

# CFP National Championship: Ohio State vs Notre Dame

Saturday, January 18, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

## Notre Dame Fighting Irish

### Pat Coogan

#### Press Conference



**NATIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIP**  
ATLANTA 2025

#### Q. What has been your favorite play?

PAT COOGAN: Most memorable play this year, I caught a pass in the Stanford game it. Reflected off one Stanford defenders and I picked it up and ran for a first down. So that was pretty fun.

#### Q. (Inaudible.)

PAT COOGAN: I'm just really excited to go out there play with my guys, play with my teammates one last time this year.

It's a really special opportunity, and just really, really excited to go out and compete with my guys.

#### Q. (Inaudible.)

PAT COOGAN: Definitely a little bit different after a win or after a loss but he's the best. He's been awesome. He's been awesome for this program. Awesome for me as a player and just awesome in my development as a person, man, player, member of the Notre Dame family. He's really been great and I'm really happy to have experienced these last three years with him at the helm.

He's a guy that's filled with juice. You see that, he's a fiery guy. He loves his players, though, and he really loves us and he cares about us a ton, and he's just a guy that we know like he has our back and we have his back as well. So that's what really makes for a great relationship.

#### Q. (Inaudible.)

PAT COOGAN: At his highest high? He loves to talk about elevating. That's been the message throughout this postseason is even though we are in the postseason and we're winning games, we have so much more on the table and we've got to keep climbing.

We have to keep elevating. I think Monday night if we reach our elevation, if we execute the way we're capable of and we compete for four quarters, I think you're going to see that next level of him.

#### Q. (Inaudible.)

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, I think obviously it's been a crazy year just with the amount of injuries and changes and battling through verse, but I just have a ton of confidence in anybody in that room that they can go out and perform and perform to the best of our abilities and put our best foot forward as an offensive line, and as a unit.

We all compete really hard in practice and we prepare our butts off for opportunities like this. No matter who is out there, I know we are going to give it all we got and just really excited to compete with those guys on Monday night.

#### Q. (Inaudible.)

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, I got a good shot of it -- not yet at least, no.

#### Q. Have you been visualizing that moment, holding that trophy?

PAT COOGAN: Of course, it's been something I've always dreamed of and something I've worked for and prayed for and competed for. So you know, that moment would be one of a kind for real.

But we've still got 48-plus hours to go and prepare and that's what we need to do, prepare, prepare, prepare, so we can compete and execute.

While it is a huge moment and a huge game, it also is football at its finest. That's what I'm really excited for.

#### Q. What's your favorite block in your career?

PAT COOGAN: My favorite block in my career? Oh, man. Any block that goes for a touchdown. I can't think of a specific one but any time you get your feet across the line of scrimmage and you drive your man into the end zone, those are really special.



**Q. The second level --**

PAT COOGAN: Those are kind of the moments you look for and when that play is called, you think you might have an opportunity for that. So those are a bunch of fun for sure.

**Q. What did you do with your NIL money? Did you buy anything special?**

PAT COOGAN: I'm a saver. I'm not a spender. I got a new -- I got like a new golf club in the summer, a three wood. So that was good. I use that a lot. But yeah, I'm totally a saver, not a spender.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: One thing about college football? Oh, man. That's a tough question. I've never really thought about that. I've had a blast. I don't think I would change anything. I love the new playoff format. The home game was super special. You earn that opportunity. So I think that was a great change. That was awesome for us.

I don't think -- not off the top of my head, I don't got anything for you.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: No, not at all. I committed to Notre Dame for Notre Dame. Obviously I knew coming here there's a lot of change. College football, it's kind of a roller coaster. There's always going to be changes and stuff like that. You have to commit to the place for the place itself, not solely for the people there because while you might not want to think it may happen, people leave and people make different choices and pursue different opportunities. You know, that's their right for sure.

But I came to Notre Dame for the university, for the players and for the special opportunity that it presents.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, absolutely. When you think about Notre Dame and you think about playing football at Notre Dame, you play for nights like Monday night. You train. You compete for nights like Monday night and that's why you come to Notre Dame because you know you have the opportunity. You know you're surrounded by the guys that have what it takes to play in a game like the National Championship.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: No, definitely not. It was always about the guys in the locker room. About the guys in the locker room, not about one particular head coach or whatever it may be, it's about the culture in that Notre Dame locker room that has led us to where we are at today and I think anyone would say that. It's the culture and the guys in that locker room that lead the charge.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: It's the pride and the brotherhood and the trust and the faith that we have in each other that continue to let us have success.

We have an insurmountable amount of trust in any which have those guys that go out and compete for us. We all know we're playing for one goal, especially in that unit, it's something bigger than yourself and it always has been that way.

Just learning from guys like Jarrett Patterson and Joe Alt and Josh Lugg and Hunter Bivin and Quenton Nelson and McGlinchey, the Martin, brothers who have really laid the foundation for what it means to be an offensive lineman at Notre Dame.

It's credit to those guys for being that rock for us and teaching us how to play five as one and teaching what it really means to be an offensive lineman here.

**Q. The last few days --**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, we knew which you can was ready to roll. He put together some really good practices. So just really proud of the way he stepped up for this brotherhood and stepped up when his number was called.

