

# CFP National Championship: Miami vs Indiana

Saturday, January 17, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

## Miami Hurricanes

### Carson Beck

#### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. Carson, first of all, congratulations. Getting back here, we've seen the highlight of the touchdown run over and over and over and over. Can you walk us through what you saw in that play. Also, you were cheering before you even got in the -- tell us what you saw in that play, and then before you even got in the end zone, you were celebrating. Tell us what was going through your head in that moment.**

CARSON BECK: Of course. They matched it up pretty well, the play that we had on. Everything was kind of headed over to the right side of that end zone. Again, they matched it up pretty well, kind of played like a quarters match in the red zone, low red. We had great protection.

So I was like, okay, we have a timeout. So I have some time to try to scramble around, maybe make a play. Kind of just shot out the back side. There was nobody there.

Obviously there was a ton of emotions in the moment to be able to go on a two-minute drive in such a huge game like that and with the implications on the line of heading to this game as well. Obviously I was super excited to be able to make that play.

**Q. Carson, considering all that you've been through, I know your faith is important to you, what does your story tell you about God's faithfulness?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, of course. Again, and I said this last week and I'll say it again, I think the biggest thing throughout my story is just to always trust in God and trust in His plan and that He has a story written for you.

At times it's really hard to see that. Sometimes it can be really dark. Sometimes you don't see that light at the end of the tunnel. I feel like that's where faith is at its strongest, and that's where you have to be strongest in your faith and having that faith that God is going to pull you out of that, that He is the only thing that can pull you out of that.



**NATIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIP**  
MIAMI 2026

I've had full trust in God and His plan. It hasn't been easy at times. But look at God, it's been an unbelievable ride, an unbelievable journey, and I'm just so thankful and blessed to have this opportunity.

**Q. Michael Irvin has been very, very supportive of the team, a bunch of the Miami All-Stars have been very supportive. How is it to have Michael Irvin at the end of every game doing cellies down the sideline and celebrating with the fans. How does that empower your squad?**

CARSON BECK: Personally I think it's awesome. He brings a lot of energy and juice to our football team. To see him along with other guys that have played for the U in the past gives us a lot of energy. You can see the support and how much they care about this university and our team.

Especially him obviously. He's been at every single game. He's running up-and-down the sidelines. He's picking me up after games, yelling and screaming. I love it, man. It's awesome to have those guys on the sideline.

**Q. Carson, playing in a National Championship isn't something new for you. You've done this in the SEC, and you've always proven people wrong. How does it feel right now to be playing again in the National Championship competing for your third championship ring?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously it feels awesome. To finally be the guy and the quarterback, a part of a team that has done this and gone through a season and eventually earned the opportunity to play in a National Championship, obviously it's a dream of mine. As one of this team's ultimate goal -- it is our ultimate goal obviously, to be in this game, to win this game.

Having been a part of it, having been on teams that have done it, have gone all the way, have won all the way, to be back in this moment is pretty surreal.

**Q. Building off of that really quickly, to be having this**

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

**game in your home stadium, talk about that. Talk about what the fan support has been like. Talk about what it's like being in Miami for a National Championship.**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, obviously that's the coolest thing of all of this is the opportunity to play in our home stadium for a National Championship. In front of our home crowd, our home city, what an unbelievable opportunity for us and The U as a whole and just the city in general.

They've had unbelievable support throughout this whole entire season. To be able to play in front of them at home is obviously pretty, pretty dope.

**Q. Visiting sideline is where you guys are going to be. How strange is that going to feel?**

CARSON BECK: It will definitely be different. We were having this conversation of we'll be in a different locker room, be on a different sideline. I'm sure some guys might get confused and start running to the other sideline mid-game.

Again, at the end of the day, once you step on the lines in between the field, it's the same size field, same end zone, same 100 yards. Again, it will come down to the execution of the game.

**Q. A big story line the last few weeks has been reform of college football. Is it broken, is it not because of the portal? Did this work out as well as you could expect because a lot of reform --**

CARSON BECK: I can't hear you.

**Q. A lot of the narrative has been about reform in college football and is it broken, is it not because of the portal. This worked out for you. Could you ever have imagined it being this way and working out this well in terms of the portal and coming here?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, of course. Obviously for my story it's a little bit different because I was at Georgia for five years. I stuck it out. I sat for three years. I waited my turn to have the opportunity to be a quarterback at the University of Georgia. Obviously I had the injury, and things don't pan out the way that I exactly thought they were going to.

Then I was blessed with the opportunity to enter the transfer portal, to have another opportunity to play at the University of Miami. Obviously talking to Coach Cristobal, talking to Coach Dawson in that process, this is what we thought we could do. This is what we thought that this

team was capable of. Obviously you have to go out and execute. Talent only takes you so far.

But the way that this team has been able to come together, the way that we've been able to battle adversity and fight through the season and ultimately earn this opportunity to play in this game has been awesome. It's obviously everything that we worked toward.

**Q. Carson, you guys are playing at home in the visitors locker room, you're 8 1/2 point underdogs. Is that something -- you've played with a chip on your shoulder, but is that something that you guys talk about as teammates that you're that big of an underdog and it gives you extra motivation to play?**

CARSON BECK: Honestly none of that matters for us. I feel like this whole season all we've really talked about is the people in this locker room is what matters. Our coaches, our teammates, these fans, everybody that has backed U, that has supported us, that has believed in us, that's what matters at the end of the day.

For us, the harder we work, the harder we prepare. We understand that at the end it's going to come down to the execution on the field. All the outside noise, everything else, we kind of just keep out. I think the more that we focus on us, the better off we are at the end of the day.

**Q. I'm curious, did you have class yesterday? If so, what class? I know there was a pep rally on campus. What has it been like being you as a student this week, particularly yesterday?**

CARSON BECK: No class. I graduated two years ago. Obviously I've been working towards other degrees now that I've gotten to Miami, but these programs take a little longer than just a year to finish. Obviously I'm not enrolling again next semester. So I'll be done after this season.

