

# CFP National Championship: Miami vs Indiana

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

## Indiana Hoosiers

### Pat Coogan

#### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. Yeah, Pat, obviously a lot has been made, again, about a team that's big, strong, fast, physical. Violent was a word Riley used. We heard that before, and you guys heard it, but when you look at the football, take the noise off the table. The guys in the trenches, what do you see from Miami's defensive line and defense overall?**

PAT COOGAN: Well, they are. They are very physical, very violent. They are special players, especially on the outside, and it's not like their interior drops off at all, either. All across the board, really talented players. The physical attributes are there. They maximize their physical attributes.

They fly around and they're a fast, violent group that's coached really well and do their jobs well. It's going to be a huge challenge for us and one that we have to prepare for and be ready for.

**Q. As a guy who played on this huge stage last year, how do you try to maybe pull from that experience, try to impart what you learned last year with this whole squad around you that really hasn't experienced this game yet?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, I think it's been similar to what we have been talking about during this whole playoff run, just being where our feet are and maximizing each day and each opportunity.

Maximizing our practices, making sure we go out on the practice field and have the best day possible and really taking what we're learning in the meetings and putting it onto the field.

At the end of the day, it's another football game, right? The stage is big. The stage has been big the past couple of weeks.



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The game is between the white lines. I think we have done a good job of having that headspace and having that mindset, never making it bigger than it is, and really just making sure we're putting in the work and putting in the prep so that when we get to game day we put our best foot forward.

**Q. You guys, we have seen more six-lineman stuff recently. Does that change anything for you as a center or, like, do you kind of remain just between the tackles in terms of your checks, your reads, the stuff you've got to communicate?**

PAT COOGAN: Are you saying like...

**Q. When you bring in the extra lineman. Go a little bit heavy.**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, it's just a package that we have. The defense could sub in their heavier package in relation to that. So I'm always aware of it, definitely.

Sometimes they don't match, though. Oregon matched a few times and other times they didn't. First 11 personnel they went heavier which they never did during the season. They went 5-2. And then other times when we brought in that heavier package, they stayed in 4-2 base.

So you just always good to be aware of it, especially as a center, because the specific plays that are within that package consist of a specific mic ID, so you got to be aware of it for sure.

**Q. Curt said he appreciated your effort being 20 yards down the field on the fumble recovery, but he said you had some work to do on your technique with falling on the ball. He did give you a hard time in the moment or any time after that?**

PAT COOGAN: No, I haven't heard anything from him. There's always stuff to improve on. We actually did work on that. We did a drill early in fall camp at the end of practices just falling on fumbles and stuff. We've worked on it, believe it or not, but there's always room to improve.



**Q. I wanted to follow up on that. Just the mindset that enabled you to be 20 yards down the field. Is that something you try to do all the time and just the approach it takes to show that level of effort.**

PAT COOGAN: It's definitely a mindset that's been instilled in me from an early age, just way back when chasing after the ball. Because you really never know, right? Those abilities to hop on loose balls can really change the game and change the outcome of a game. They happen very so often but they're big moments. They're really big moments.

It's happened a few times to me in my career. Yeah, any one of us could have been in that position because any one of us runs after the ball and takes great pride in that. It just so happened that the ball bounced our way and bounced my way.

I was happy to be there for my quarterback because he's been there for me many times, escaped pressure, whatever it may be. He's had my back numerous, numerous times, so I was happy to have his for once.

**Q. With the stakes what they are, I don't know if this is the toughest offensive line you guys have faced all year or not, but with the stakes added in there and how good they are, is that pressure on you guys as a line to succeed or is it relishing the challenge or a little of both?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, it's one of the best, but at the same time, we take great pride in protecting the quarterback no matter who we're playing. I think that's just an absolute key emphasis for us this week to protect the quarterback and obviously run the ball. That's part of who we are and our DNA.

But no matter who we're playing, we have to protect our quarterback. We have to protect the quarterback in every situation, every down. We know how special he can be and how good our offense can be when we give him the time to execute. No matter who we're playing, we need to protect the quarterback and it's the same message this week.

**Q. Coach Cig said yesterday that this team is the best he's ever had at taking the message he gives you guys and putting it on to the field. From your perspective, what makes this team so receptive his message?**

PAT COOGAN: Certainly I think he always says and it's true, it's a very veteran group. It's a mature group. It's a group that's been around the block, played a lot of football, and a group that knows how to take messages and put

them on the field because of just how much football we've played, how much football a lot of guys have played together and sort of like that. So I think we have done a great job of, like he said, just taking that mindset and putting it into between the white lines.

It certainly starts with him and just a mindset that he implements within our program and even starting back in January, February, he's saying the same stuff he's saying before we walk out for the Peach Bowl, right? So the messages don't really change. I think that's why we see that success. It's ingrained in our minds.

**Q. You mentioned for this run, last year's run, being where your feet are, maximizing practice days, everything leading up to these games. When you're having these high highs, I guess what went into training your mind to reach that point where you can be grounded, not make the moment too big?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, I've learned from a lot of great veteran leadership at an early age, a lot of great coaches. This is my fifth year. I've played a lot of football. I've been around success. I've been around failure. I've been around everything in between. I've kind of just learned throughout the years of what really matters in the moment. Obviously how to win with class but also how to handle failure. So I think everything in between has molded me and my mindset.

And certainly, there's a great amount of joy after victories, and there's a great amount of -- just very proud of the group and stuff like that but I also understand and know how much more there is to get done because I have been in those shoes, and I think especially last year, that playoff experience helped me and kind of just shaped me and my mindset.

But at the end of the day, I've been around it all it feels like, so it's really just shaped me kind of into the guy I am today but also surely the player, right? And just how I handle everything: Success, failure, adversity and everything in between.

**Q. You guys have been fighting the outside noise and blocking it out. Most of the time it was negative. Now here you are, you see promos on ESPN. Any time you turn on the TV, there's a promo. You guys are talked about. How do you guys filter out the good noise?**

PAT COOGAN: We understand that outside noise is exactly what it is, it's outside. It has no impact on our ability to go perform on the football field. It's not going to score us any touchdowns. It's not going to convert any third downs defensively. It's not going to stop any third

downs or get us off the field.

That's exactly what it is. It's all clutter. It's all noise, it's all distraction and like I said, we have a very veteran group and a mature group, and certainly Coach Cig instills that mindset of eliminate all noise and clutter.

We really do. We try our best to. We're humans as well, so sometimes it gets difficult. But I believe we have done a great job of doing so and we need to continue to do so.

**Q. You talked a little bit about pulling from your experience from last year, but how important is getting back to kind of a normal week of preparation after having so much time in between the Rose Bowl and the Peach Bowl and the end of the season?**

PAT COOGAN: Yeah, it's great. We really are starting a normal week here. I think it's getting everyone back into the groove and normal preparation. Coach Cig and Coach DO have done a great job of implementing schedules that make sense and schedules that help us and maximize the hours within the building.

So I'm excited for the workweek. It's going to be a great week of prep. We just got to put in the work.

**Q. Taking away the experience of being in the national championship last year, is there a national championship game previously that stands out to you most growing up? And which game would that be, do you think?**

PAT COOGAN: That's a great question. Probably the one I remember vividly because I was in high school was 2019 LSU. That was a big year. And just the Alabama years, kind of growing up in the mid-2010s or whenever that was.

Besides that, it feels like it's all mixed together now. But, yeah, those couple times. Thanks, guys.

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