

# CFP National Championship: Miami vs Indiana

Saturday, January 17, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

## Miami Hurricanes

### James Brockermeyer

#### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. James, Sisi talked about just having a pact of wanting to get back to the Hard Rock after the regular season. Talk about what went into that and just the mentality throughout the postseason of wanting to play one more home game?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, at the end of the day we been a team that's had a lot of ups and downs throughout the season. You know, after the Louisville game obviously that was really disappointing for us. Mark Fletcher brought it up in a team meeting. Like guys, the national championship game is in the Hard Rock. That would be brutal to watch that game, two other team playing in our home stadium and not being a part of that.

At the end of the day the process to get there was the most important thing. You can't worry about just the end of the journey. You got focus on day-to-day operations to get to that point.

**Q. Been a lot made about all the coaches in the semifinal being ex-Saban assistants. You played for both of them. How are they alike and how are they different?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, I would say they're alike and different. Obviously Coach Cristobal has taken a lot of things from Coach Saban that he learned over the years, whether that's how practice is scheduled or day-to-day operations. But he's put his own spin on it at the same time, it's not like a carbon copy of the old Alabama.

But both coaches are incredible. I'm really thankful and blessed to have been able to play for both of them.

**Q. What's the key for you guys to win this game?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, we just got to go execute and do our job, not make it bigger than it is. At the



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end of the day we're playing a football game and there will be a lot of distractions and external factors that go into this game, and we just need to play Miami Hurricanes football and we'll be confident to be able to do that.

**Q. You've been on some playoff teams in the past. Just what do you take from those experiences that's helped you now?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I think the biggest thing is being able to handle external factors and distractions. There is just so much more attention that comes with big playoff games like this. I think the teams that handle all those distractions and external factors are the teams that typically have the most success.

**Q. Just going off that, is playing at home an advantage or disadvantage when it comes to the external factors?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I mean, there is both to it. A lot more distractions I would say when you're playing at home, so that's a big challenge for us to deal with. It's going to be really special being able to play in Hard Rock in front of our fans and just all the people that have supported us throughout this year, throughout the peaks and valleys of the season.

So there is both sides to it.

**Q. What do you remember about what you were feeling as you were watching the show waiting to see if you got in this year?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I was just on the edge of my seat. Obviously you're in a helpless spot at that point just hoping that U pops up on the screen on ESPN.

Obviously looking back on it it was a great day, but I guess could have gone both ways. We're just really thankful to have gotten in and have the opportunity. Just trying to make the most of it.

**Q. I think preseason people wouldn't be surprised that you guys are here now, but there was a long journey to**



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**get here. Was there a moment or game where you felt like, all right, it finally clicked and we're finally playing the kind of football I know we can play?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, early in the season, I mean, we played some really good football against some really good teams. You know, we were kind of rolling and then we hit a big roadblock in the Louisville game. Two weeks later lost to SMU. So there has been both sides to it.

At the end of the day we just had to get back to playing the standard of Miami football. Towards the end of the season got hot and been able to keep it rolling, so that's just we just got to keep doing.

**Q. James, just kind of like speaking schematically when you look at Indiana's front, just tell me what's going to be some of the challenges that you guys are facing blocking them? I know obviously everyone is talking about the size advantage and the weight advantage that you have on their defensive line, but what are some of the challenges that you see and what are some of the things allowed them to be so successful to this point?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, I mean, just from a schematic standpoint they do a really good job of creating chaos on opposing offensive line. Their D-coordinator does a really good job understanding the way offensive lines are going handle certain looks they present.

So just from the front to the linebackers, they all do a really good job flying around making plays, creating chaos. It's going to be a really big challenge for us. They do a good job of playing together. Don't really make mistakes.

It's going to be a really big challenge for us.

**Q. I noticed all of the offensive lineman taking shots of cafecito before the game. How does the Cuban coffee help the offensive line?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Those are the specialists actually. Our long snappers and kickers and punters do that before every game. I don't do it before the game.

I've become familiar with the Cuban coffee and cafecito throughout my year here at Miami and obviously it's really good stuff, but I don't do it with all those guys before the game.