Man, it's been awesome for this university, for this fan base, for this city, especially to have the opportunity to play in Hard Rock. You can see, we're walking out of the facility yesterday, there's a ton of fans, a ton of people. Everyone's screaming, yelling, cheering. It's been an awesome, awesome opportunity for this team. I know all of us are super excited about it.

**Q. Are you on campus at all during the week? Were you at the pep rally yesterday?**

CARSON BECK: I live in the facility. That's about it. If I'm not at the facility, I'm at home, and I just kind of bounce back and forth. It's been that way for about the past month.

**Q. We do a little thing where we just get like the grip strength of all your teammates and put it up against each other. Do you mind squeezing that a little bit and see what number you can get.**

CARSON BECK: 159.6.

**Q. Just your thoughts of going against Fernando Mendoza, what maybe you like about his game. Then just overall Indiana as a team what you guys respect about them.**

CARSON BECK: Obviously a very talented player. I haven't gotten to watch him much. The only time I really got to watch him is when I was studying Ohio State's defense for that game. Obviously he was able to make some really big time plays in that game. It will be really cool to face a really talented opponent.

Then as far as the whole team of Indiana goes, they play with great discipline. They play so well as a team. You can tell they're really, really well-coached. Again, the talent speaks for itself. They've done an unbelievable job this year, and we're really excited for the opportunity to have this challenge to go up against them.

**Q. Coach has talked a lot about how you guys are trying to treat this like a road trip, schedule stays the same. For you, how easy or hard has that been being here at home?**

CARSON BECK: Again, it really is the same at the end of the day. Last night we went to the hotel. Yes, we are in Miami, but it's not like I'm going home to go sleep in my own bed. We're in the hotel. We're meeting more. Obviously the practices are a little bit different as far as the time slots go. Then obviously we have this. This is not normal.

Again, it still feels like each and every week has these past playoff weeks. For us, again, at the end of the day, it's going to come down to what we're able to do on the field. Obviously it's cool we have the opportunity to play in Hard Rock, but it's still a football game as it always is.

**Q. What do you see from them defensively in particular that makes them so good?**

CARSON BECK: Again, they don't make mistakes. They play very, very well together. They're very disciplined. Then like I just said, the talent speaks for itself. They're obviously super talented in all facets of the game. The front seven, D-line, linebackers, their DBs are very talented, play the quarterback's eyes really well, and

they're very well-coached.

It's difficult to go up against defenses like that that play so well and mesh so well together. Again, we're really looking forward to this opportunity.

**Q. Now, Notre Dame was ahead of you all for pretty much all the rankings. What was going through your head on selection night? Because from earlier in the season until that point, it was like, hey, we really don't have a shot to get in. What was kind of going through your head, and then what was your reaction when you all finally got in?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously for me personally, I didn't know what was going to happen. I knew that after the SMU loss and we had four more games left in the season that we had four guaranteed opportunities left to go play and just go do what we can. Honestly, just kind of cut loose and have fun in these opportunities because we don't know what the rest of our season is going to look like.

I feel like our team really took that and handled it very well and really maturely. Those last four games we played really well. Obviously you get to the selection day, and I'm sitting on the couch watching. I'm obviously very anxious for what the decision is going to be.

Once you see Miami up there on the screen, I'm running around, jumping around the crib, obviously super, super excited. Now to have been able to do this with this team, it's been unbelievable. It's been really, really awesome.

**Q. Are you really working towards other degrees?**

CARSON BECK: Well, after this, I'm done.

**Q. Just to be clear, you're basically a professional football player. You're not taking any classes.**

CARSON BECK: No, no, no, I've been in school, yes. I've had classes this whole entire year that I've had to take. Now, all of them are online, so I don't ever actually have to go in person, which is probably a good thing and helps me as far as my schedule and time that I can devote to football.

No, I've been enrolled in school and taking classes, yes.

**Q. Just curious, when you came to Miami and you were coming off the surgery, what were the ways in which you stayed engaged with your teammates while you're going through the rehab process before you get on the field that helped build trust with them this year?**

CARSON BECK: I think, honestly, Coach Cristobal did a great job with that for me. During spring practice, I was dressed up in full pads. There was no way I was ever getting in to practice. I was at every practice in full pads, go through the warmup.

I'd kind of just sit right behind. They have a camera right behind our offensive set, and I'm sitting by the camera the entire time talking to guys, talking through plays, meeting with the guys. So any way that I could build chemistry, obviously off the football field and by trying to be a coach essentially is kind of what I had to do since I obviously wasn't out there practicing with them.

**Q. What concerns you the most about playing this Indiana defense?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously they're super, super talented. You can see the way that they play, they play really well together. Their chemistry is very high, and they're very disciplined. They're well-coached. Again, going up against defenses like that that don't make a lot of mistakes and are mostly in the right spot on each and every given play, it obviously presents a challenge for us.

Again, we're going to have to go out there and just execute and execute our plan.

**Q. This team's been in three playoff games that have come down to the last couple possessions in the fourth quarter. Why is this offense so comfortable in those situations?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, I think a lot of that comes from our preparation and just the way that we practice. Coach Cristobal puts us in these situations during practice, throughout fall camp, the two-minute drill, red zone, opening, coming out like backed up.

So all these different situations that you get in a football game, we practice them, and Coach Cristobal puts us in these situations. So I believe that's a huge part of why we feel comfortable when those situations do arise in a game.

**Q. After last year, was there like any scenario where you might have stayed at Georgia? I know you've discussed this a lot, but what was the ultimate reason you came to Miami?**

CARSON BECK: No, the way that everything worked out, there was never really a thought for me until obviously the injury, of me coming back to college. If you asked me all last year throughout the season, that was never in my plan.

