. I feel I've gotten better each and every week. Things have slowed down for me. But yeah, really just understanding defenses and understanding what they're trying to do to me for sure.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Them two guys, probably the best we're going to see all year for sure. Two physical guys. But we're ready for the challenge that they're coming with, and that's to play man on man, and we're ready to go on Monday.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: The environment is pretty crazy, seeing all these cameras. Something I never thought I'd see a day in my life. But it's a blessing for sure just to be in this position now.

**Q. How has Coach Day (indiscernible)?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: We just had a player-led meeting, and we all discussed the issues, Coach Day discussed the issues, and we just went to work. Two and a half weeks we had off before the Tennessee game, we just came out there Tennessee game and we played with a chip on our shoulder all throughout the playoffs, and we're going to continue to play with that chip on our shoulder in the National Championship on Monday.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Geno had a very impact on my career I should say, just going to his games as a very young kid, seven, eight years old, him playing for West Virginia and they played Clemson in the Orange Bowl down in Miami. Just going there, seeing his games, it was like, I definitely want to play on that stage, and I can't wait until I get to that moment for sure.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Coach Day is really just in his own little space. He's just walking around, trying to get his mind right, trying to get his mind ready for the game. But he's just getting everybody hyped in the locker room and just

trying to get us ready to go win the game.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Yeah, for sure. You're going to play man against Ohio State receivers, just be ready because we're definitely going to come out there and give our best. They said they're not going to change what they do, so we're just ready for the challenge.

**Q. A year ago at this time watching the playoffs, is this kind of what you envisioned? Did you see this kind of situation developing?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Not a year later. Definitely sometime in my career in college, but not my first year in college I should say. Just to be able to be in this position right now is a blessing. Just a young kid from Miami to be here, I won't take it for granted. I'm ready to go out there on Monday and give it my all.

**Q. Two years ago this team (indiscernible) for a lot of guys who have been around the program. From your perspective (indiscernible)?**

JEREMIAH SMITH: Yeah, I was watching that game against Georgia, I believe. I was watching that game. I was pretty sick myself because I was actually committed at that time. Yeah, it left a bad taste in your mouth. But we're ready to go out there Monday to redeem ourselves and put on a show on Monday.

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