**Q. And then you were just talking about the chaos. They do a lot of twists and movement and stunts up front, defensive line. How do you communicate**

**handing off people or if they're trying to change the gap?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, we just got to do what we are trained to do. We played teams this year who run stunts in games and create a lot of chaos, so there is not some magic potion to it. You got to do a good job staying on the same level and having confidence on the guys to the left and your right that they're going to be there for you when they need to pick it up.

You just got to protect each other at the end of the day and make sure we're all working together as a unit.

**Q. Last thing from me. You guys are practicing at home. You've been sleeping in your own beds until yesterday. Is it hard to wrap your head around this is the national championship, or does it feel like just another home game? What does it feel like?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, we're treating it as a road game. Obviously we're in Miami, but we're in a different hotel than we typically stay at. It's the same schedule we been on throughout all the bowl games this year.

That's kind of where our mentality and something Coach Cristobal wanted to keep the same for us this week.

**Q. Similar routine to the Fiesta Bowl and all that?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yes, ma'am.

**Q. Got you. Thank you. With the NCAA schedule just the way it is where games are so spaced out, you guys had, what, like two or three weeks or something like that from the end of the regular season to the A&M game. Then got to like another like ten days or something like that until you played your next game. Do you feel like that's something that needs to change moving forward? Is that something that you would like to see changed considering the NFL and high school, everyone else plays games every week, but college has these exceptionally long layoffs between games. Do you feel like that's challenging for you?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, I think we had two weeks to get ready for the Texas A&M game and then we had ten days after that to get ready for the Ohio State game, and then we had eight days to get ready for Ole Miss.

But it's just you got to treat everything normal and obviously there is different scheduling you get placed in. No, I wouldn't say it was a big challenge. Week to week in



the regular season you get seven days to get ready for a game. Everything is eight days or more, so more time to prepare for games.

I think we like to view that as an advantage to have that extra time to get ready for each opponent.

**Q. From the film that you and the rest of the offensive line have been able to watch leading up to this game, what stands out about Indiana's front seven.**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: They just do an elite job playing together. They don't make mistakes. They have a really good understanding of their defense. You can just tell by the way though play and fly around and they have a lot of confidence in the way they play and their D-coordinator does a such a good job of putting them in spots to be successful.

You can just tell they have a really good understanding of how offensive lines are going to handle certain looks they present. It's a really good unit top to bottom and it's is going to be a big challenge for us.

**Q. I don't know if you answered this question already, each of these playoff game has its own makeup. This week in practice, has anything change knowing what's on the line Monday night? As far as you approached it.**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: No, sir. Today is like a Thursday for us of a normal game week. That's the way we view it. Yesterday was a Wednesday and we kind of lose track of the real days of the week at this point because we try to base everything on when the game is and treat it as a normal game week.

You know, we just try to keep the process the same no matter what day the game is on, and that's the way we've handled all the playoff games so far.

**Q. Spoke to Mario yesterday. You know how he is, he takes it one day at a time, the next step, more work to be done. What keeps him so locked in that you have seen out of your head coach?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: He just does a really good job focusing on the process. I think sometimes people can get caught up in the end goal, and obviously it's great to focus on the end goal. At the end of the day it's a battle day to day to be at your best and operate to the standard of Miami football.

**Q. Thank you.**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: You're welcome.

**Q. Just curious your Mt. Rushmore of Miami football, all-time?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I don't know. There is way too many good players to count. I think I'll get in trouble, count a lot of those guys out. Obviously been really special being here and seeing all the former players come back. I don't want to get in trouble with any of the alums doing that. (Smiling.)

**Q. What would it mean to win a national championship on your home field?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Oh, it would mean a lot. It would be a special moment for our team. Right now we're just focused on going 1-0 on a Thursday practice and doing whatever it takes to get to that point.

**Q. Talking to Coach Dawson about this a second ago. There is some similarities between with the way your defense is structured and Indiana's defense is structured. You've obviously had a chance to go up against their defense pretty consistently throughout the season. Do you feel like that gives you any sort of advantage even if it's really, really minor one going into this week, just knowing, hey, we've seen something kind of similar before and even Corey Hetherman was previously a Curt Cignetti defensive coordinator and has a little bit of familiarity with how his system is going to work?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: No, I wouldn't say it presents any sort of advantage or disadvantage. At the end of the day they have certain themes they like to get to on their defensive structure. They have really good players to make that happen. There are some similarities you could say for sure, but it's a different defense at the end of the day.