That was never, oh, I'm going to do this, do that, come back to college for another year. I'd already been in

college for five years. I started two full seasons.

For me, my goal was to ultimately go to the NFL, and that's always been a dream of mine. Again, after the injury, it kind of changed my mindset, changed what my future was going to look like. Obviously the opportunity to come to Miami presented itself once I entered the transfer portal, and I made that decision, and here we are. It's really worked out well, yeah.

**Q. Technically the road team playing at home, how unusual is that, and what is this home-field advantage in this National Championship mean to you guys?**

CARSON BECK: It will be interesting being in a different locker room, being on the opposite sideline of the one you're usually on, and obviously wearing white jerseys in our home stadium, which I like the white jerseys better. I think they look super dope.

Again, at the end of the day, it's still the same field, still the same game of football that we've always played. It will be super cool to have the opportunity to play in Hard Rock.

**Q. How did you kind of navigate the dynamic of not being able to be on the field in spring but also trying to develop chemistry with the other quarterbacks on the roster while they also kind of knew that, if your recovery went well, you were going to take their job once fall camp opened?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, I think the biggest thing for me was just trying to be like a coach on the field. Obviously Coach Cristobal made me dress up in full pads, put the helmet on, everything. There was no way I was ever practicing. I couldn't throw a football.

But I just tried to serve as a coach and serve the players around me and earn their trust by the time that I put in and what I did on the field during practice, after the field whenever we would meet together and watch film -- as I learned the offense as well. I'm still learning a new offense, a new system, trying to understand the players around me, who we were going to have, what we were going to be able to do.

Again, just trying to be that on-field coach, and also help the guys off the field as well is how I was able to build chemistry and relationships while not being able to practice.

**Q. Have you ever been in the visiting locker room?**

CARSON BECK: No, never. Even when we played in the Orange Bowl at Georgia, the two times we played there,

we were in the same locker room that we're in now at Miami.

**Q. What's made this team so special this year getting to this point where you weren't sure you were even going to be in the College Football Playoff, and now here you are in the championship game dealing with all of that uncertainty. How has that affected the team throughout this entire postseason process?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, I think there's two things specifically that stand out about this football team. The first one is the way that we're able to handle adversity. I mean, anybody can look at the season and see there was a bump in the road there in the middle, and this team had a decision that we can make. We either could have laid down, given up, but again, the way that we were able to handle that adversity and bounce back is ultimately the decision that we did make.

I think a huge part of why we were able to answer that adversity is the second reason for why this team has been so good. It's the connection that this team has. It's the family aspect of -- I mean, we're in the facility working every single day from January. It's been a full year of this team and what we've been able to do. From the very jump, it's been work, work, work.

Again, without that, without that family aspect, without that connection, I feel like it's a lot harder to make the decision to answer adversity, to bounce back from adversity. Most teams just fall without that connection piece. Again, I believe we have that. I feel like we exemplify that to the highest standard. Those two reasons are why I feel like this team has had so much success.

**Q. You kind of just touched on this, the brotherhood. How were you all able to build such a close bond? You haven't been here that long, but it seems like you guys have been united for longer than you really have.**

CARSON BECK: Of course. The biggest thing, obviously we spend a ton of time together. That's on the field. That's off the field. I mean, these guys are like brothers at the end of the day. You see these guys more than your own family. Obviously we're in college now. We're living on our own. We've got practice each and every day. We're in the facility countless, countless hours each and every day. We wouldn't want it any other way.

I was saying this yesterday in an interview. I mean, you don't want to leave the facility with these type of guys around. Every single time you walk in the facility, it's fun. You want to be there. That's how it should be. That's a credit to what Coach Cristobal has built and the

environment that he's been able to sustain at Miami, again, it's a fun place to be.

Obviously there's time for work, right? And work should be fun. Again, when you're able to have fun in that type of environment and want to be there around your teammates, honestly, I feel like it makes it easier each and every day to come in and work and try to be the best that you can be.

**Q. You were in two winning college football championship games with Georgia on the sideline. Would you trade in those championship rings for a starting quarterback ring? And what lessons did you learn from those games about pressure being in a big title game that you can teach your younger teammates?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously it was such a blessing to be part of those two championship teams. Man, just what unbelievable players on those two teams. You go look at the talent on those two Georgia teams that are now in the NFL, now playing, just unbelievable, right?

To be a part of that and see what it took to get to a National Championship, see the work that you have to put in, the way that you have to lead, the team that you have to have, it's very inspiring for me as I continued on in my career and got older. But not only that, obviously, looking up to those guys that I sat behind, played behind, and things of that sort.

So now to have the opportunity to do it myself, to be the guy that's on the field, it obviously feels a lot different, as it would for anybody. Again, it's a wonderful opportunity for this team, for me individually. I'm super excited for it.

**Q. You've had an incredibly -- you've had a wild year. Starting here, you got some SEC fan backlash, your car got stolen. Can you just reflect on all you've been through and how you've kind of managed to wind up here at the national title game?**

CARSON BECK: I feel like that question could start like a 30-minute story time. Again, in the shortest answer possible, this year has just been, again, unbelievable. It's been a bumpy road, a roller coaster. Through every moment, I'm truly thankful and grateful that this year has happened. I wouldn't be the person I am today.

Obviously it's a lot easier to say that now sitting here. It's not even because we're sitting here at the National Championship, it's more about the person that I've been able to develop to and become. Without all the experiences of this year, everything that I went through -- the rehab, learning more about myself, doing a lot of soul



searching, looking in the mirror and reflecting on who I am and who I want to be -- without all these different situations, scenarios, moments, none of this would have come into fruition.

