

# 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

#### Q. (Inaudible)?

PAT COOGAN: Most memorable play this year. I caught a pass in the Stanford game. It reflected off one of the 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 and 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 just see that. He's a fiery guy. He loves his players, though. 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 really what makes for a great relationship.

#### Q. (Inaudible)?

PAT COOGAN: At his highest high? I think, you know, he loves to talk about elevating, and that's kind of 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 gotta keep climbing, we gotta keep elevating. So I think Monday night if we reach that elevation, if we execute the way we're capable of and we compete for four quarters, I think you're going to



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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 adversity, 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. So no matter who's out there, I know we're 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, yeah.

#### Q. (Inaudible)? Can you visualize holding that trophy, and is that something you've thought about for a long time?

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, of course. It's been something I've always dreamed of and something I've worked for and prayed for and competed for. So that moment would be one of a kind, for real. But we still got 48-plus hours to go out and prepare, and that's what we need to do. We need to prepare, prepare, prepare so we can go out there and compete and execute. And while it is a huge moment and a huge game, it also is football at its finest. So that's what I'm really excited for.

#### Q. (Inaudible)?

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 anytime you get your feet across the line of scrimmage and you drive your man into the end zone, those are really special.

#### Q. (Inaudible)?

PAT COOGAN: Those are kind of the moments you like look for, and when the play is called, you think you might



have an opportunity for that. So those are a bunch of fun, for sure.

Oh, God. I'm a saver. I'm not a spender. I got a new -- I got like a new golf club in the summer.

**Q. What did you get?**

PAT COOGAN: A 3-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. So I don't think I would change anything.

I love the new playoff format. The home game was super special, and you earn that opportunity. So I think that was a great change. That was awesome for us. So I don't think -- not off the top of my head. I don't have 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. Like college football, it's kind of a roller coaster. There's always going to be changes and stuff like that. So you gotta commit to a place for the place itself, not solely for the people there, because whether you might not want to think it may happen, people leave and people make different choices and pursue different opportunities, and that's their right for sure. But I came to Notre Dame for the university, for the place and for the special opportunity that it presents.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, when you think about Notre Dame and you think about playing football at Notre Dame did, 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 for games like a 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're at today, and I think anyone would say that. It's really 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 of those guys that will go out there and compete for us, and 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 Mike McGlinchey, the Martin brothers, who have really laid the foundation and for what it means to be an offensive lineman at Notre Dame. It's a credit to those guys for being that rock for us and teaching us how to play five as one and teaching us what it really means to be an offensive lineman here.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. We knew Chuck 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, like he goes out and he competes his butt off. And just really happy to see him do that and really proud of the way he stepped up for us. And he's put together a really great week of practice again, so he's a cool, calm, collected guy. But I know he's ready to roll if his number is called and when his number is called.

Like I said, just the trust that we have with everyone in that position group, it's a special bond for sure.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: He's the best. It was really easy, honestly. A lot of golf. Yeah, 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 would beat me every single time. But that was fine.

But, no, it was a lot of fun because it's the summer days. You know, you work out in the morning and you run and then, yeah, but building that relationship with him was awesome. And 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 he'll do anything for this team. So having a guy like that and protecting a guy like that, it makes your job a whole lot more fun, but it also makes it a whole lot more easier because you got a guy behind you who will do anything for you and for 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, just overcoming adversity and just stepping up when his number is called, and really proud of the way he stepped up and handled business just like he always does.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. Really strong, physical group. They play really well together as well, and talent across the board. They're kind of led by 33 and 0, they're 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 gotta 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. He doesn't change just because it's pregame or he doesn't change just because it's halftime or because we're down 10 against Penn State or 7, whatever it was. He doesn't change. We know what we're going to get. We know who he is and he knows who we are, and we know he has our back and we got his back. So that's really been the best part of our relationship and a player relationship with Coach Freeman is just that mindset of we know he'll go to war for us and we'll go to war for him. So it's really easy to play for him for sure.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. 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, and 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. And 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. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Maybe twice a week in the summer.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: We get out there with four guys, a foursome or eight guys and we play -- we play a lot.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: I think that just means he'll do 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. So 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 I think just watch those videos again. Maybe before you go to bed, just watch them, watch them on YouTube, whatever, whatever you want to do. I think just like envision it in your own head. The message of the week, whatever it is in that wide receiver room, in that ice room what you guys call it. It'll come to you. I believe in you.

**Q. (Inaudible)? Do you think about that before you get on the field. How do you get yourself going to get the other guys going?**

PAT COOGAN: It's really not something that I practice. I feel like if I practice it, I'd fail completely. So it's really off the rip, off the top of my head.

It's kind of the message of the week, and I build stuff in my head, and whatever I write in my notes, that's kind of in the back of my mind. But, yeah, it's just an emotional moment before pregame, as I'm sure you know as well, before you run out there with your boys. It's something we've done since I was a freshman huddled up and had that last brief moment with each other.

So it's really just how much I care about these guys and this university, and I will say I've always been a kid that's kind of wore his heart on his sleeve. But leading the troops out there, it's been fun, for sure.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. It makes our job a whole lot easier, too, because we know we got a guy back there who will do anything for us to have success and who will do anything for this team to have success. And we've seen him multiple times jumping over, running through, whatever it takes.

That's kind of what Riley lives by, like whatever it takes, and it makes our job a whole lot more fun and a whole lot easier because as an offensive lineman, you gotta -- you do whatever it takes, and when you got 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 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. But, no. The rock for our offensive line unit for sure.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Obviously it's been 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 and just really doing whatever it takes to have success on the field.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

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

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. It's just play by play we gotta go out there and execute, and one of Freeman's main messages is "one play, one life." And 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 kind of what we live by, and that's what we try to do every single time. And you may not win every play, and that's okay, but you just gotta win the next one and the next

one after that and stuff like that.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, I graduate in December.

**Q. What is your degree?**

PAT COOGAN: American studies.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: South Side Chicago.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: That's a great question. I would say probably, you know, maybe some like -- maybe some Zach Bryan or something.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Big fan. Big fan of country music in general. "Burn, Burn, Burn" is a great song. "Birmingham." I like the oldies with him. "American Heartbreak," best album.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: My favorite young man in the offensive line room is 1,000 percent Max Anderson, 1,000 percent.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah. He's been a great addition, and he's been awesome, and he's done everything -- everything he's done is to have success within the program and make sure we have success. So just really happy to see him succeed and he's been awesome.

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