I would say that.

**Q. James, when you first got to Miami and been working, around Coach Mirabal, what's the biggest difference working with him and former O-line coaches everywhere else you've been?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, I think every O-line coach I've had in college has been really good for me and transformed me into the player I am today. Coach Mirabal has been so special to me and my family. He's just someone who believed in me from the getgo. He just held me to a very high standard here at Miami, always making sure I'm doing the right things.

First thing that happened when I got here in January, he's like, all right, we're going to come up on a Saturday morning and learn the offense. Every day pretty much. So just having all these extra meetings with me in January to help me learn the system showed a lot about him. He could've been doing other stuff, but he's in the O-line room with me at like 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning. He could be hanging out with his family, but he's making sure I understand what I need to be doing.

**Q. Kids dream about playing in the national championship. Has this moment set in for you yet, and can you talk about what it feels like to be playing here in Miami?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, it's really special to be able to play in game in front of a lot of our fans. Yeah, we're really trying to treat it like any other game. Try not to get too distracted with everything else; handling it like any other game you could say.

**Q. James, how would you describe your journey to here from where you started, high school, Bama, TCU and now here? Just sort of what that's been like for you?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Chaotic is probably the best word. If you told me coming out of high school I would've come out of three different schools, I would've called you crazy. At the end of the day I played for a lot of coaches. I've been with numerous teammates and there are just so many people who have been very special to me who have created me into the player and person I am today.

I wouldn't want to have it any other way. Just very blessed and thankful to have experienced everything the way I have.

**Q. I was asking Francis this. How would you describe Mark's running style as one of his O-linemen?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Violent I would say. He runs with bad intentions and he's really fun to play with. He makes us look good. Sometimes we'll miss a block and he'll just run a guy over or make a guy miss and start toting it down the sideline.

I think what also stands out is his pass protection is elite and some of the best I've ever seen in college. Just such a great teammate. Willing to do whatever it takes, whether that's in pass protection or elite blocker or running someone over. He's awesome to play with and an elite human being at the same time also.

**Q. You were the only portal offensive line addition when you came in. How long did you feel like it took for you to really kind of get integrated with the system and the rest of the offensive line and develop a chemistry, especially considering that offensive line has been proven over and over again? You know, the best offensive lines are usually pretty experienced and they've played together for a while. How long did you feel like it took for you to really feel like, okay, you're one of the guys, like everyone is on the same page and you know what you're doing going forward?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, I think that was a really good thing about getting here in January is I could go through spring ball and get familiar with everyone's play styles and learn the calls. I was able to get a pretty good grasp of the system in the winter with all the extra meetings we had.

At the end of the day you got to get on the field with those guys to really see how it operates firsthand. I would say middle to the end of spring ball is when I really started getting comfortable with everyone and not feeling like the new guy.

**Q. So, James, full disclosure. I know your dad. Covered him in the NFL. Who is the better player in college, you or your dad?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I played center and he played tackle. I don't know if you can compare us directly. Probably my dad. My dad was a first round pick in the NFL, so we'll see what happens. He was a complete stud and a really good athlete and player. I'm going to give my dad the cap on that.

**Q. You got a chance to get something he didn't get, right? Did he win a title in college?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: He did not.

**Q. So you got a chance to get something he did not in college.**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yes, sir, absolutely. Hopefully I can get this and have some bragging rights on him.

**Q. James, after the Fiesta Bowl, Jacolby used the nickname Vanilla Vick to describe your quarterback. He said he'd heard in from somebody on offense before. Had you talked about Carson's secret weapon ability to run, and what did you think of his nickname?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, I would say that's a

pretty good way to describe him. I hadn't heard that before. That third down scramble he had against Ohio State was awesome and he put everything on the line on that play. I know a lot of quarterbacks who wouldn't be willing to go make that play. He's just been able to turn on the jets as you could see in these playoff games.

Just shows a lot about his competitiveness and character as a player and as a person.

**Q. James, what can you say about working in the offense under Coach Dawson, just what he's done for this team, leadership, how he's brought out the best in not only you but the entire offensive line?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, Coach Dawson has been fantastic. Such an awesome person, great coach. Does a really good job of allowing us to play complementary football. We do a lot of good stuff in the run game here and there and he's able to make it look the same on play-action.