Again, football aside, this is more about me just as a human being, but man, that's honestly why I'm so thankful and so grateful for this year. Again, obviously there's been a lot of just hard stuff happen. I am truly grateful for it all.

**Q. Kind of unique there are a couple of Miami natives on the other side of the field. What kind of relationship if any do you have with Mendoza or D'Angelo Ponds? Have you ever come across these guys?**

CARSON BECK: I've never had the opportunity to meet them or talk to them ever. I have zero relationship with them.

**Q. Looking at what you've been able to do, Georgia you're there, you win a National Championship, you go through an injury, and when you have that injury, you have to come back and you come to Miami and now you're in a National Championship. People don't talk about the grit enough for you in my opinion of what it took in Georgia, of what it takes, two different conferences, two different roads, and an injury in between. Just what you can say about that journey.**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, it's been an unbelievable journey. Without all these people here at Miami, my teammates, my coaches, the training staff especially, they had to deal with me at 6:00 AM every single morning going through rehab with my elbow, and it's not easy. Obviously there's times where you doubt yourself through that process. There's times when it's really hard to see a light at the end of the tunnel in that process.

Without everybody around me pushing me, motivating me, like you're going to be good, keep going, keep going. Obviously at the end of the day, I have to make the decision and the choice myself, but having everyone else around me really, really helped that process.

Again, the way that this year has gone, it's been unbelievable. It's been ups and downs, a roller coaster ride, but the way this team has been able to handle adversity and just bounce back from so many doubters and people not believing in us, it's been pretty unbelievable. I'm super excited that this team has this opportunity to go play in this National Championship Game.

**Q. You're the home team. How many points do you think playing on your home field helps the gains? Playing at home, how many points do you think that**

**helps your team? Is it worth a touchdown?**

CARSON BECK: I don't think playing anywhere helps any points on the field. Whether you're on the -- whether you're at home or away, that doesn't score.

**Q. How do you like being -- I know everyone else already asked you these questions. How do you like staying at the Fontainebleau versus being back on the campus?**

CARSON BECK: Personally for me, I love it. I think that having the opportunity to go stay in the hotel a couple days early just allows you to focus and lock in and only be around football. Not to say that that's really not what it always is, especially at this time in the season and the playoffs and you don't have any extracurriculars, it's literally football, sleep, football, sleep, and that's how it goes.

Being in the hotel, you're around your teammates more. You're around the coaches more. You're able to go and ask questions by walking downstairs to a meeting room as opposed to having to drive into the facility and doing it that way. I love it for me. I think it locks me in more and keeps me focused.

**Q. We know you're a big Rod Wave fan. What's the first thing you're listening to on Monday?**

CARSON BECK: Like a specific song? I'm listening to Rod Wave the whole way. My favorite thing to listen to is Shock the World. Hell yeah. Let's do it.

**Q. Carson, you're 9-2 against top 10 teams. Why are you actually better against better teams?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously a huge part of that is everyone else around me. I mean, I'm only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to as an offense as a whole. Again, I think in these big time moments, you've got to rise to the occasion. It brings more out of a team, especially in a playoff atmosphere as well.

Again, huge credit to the teams I've been on and the players I've played around. I'm only a piece of that puzzle. It definitely does bring more out of you as a player whenever you're in these big time moments.

**Q. This is Burke. He's living out his dream experience this weekend. He's a Georgia guy, and he wanted to know, if Georgia had beat Ole Miss, how would that have felt having to play Georgia?**

CARSON BECK: Man, obviously it would have been a great opportunity. It would have been really, really weird to



play against obviously my former team and knowing all those guys, having played with all those guys, worked with all those guys. A lot of those dudes on that team are like brothers to me and will be family for me the rest of my life.

Obviously knowing Coach Smart, knowing the whole coaching staff, having spent so much time there, it would have been really weird for me. It would have been a really cool opportunity to see that play out, absolutely.

**Q. Carson, you have obviously overcome a lot in your career, and one of those problems or issues was getting healthy again, learning a new system, learning a new team. When did you feel comfortable as the leader for this Miami Hurricane team?**

CARSON BECK: I don't know if there was a specific moment that I could track back to, but I did think coming into this university and understanding that I wasn't just going to have respect from everybody just because I stepped on campus. I think -- and it was honestly harder to earn the respect of everyone around me because I couldn't go play.

I feel like going out and playing and showing people like, yo, I'm here. We're going to have success, we're going to be able to win, it's a lot easier to earn respect that way. So I had to try to find different ways to earn the respect of my teammates and earn the trust of my teammates. That's my showing up early, staying late, being around the guys, meeting with them, showing them maybe the mental side of the game and how smart I can be when it comes to the game of football.

So just trying to find little ways to earn trust and earn respect from my teammates without actually being on the field was difficult, but finding those ways, I think, ultimately made me comfortable in being able to be a leader and solidifying that spot on this team.

**Q. Your story has been well documented. How hard it's been on you with this offseason and how you were at just a bottom point of your life. Who did you rely on to help get you through that?**

CARSON BECK: I think first and foremost is my faith is what ultimately pushed me through that. Just having faith that everything is going to be good, that God had my back, that this whole story is going to work out the way it's supposed to, which is really hard in those moments. It's really hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Besides that, obviously, I'd say my mom, my sister, and my family, some of my best friends. They're always there for me. They would never waver regardless of what I've been

through. That's why I always keep close who's in my inner circle. That's who I love the most, and they've always had a huge part in my life and in my success.

**Q. How much has your experience helped you for moments against Ole Miss? Just seeing a lot of football, seeing a lot of defense, how much has that helped you on this run through this season?**

CARSON BECK: I think that's a huge part of obviously my success, but then when it comes to this team, as I'm able to help and be one of the pieces of the puzzle, I think it's been a huge part of it. Especially in these big moments where the pressure is super high, the expectations are super high, I'm calm, I'm cool, I'm collected. You've been in these moments before. That's what I tell myself. You know, just go out there, have fun, and enjoy the game regardless of what happens.