While it may have been his first live reps of the year, he goes out and competes his butt off, and just really happy to see him do that. And I'm really proud of the way he stepped up for us. He put together a really great week of practice again. He's a really cool, calm collected guy, and I know he's ready to roll if and when his number is called. Just the trust that we have in that group, it's a special bond for sure.

**Q. How would you describe your relationship with --**

PAT COOGAN: He's the best. It was really easy, honestly. A lot of golf. A lot of golf which was fun. Because you get outside the building and you really learn about each other, and he's good. He beat me every single time. But that was fine.

But it was a lot of fun. It's the summer days, you work out in the morning and you run, and then yeah, but building our relationship with him was awesome. He's been a joy to be around, and he's the best.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: I know he'll do anything for this university and I know he'll do anything for this team. Having a guy like that and protecting a guy like that, it makes your job a whole lot more fun but it also makes you a whole lot more easier because you know you have awe guy behind that you will do anything, anything for you and this team.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: Stevie is awesome. He's been a grinder for us, and just can't say enough good things about Steve. He truly is what it means to be a Notre Dame guy, overcoming adversity and stepping up when his number is called and proud of the way he stepped up and handled business just like he always does.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: Really strong, physical group. They play really well together, as well, and talent across the board. They are kind of led by 33 and 0. They are leaders up there.

But all those guys have ability to make plays and be disruptive in the pass and run. So it's a great opportunity and we've got to prepare our butts off to go out and execute.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: I think the best part of that is he's himself, and it's what we get every single day. Doesn't change just because it's pregame or doesn't change just because it's halftime or because we are down ten against Penn State or seven, whatever it was. Doesn't change. We know what we are going to get. We know who he is, and he knows we are. And we know he has our back and he knows we have his back.

The relationship with Coach Freeman is just that set of he'll go to war for us and we'll go to war for him. It's really easy to play for him for sure.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: He really came into the building and he wanted to do anything possible to help his teammates, and even though they were new teammates and he just came

in, he came in with a positive mindset every day. He came in and really wanted to do anything to help this team grow. And that's what we really appreciated about him.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: It wasn't anything over the top. He just came in with a positive mindset every day and even though he was battling back from injury, he was still there for us, trying to learn everything about us and just creating those relationships.

We played a lot of golf in the summer. So getting outside of the facility and playing golf was a lot of fun and that just helped build that bond for sure.

**Q. How often would you play golf?**

PAT COOGAN: Maybe twice a week in the summer. We'd get out there, four guys, a foursome or eight guys. We play a lot.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: I think that just means he'll do anything, anything for the team, and anything to have success. We've seen him jump over guys. We've seen him lower his shoulder into guys. He'll do anything for this team.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: You know, J.T., I think for you, you're a charismatic guy, you're a funny guy. But I think we're a lot alike, J.T. I think we're a lot alike.

So just watching those videos, again, maybe before you go to bed, watch them, watch them on YouTube, whatever you want to do. I think just envision it in your own head -- the mental of the week, whatever it is in that wide receiver room, ice room, whatever you guys call it. It will come. I believe in you.

**Q. Where did that come from? How do you get yourselves going?**

PAT COOGAN: It's really not something that I practice. I feel like my practice today I failed completely. It's really off the top of my head it's kind of the message of the week. Whatever I write in my notes, that's in the back of my mind.

It's just an emotional moment before pregame, as I'm sure you know as well before you run out with your boys. It's something we've done since I was a freshman, huddle up and have that last brief moment with each other.

It's how much I care about these guys and this university. I've always been a kid that wore his heart on his sleeve but leading the troops out there, it's been fun for sure.

**Q. Is that something that gets you guys going as well?**

PAT COOGAN: It makes our job a whole lot easier because we know we have a guy back there that will do anything to have success and anything for this team to have success and we've seen him multiple times jumping over, running through, whatever it takes. It makes our job a whole lot more fun and a whole lot easier. As an offensive lineman, you do whatever it takes and when you have a quarterback back there who does the same, it's a lot of fun.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: Hell of a group for sure. You've got a lot of hair in that group. A lot of hair. Probably need some haircuts in that group. Specifically the guy that just asked that question, a little shaggy.

No, the rock for offensive line unit for sure.

**Q. How much of that affects, you guys --**

PAT COOGAN: Obviously it's honey a hell of a year and a roller coaster at times but we've learned throughout the years that there is no secret to success. It takes hard work. It takes determination and overcoming adversity and playing together, building bonds, building friendships. Just doing whatever it takes to have success on the field.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

PAT COOGAN: It's kind of just what comes to Notre Dame. It's what makes Notre Dame special. But at the end of the day we have going out there and play a football game. Obviously that encapsulates what Notre Dame is and the tradition behind it, and tradition is a huge part of the university. For us, we really just have to go out there and execute.

**Q. Where does that come from --**

PAT COOGAN: It's just play-by-play, we've got to go out there and execute and one of Freeman's main messages is one play, one life. That's what we've really taken to heart. One play at a time. You can't win the next play. You can't win the last play. It's only this play.

And that's what we live by and try to do every single time. You may not win every play but you've just got to win the next one and the one after that.

**Q. Have you graduated yet?**

PAT COOGAN: I graduated in December.

**Q. What was your degree in?**

PAT COOGAN: American studies.

**Q. Getting ready for the next level?**

PAT COOGAN: Yes, sir. That's the plan.

Yeah, south side, Chicago.

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