So he's awesome. He's one of my favorite coaches I ever played for and I'll forever be indebted to him.

**Q. As a quick follow up, what can you say when you look at Indiana on film and what their defense creates, what that defensive line brings to the table, what you've seen from them, and what that matchup will be like in the trenches?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, it's going to be a great matchup. They have had a ton of success this year and rightfully so. A group of really good players who understand each other very well. They understand the defensive scheme they play in really well.

They don't make mistakes to be honest, and it's going to be really big challenge to do a good job of creating confusion and chaos up front with some of the games and blitzes and stunts they have.

Once we get into the playoff we have a really big challenge on our hands. Today we are going through our Thursday practice trying to get ready for it.

**Q. A Coach Cristobal team obviously wants to go from the inside out, build from the trenches. Do you feel that as an offensive lineman that you guys are the foundation of this team?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, no doubt. He's told us that before. This team will be built on the trenches, on the offensive line. We take a lot of pride in that, and Coach Cristobal being a guy that's played offensive line and at

Miami makes it that much more special.

Just really grateful to have him.

**Q. As someone who has done some of that stuff before, obviously had other coaches, what's the difference when you step into a room for Coach Cristobal? What drives you to become better for him?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, it's awesome just having a head coach who has been a guy who had his hand in the dirt and played offensive line. It just mentally makes you feel really at peace with it, just understanding that you have a coach that's done all the same things you've done before. Offensive line is a pretty unique position. If you haven't played it you can't truly understand what it's like I would say.

Coach Cristobal being the forefront of our program and being a guy that's done all that is really special and makes us feel great as offensive linemen.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about representing the conference. How much ownership do you feel like for the ACC, how important is this for the ACC, for your team, to close this out, and do you feel a responsibility towards the ACC on Monday night?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Yeah, the ACC is a really good conference with a lot of good teams and really good players. Yeah, it is an honor to represent the ACC in the championship game like this. Obviously we want to make everyone proud on that stage and prove ACC is a really good conference.

**Q. James, can I just get a game pick from you, Texans or Patriots?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I have no idea to be honest with you. I have not been as dialed in as I should be with all the NFL stuff. Been pretty focused on this game. I have no idea.

It'll be a really good game.

**Q. What are you listening to in the locker room on Monday?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I got a lot of different stuff. I got some kind of calm, like classical stuff, and also got all your rap and stuff that gets us hyped up. I got a little mix. Just depending on the time of day and as I get closer to game time I kind of start turning it up a little bit, you know.

**Q. Ball out Monday, man.**



JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Thank you.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I think we'll be on the other sideline than we were in Hawai'i. That's different for us, but...

**Q. Five rapid-fire questions. What's your go-to gas station order?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Protein shake.

**Q. If you could have one company in the world sponsor you for NIL, which company with that be believe?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Canes Connection.

**Q. If you could shout out one athlete in the world, who would that be?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Go with my dad, Blake Brockermeier.

**Q. What's the hardest place to play in your career?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Probably the Texas A&M game and first round of the playoffs.

**Q. What is one thing that you personally are obsessed with right now?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: Getting ready to win a football game.

**Q. You've been around some really great offensive players in your offensive career. When I say Malachi Toney, what did you think?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: He's an absolute stud, and elite competitor. At the same time he's a true freshman but he's handled like himself like he's been in the NFL for ten years. He comes in early in the morning, puts the right stuff in his body, always getting in extra work. Absolute stud and been a game changer for this program.

**Q. Who does he remind you of?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: I really don't know. I think he's one of one. He's such a stud receiver at attacking the ball in the air and making -- getting yards after the catch.

He's an elite blocker at the same time. Go turn on the film.

Like he's down there just there coming after guys with everything he's got. He puts it on the line every play for whoever has the ball even if it's not him. It's really fun to watch. Obviously as an offensive lineman we get fired up watching him go block down the field.

**Q. When you see him push a pile into the end zone as a offensive linemen, how cool is that?**

JAMES BROCKERMEYER: It's awesome. Yeah, when you think of receivers sometimes you think of all the diva guys that just want the ball, and when they don't have the ball in their hands they throw a fit. That's not how our guys are at all. They do whatever it takes to make sure we are successful as an offense and it's really special to watch.

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