It's the game of football. You're out here having fun playing the game you've loved since you were 5 years old. It's been an unbelievable opportunity this year, and hopefully we have more unbelievable moments coming up this Monday.

**Q. Carson, Miami's produced a lot of stars over the year. What's it like when you see legends like Michael Irvin and Ray Lewis with you on this journey?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, I think it's one of the cooler things of being a part of Miami, of being at this university is seeing guys like Michael Irvin, Ray Lewis, Edgerrin James, Andre Johnson -- I could continue going on and on and on, just recollecting some of the guys that were at this last game.

For us as players, those are guys you looked up to growing up, that you watched when you were a kid, for them to be on the field supporting you, talking to you, dapping you up, hugging you after the game, it's pretty cool. It's a part of why it's so cool to be at The U and be a part of this legacy.

**Q. D'Angelo Ponds is one of the top ranked cornerbacks in the league. How important is it going to be to minimize his impact on the game Monday night?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously he's super, super talented. You look at the ability that he has, what he's able to have produced for their defense, he's a centerpiece and a key piece of why they are so successful.

For us, I think it's important to understand where everybody's at on the field, him being one of them. They obviously play super well together. They don't make a lot of mistakes. They're very disciplined. So just trying to

keep a balance and checks of where their guys are, what they're doing, maybe different blitzes, coverages, things of that sort is really important for me as the quarterback on the field and just kind of trying to be the key and lead our offense in the right way.

**Q. Carson, we have you on one side and Fernando Mendoza on the other. You're both playing for a National Championship, and you're both going to be in the NFL draft going up against each other. What can you say about Fernando Mendoza on the other side and just what you've taken with you having 73 percent completion percentage, he's also had 73 percent?**

CARSON BECK: I haven't obviously been able to watch him much. Most of my football watching goes into defense, but what I have been able to see was when obviously I was preparing for the Ohio State game and watching the Big Ten Championship. He made a lot of plays in that one. He seems like a really talented quarterback, a great person.

Again, I believe it will be an awesome matchup for me, for him, and I'm really looking forward to it.

**Q. From the SEC title game last year when you got hurt and that picture of you laying on the ground, what was in your mind from then? And then running into the end zone versus Ole Miss, that gap of time, it almost seems like it's scripted from a Disney movie. Who would play you in a Disney movie or a movie about your comeback story?**

CARSON BECK: I don't know who would play me, but just speaking on that moment in particular compared to obviously running into the end zone at Ole Miss, it's two total ends of the spectrum. When I went down on that field at the 50 yard line in Mercedes Benz, I knew I was done. Obviously I felt my arm, I felt everything. It was one of the lowest moments of my life.

Obviously I was able to come into that game later on and hand the ball off to go into the end zone, which was awesome that that was my last play as a Georgia bulldog and not laying there at the 50 yard line at the end of the half.

Comparing that to running into the end zone at Ole Miss, that was one of the highest moments of my life, one of the better memories that I'll always hold onto and cherish. Obviously it's been a crazy year of ups and downs, but to be able to get back to this point, it's really awesome.

**Q. Carson, Indiana does a lot of stuff on defense post-snap. How much have you been studying what they do, and how can you avoid, I guess, getting kind**

**of thrown off by that?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously they do a lot of really different things on defense from their fronts to different pressures to coverages. They try to keep you guessing as an offense, and you are right, they force you to play a lot of post-snap and recognizing coverage and recognizing different, again, pressures and safety rotations and things of that sort.

For me, just watching film and understanding, maybe trying to pick up on certain tendencies or certain what's their favorite pressures and percentages of those?

Again, at the end of the day, it's all going to come down to kind of read and react once I do get on the field. I feel like that's what we've been able to do well.

**Q. In terms of being able to play in your home stadium, Mario Cristobal talked about the distraction that's are going to obviously come up. What has it been like to maneuver that this week? I know you guys are treating it like another, the next game, but what does that actually look like, and how have you balanced everything that's going on?**

CARSON BECK: For us, obviously it's a super cool opportunity to have the opportunity to play in Hard Rock, but at the end of the day, it's the same 100 yards between the two end zones, it's the same 53 yards between the two sidelines. At the end of the day, you have to go out and execute. You have to go play football regardless of the stadium you're playing in, whether it's in the Dallas Cowboys stadium at the Cotton Bowl or the Arizona Cardinals stadium at the Fiesta Bowl.

Obviously we now get to play the National Championship in Hard Rock, but we still have to go out and execute as a football team.

**Q. Can you tell us a little bit more about your relationship with Coach Cristobal? How do you trust him, and how does he kind of set the tone within the locker room and on the sidelines for your team?**

CARSON BECK: First and foremost, I'm so grateful and thankful for Coach Cristobal and this opportunity that he's given me. I still remember back almost a year ago -- well, I guess it would be a little bit over a year ago at this point, the first time that me and him talked on the phone. I had a huge smile. I was so thankful for him wanting me to come down to the University of Miami, for wanting me to come play for him.

Again, as our relationship has built throughout this season, it's been unbelievable. I have full trust in him as a head



coach, and his decisions and what we've been able to do this year. Each and every week, we just sit down for 20, 30 minutes, usually after our Wednesday or Thursday meeting, and we kind of just talk about football, about life. He just checks in.

I really appreciated that from him because, again, that's really helped our relationship transform and grow over the season. Again, I'm super thankful and grateful that he's given me this opportunity, and I have full trust and faith in him as a head coach.

**Q. Obviously you've had quite a journey here. This game means a lot. It's easy to say that we have a home-field advantage here. Being in Miami, what does that mean playing here at home, if you will, and is there anybody in your life you would dedicate this game to?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously it's an unbelievable opportunity for us to play at Hard Rock, to play in our home stadium. I know I'm super excited for it. I know this team is super excited for it, especially for this city. You see these fans. You see the energy that they fuel to us, bring to us. It's been an unbelievable ride. To be able to do it in Hard Rock in this last game is awesome.

For me just in this game, I'd say my family and my best friends, everybody that has been right by my side and stuck next to me through this entire ride, again, I wouldn't be here without them. I love them very much. Again, they're my biggest supporters, and I love them so much.

**Q. Between your time at Georgia and Miami, you've been the underdog a lot of times and have not lost a single one. What is your mentality going into these games, and do you feel like it makes you play better when you're counted out?**

CARSON BECK: I don't know if I'd say it makes me play any better. Obviously when the stakes are super high, you're super locked in, you're super focused. I know this team for me what we've always focused on, at least this year, is each other honestly and kind of just keeping the outside noise out and kind of focusing on what's important. What's important is ultimately the execution on the field, staying consistent, and playing together and ultimately having fun.

This is a game we've all loved since we were 5, 6 years old. I started playing when I was 5. Again, it's the same exact game. Obviously the stakes and implications are a little bit higher now, but again, we just go out and have fun as a team, play together, and when our focus is there, we're really, really good.

**Q. Carson, I was wondering what you thought of the nickname Vanilla Vick. How much has your willingness to run over the last few games been a new addition, a new wrinkle in the Miami offense?**

CARSON BECK: We're sitting there after the Fiesta Bowl, and Jakobe got asked the question, and he said that nickname, and I started dying laughing on the podium. It's hilarious.

For me, I've always said I'm going to do whatever it takes to win the football game. I think that's what's important ultimately is winning the game. Nothing else really matters. For me, if that's handing the ball off, if that's having to go run after a first down, if that's having to pick it up with my legs, throw this route or this route or this route and do this, whatever I have to do for the team, I'm willing to do.

I feel like the way that I played, that's kind of been characterized and shown.

**Q. I'm from Christopher Columbus High School. You beat us in 2018 for a state championship. What do you remember about that game? What do you remember about prepping, watching the defense and stuff, prepping for that state championship game? Obviously we came out on the wrong end, you guys came out on the right end, but now you're surrounded by Explorers every day.**

CARSON BECK: Thinking back to that, obviously for me that's one of the coolest memories of my life is winning a state championship. Again, I remember preparing for that game and watching it and being like, man, this team is really talented. This is going to be a challenge for our football team. Obviously it was a really, really close game. It came down to two points being a deciding factor.

Again, for me, that's one of my most memorable moments in football in general, but especially in high school being able to win a state championship.

**Q. The fact that you've come to Miami and now you play for an Explorer in Coach Cristobal. Coach Mirabal is an Explorer. You have Explorers on the team. Do you start to feel what the Columbus Explorer community and brotherhood is like now that you're here?**

CARSON BECK: Absolutely. Again, having Coach Cristobal, Coach Mirabal, a couple of guys on the team that obviously played for Columbus, we always joke around, and I always say, well, I beat you guys. It's always

a fun little joking matter in the facility.

Yeah, obviously you can tell, there's been so much talent come out of that school. Yeah, a lot of respect for the school, 100 percent, absolutely.

**Q. You've played in a four-team postseason bracket, and now you're playing in the 12-team postseason bracket. How would you compare the road to championship from both?**

CARSON BECK: Well, obviously being in a 12-team and not having that first round bye, you've got to play one extra game. Then even if you do get the bye, you still have to play an extra game as opposed to if it was four teams. For me personally, obviously, I love the 12-team, especially because of this opportunity and what we've been able to show this year.

If it was the four-team bracket, this story never happens. I'm not sitting here in front of you. We don't even have the opportunity to showcase our talent and what we're capable of in a playoff.

Again, I think the more teams you let in, the more opportunity there is. Obviously I think the road can be harder because you have to play more games, but yeah.

**Q. You played with some obviously great receivers at Georgia. How would you compare Malachi as a freshman, and what makes him so unique?**

CARSON BECK: Malachi is one of the best, not even just wide receivers, just players in general that I've ever played with. To be as young as he is, obviously 18 years old, 17 when the season started, I could see it back in the spring -- from his work ethic to the body control. The talent speaks for itself. Put that to the side. Obviously he's uber talented, and that obviously helps him.

What makes him the player that he is is his work ethic, the time that he puts into the game, the understanding from a mental aspect. I think when wide receivers have that, it gives them levels over other guys that maybe don't understand spatial awareness, understand zone coverage, understand how to defeat man, whether it's outside, inside, head up, all these different things that -- and when you have that mental aspect, I feel like that gives you an advantage to the wide receiver. That's something that he has.

Honestly, the two guys that I've been around that have played quarterback before, that's Ladd McConkey, and Malachi Toney, those are two of the best that I've ever thrown to. A lot of it is because they understand how I see

the game. That's what I try to do with my wide receivers whenever we're together is help them understand how I see the game, and that helps them as far as understanding defense, understanding coverage, and ultimately it comes down and makes better timing.

I'm kind of going off track of the question, but he's an unbelievable talent, and he's been unbelievable this season.

**Q. How impressive is it -- he's a Miami kid. He was a top recruit. There's a lot of pressure that goes with playing for your hometown team as a big high school star. How impressive is it that he's had this kind of year with all those expectations?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, are you asking for him? Man, to see him do this for his home city, his hometown, it's obviously super awesome, but he doesn't feel the pressure. He's well beyond his years as far as only being 18 years old. The way he handles himself, he's very, very mature. He shows up. He works. That's really all he does. It's ball, ball, ball. You've got to kick him out of the facility from what I've seen.

Super, super thankful that he made the decision to come to Miami. We wouldn't be the same team without him.

**Q. Given your guys' path throughout the playoff, would you in any way be able to call this a Cinderella run?**

CARSON BECK: I don't know. I don't believe it's a Cinderella run. There was a time in the season where we were the No. 2 ranked team in the country. I think a lot of people forget that. Obviously we dropped two games in there where we lost by three points and we lost in overtime. Honestly, one of those games I probably played my worst game ever.

I think it's -- I don't know. I don't think it's right to call it a Cinderella run. I think it's a very talented football team regardless of seeds. At the end of the day, you've got to go out and play football. You've got to go compete. The number next to your name and the football playoff seeding doesn't matter at all.

Again, for us, we just go out there every game and focus on the execution and consistency of our football team. I think that's what we've been able to do really well.

**Q. A year ago, you had declared for the draft before deciding to go to Miami. What was that process deciding what to do and deciding to come back?**

CARSON BECK: Well, I think obviously the biggest thing for me after having the injury, after having to have surgery, it wasn't the best look for me to go into the draft, to make that decision. Still having the opportunity to know that I was going to play football, to have another year to have an opportunity to be a starting quarterback, to come play for Miami, obviously that really factored into my decision knowing that I was going to be able to play the game that I love for another year.

Ultimately, it's a lot better to come out of the season healthy rather than injuring probably the most important thing on my body as far as a quarterback goes, besides maybe my shoulder. Obviously those are two huge factors of why I came back and ultimately decided to do a sixth year of college.

**Q. A lot of quarterbacks stay in school versus going to the NFL with NIL help. How helpful is that for college football now?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously it creates a whole new side of college football. We've seen college football change so much since NIL has become a thing. Honestly, I'm in like a pretty cool range of where NIL came in. When I started, it was my stipend check. I had like 150 in the bank. I'd go fill up my gas, go get dinner, and I'm waiting for the next stipend check. That's when I was 18, 19 years old. Now these 18, 19-year-old kids are making hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of dollars. Which is honestly crazy.

It's totally changed the landscape of what college football is. You even see it with these playoffs. All the teams that were in the Final Four, three of them had never been there before. Again, I think it creates a whole new landscape of college football, and it's a really cool opportunity for us as players and honestly for everybody involved.

**Q. Obviously this group is playing big games at this point, a lot of them. How much have you told your teammates about the National Championship Game experience, two of which you've had at Georgia?**

CARSON BECK: I think since the beginning, I mean, dating back to January, February, there's been conversations that I've had with a lot of these teammates and a lot of these guys of what it takes. Not just once you get there. The most important thing is back in January, what were you doing back in January, February. That's what's ultimately going to carryover into these big time games. Are you prepared? Did you put the work in? This didn't just happen by chance.

This team's worked really hard. We've really banded

together to make this happen. I'm really proud of this team and the way we've been able to respond to a lot of things this season. It's a really cool opportunity to be in this game.

**Q. What inspires Carson Beck?**

CARSON BECK: What inspires me? I think there's a lot of things that inspire me, but I think most is my mom. You look at her and the way that she works, the way that she shows up each and every day in everything that she's been through, everything that she has kind of pushed to the side to be able to provide for me and be there for me since I was a kid, it honestly inspires me to show up each and every day the way that she's always shown up and the way that she's pushed her problems to the side to continuously support me and be there for me.

Yeah, I love her a lot, and she's been a huge inspiration to me and why I play the game of football.

**Q. I wanted to ask about -- and I realize I'm somewhat generalizing, but some of the differences you saw between playing in the SEC and the ACC. Do you feel like on Monday night that you're representing the conference as much as The U, or is there kind of a separation there?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, I believe every conference is different. Every conference is different. Each and every one has a different playing style. The SEC is different to the Big Ten is to the ACC is to the Big 12.

Again, for me it was definitely a different experience playing in the ACC. The defense was different. The structures are different, which is honestly a really cool opportunity for me, which is different blitzes, different pressures, different coverages, the way that they do things, it definitely helped me develop more as a player.

Obviously, yes, we are representing our conference being part of the ACC, obviously representing The U as well. I think that's a huge thing for us representing our conference as we head into this game.

**Q. With so much talent around you, how do you keep discipline at the forefront?**

CARSON BECK: There's so much, so much talent, especially on the offensive side of the ball, not even speaking to what's on our defense. For me the way that I play quarterback, it's really like a point guard on the field. Obviously if I have to make a play every now and then, that's what I will do, but the biggest thing for me is distributing the ball to our play makers around me. They're



probably going to do a better job with the ball in their hands than me running. Obviously trying to get it out of my hands and into their hands will favor our team in a better way.

That's how I try to play quarterback. Having these amazing guys around me, it definitely makes my job a lot easier, absolutely.

**Q. You touched on it a second ago. You've played in a lot of electric atmospheres throughout your college football career. Where does the typical Miami home game compare to the other ones you've played, and what is the expectation for Monday night's atmosphere?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously I think the atmosphere on Monday night is going to be electric. It's going to be through the roof. I look back to our first home game of the year against Notre Dame, night game. The Rock was packed out. The fans were -- I mean, honestly, that environment was probably the best environment I've ever been in was against Notre Dame that night.

Again, our fans have done an unbelievable job throughout this whole, entire season of showing support to us, believing in us, being there for us. It's been an unbelievable experience to be a part of the U and be a part of this family.

**Q. You spoke about the changes in the college football landscape a couple minutes ago. Another huge component of that have is the transfer portal. Last year's National Championship featured two quarterbacks who had transferred that same year, same thing this year with you and Mendoza. What can you say about that?**

CARSON BECK: Obviously the game has really changed. It's pretty crazy to look at what the transfer portal has kind of become now. Obviously for me I feel like it's a little different. It's not like I went to school for one year and changed schools. I stayed loyal to Georgia. I sat for three years and waited my turn to have the opportunity to be a starter like I always wanted. I always wanted to be a quarterback for the University of Georgia from the second I stepped foot on that campus.

Then obviously with the injury and things kind of happening after the season with my elbow and not ultimately going to the draft, everything kind of just led to me going to a new school, having a fresh start. Then obviously being able to come to the University of Miami and have success with a really talented team around me.

Again, the transfer portal has changed what college

football is, and it can be a really, really good thing in most cases.

**Q. If you could have any artist perform at the halftime show, who would it be?**

CARSON BECK: My favorite is Rod Wave, so I'd say Rod Wave. That would be pretty dope.

**Q. Hi, Carson. You said at the 6-2 start, you guys committed to having fun and playing loose. How does Coach Dawson's play calling kind of lend to that, especially with the trick plays and just the electricity that your offense has?**

CARSON BECK: Honestly, that kind of -- what you just said, cutting it loose, just having fun, that is who Coach Dawson is. That is what he exemplifies and resembles, the calm, cool, collected, never panic kind of mentality. Again, I feel like that's helped me a lot as a quarterback, as a person as well, just learning from him and the way that he carries himself. Staying calm, cool, collected, next play mentality, going out there and having fun.

I feel like in the way that we play, in the way that we run around, I mean, you go watch someone score, go watch the other 10 guys. The other 10 guys are more excited than the guy that's actually in the end zone. That exemplifies what this team has stood for and kind of exemplifies the change you're talking about.

**Q. Having such an impactful performance last week, do you let that affect your mindset in a positive way heading into this week, or do you not let that affect you by any means? Do you kind of approach this game with the same process and preparation that you do every other game?**

CARSON BECK: I think for me individually, and I can speak for the team as well, but for me individually, I feel like I've always done a really good job of taking each day at a time. It's something that I've really tried to focus on as I've gotten older and gotten more mature through my career and just as a person as well.

Again, once that happened, obviously, I give myself the next day to celebrate, to enjoy the moment, and then from there it's flip the switch, onto the next one. I think this team does a really good job of that as well, and Coach Cristobal kind of harps at it. Focusing on each day as it comes, focusing on each game as it comes, and just try to be in the moment.

**Q. I have two questions. The first one is what's the biggest factor that the team has implemented to face**



**the adversity and all of the comments being made about Miami throughout the season doubting the team?**

CARSON BECK: For us, I think a huge part of that is just recognizing it for what it is and understanding that none of it matters. Just leave the outside noise and let it be. That's for entertainment. It's not for going out and executing.

For us, we focus on us, and that's what we've been able to do really well this season.

**Q. You talk about your faith a lot. Can you just talk about how that's impacting you in this game?**

CARSON BECK: Yeah, absolutely. Obviously my faith has had a huge impact on me throughout this entire season and obviously throughout this entire year. Without it, I don't know if I would have gotten through this season. It's been a huge factor for me. Obviously in this game, again, I wouldn't be here without it. I wouldn't be here without God and all the moments that he's put me through to get to this ultimate opportunity.

I'm super grateful for that and super grateful for this opportunity He's given me to play in this game and glorify Him.

**Q. I think you've played against Fernando in the past. What do you remember about those matchups and the excitement of playing against him? What do you see in him as a fellow quarterback?**

CARSON BECK: We've never played against each other head to head. Obviously I played against Columbus in the state championship game, but it was a different quarterback at the time. I've never had the opportunity to meet him, and I don't really know him, but from what I've been able to see from him, I've really only seen him play against the Ohio State defense because I was studying the Ohio State defense, and he was able to make some really big plays.

He seems really talented, really good person. Again, wishing him the best and a lot of success.

**Q. How has your move to Miami as not just a player, but also a person, helped you grow? Also, I wanted you to know are you still a barber? I interviewed you a few years ago when you were at Georgia, you were a barber for the team. I wanted to know if you're still cutting hair for the team.**

CARSON BECK: The move to Miami has been awesome, it's been unbelievable. What a year this university has

been able to have and I've been able to be a part of as a quarterback.

Yeah, I still know how to cut hair. I took a little break for a while, just for whatever reason, but yeah, I still do know how to, yeah, absolutely.

**Q. For the younger generation, what's your one tip or tactic for chasing your dreams, achieving success in life?**

CARSON BECK: Man, I think there's so much to be said as far as chasing your dreams, but I think the biggest thing is commit to yourself, believe in yourself. You have to believe in yourself. If you don't, if you buy into what other people have to say about you, if you buy into all the outside noise, it's only going to get in the way. It's only going to distract you. None of that matters. Leave it out of the way. Let people talk. Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by those doing it. That's the biggest thing to know as you chase your dreams.

**Q. You've been part of championship teams. What kind of characteristics do you see out of this team that's made them get to this point?**

CARSON BECK: I think the biggest characteristic of championship teams is how you're able to overcome adversity. I think that's what this team has exemplified so well this season. That's shown in the way that we were able to bounce back from the little midseason bump in the road that we were able to face. Even adversity that you face in games, maybe it's we have a turnover on offense and the defense is able to come out and come get a stop, that's facing adversity in the middle of a game. Or maybe the defense gives up a score and we come out and respond to a drive after that. That's an example of adversity in the middle of a game.

Again, this team has done so well with that throughout this whole, entire season, and I think it's a huge trait of championship football teams.

**Q. Obviously you were recruited pretty heavily by Coach Saban at Alabama and then Mario coached for him for a while there, had a good run. How are they alike? How are they different?**

CARSON BECK: Well, all of them are super intense. They're super intense, and you can tell that their love for the game is super, super, super high. Again, that's what I would say is the same, but they all have a different way of coaching, from Coach Smart to -- obviously I never got coached by Coach Saban, but being able to meet him and be around him, they all have different ways of doing it, but

at the end of the day, they're super intense and have a great love of the game, for the game of football.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

