

CFP National Championship: Miami vs Indiana

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Miami, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

Indiana Hoosiers

Coach Bryant Haines

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Hey, Coach. I want to ask you about that terrible person you're coaching against on the other sideline. What's it been like this week? I know you guys talk a lot, and obviously this week you're probably not so much. What's it like, the human element of this, for you two guys?

BRYANT HAINES: I think it's fairly easy to separate. Coach Hetherman is an awesome, awesome football coach, and I love him as a human being too. But it's pretty easy to separate work with the relationship externally. So not hard to separate it, but yeah, he's a good football coach.

Q. One quick follow-up, if I may. You were in his wedding or whose --

BRYANT HAINES: He got married in the summer of '21, and I was in his wedding. He got married at Jubilee. I got to be in his wedding and -- a close friend.

Q. Bryant, Coach Cignetti talks all the time about process, process, process. Here we are NFL week leading up to a National Championship game. How much of that just rung true all week in regards to getting work done and just being sort of focused on the moment still?

BRYANT HAINES: I can't hear some of that. Process-oriented is what you said?

Q. Yeah. He's just so process-oriented. Now here we are in a National Championship week. What's this week been like, and have y'all been sort of staying true to that process, process, process, for this game?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. Absolutely. It's the same. It's the exact same thing. I think that's what makes Coach Cignetti's system unique, makes what we do unique. This is another football game. Granted, there's some media



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obligations. There's a couple changeups to the normal routine. But at the end of the day, process-oriented people, process-oriented football teams stick to the process. That's what's brought them success, so that's what you continue to bring them success. So we're sticking to what we do, and the schedule's been about the same.

Q. Coach, when you kind of reflect on your journey, if you're able to, how much do you kind of think back of where you were, you know, eight, nine years ago, and here you are a defensive coordinator of a potential National Championship team?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I don't think about that much at all, outside of these moments when somebody brings it up and I get a chance to maybe sort of tell my story a little bit.

There are moments in there where maybe I get some feedback on what you guys hear from me, whether it be from somebody that's maybe going through the same struggle. And that's meaningful to me. I love to be able to help and give advice as much as I possibly can.

But I'm a defensive coordinator at IU, and I've got a lot of work to do, so I focus on that. I focus on that. I don't have a lot of time to think about making no money back in 2012. I'm just trying to do my job today, tomorrow, and then Monday night.

Q. Coach, Miami has quite a bit of speedsters, like a Malachi Toney. How do you defend speed without losing discipline?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. Malachi Toney is a phenomenal player. I think he's probably the best slot we've seen. I think it's unbelievable when you watch him on film. The fact that he's only a freshman, it's mind-blowing because he plays like an upperclassman. He's physical, obviously fast, very sudden.

We need to be true to our leverage points, meaning if we're in zone, if we're in man, where's our help at? We shouldn't be expected to have to play Malachi Toney all over the field in isolation moments. We should be able to use

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leverage on him and to vice him. So staying true to our angles, and that should help us against the speedsters that Miami has, especially number 10. I mean, he's phenomenal.

Q. Corey talked a little bit about how much he took from his time at JMU and working with Cig and obviously working with you.

Do you see a lot of similarities between what they do and what you do now, or is he kind of his own thing now and you're kind of your own thing?

BRYANT HAINES: I'll level with you. I don't watch a lot of Miami's defense just because I'm working on their offense. I'm trying to attack Coach Shannon Dawson and Malachi Toney and quarterback.

So I know a little bit about what Corey's doing because we do talk a little bit. I think there's some similarities. I'm sure there's plenty of differences too. But to be honest, I don't study -- study Miami's defense much.

Q. Bryant, you've had the opportunity to go up against a lot of good quality, elite offenses this year. What separates this Miami offense from, say, Ohio State or Oregon or those types of teams?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. Physicality, their physicality. Not that the other teams that we played weren't physical. I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is if you're going to put them all in a line, which offense is the most physical, Miami is the most physical offense. Big, powerful back. Their offensive line, again, enormous.

But these guys play together very well, and they lean on you. They have a system that allows you to kind of turn it into a little bit more of a wrestling match than some other offenses. So it's their physicality that makes them unique. That's why they're here.

Very physical on the perimeter too. We talked about Malachi Toney being a freshman. He blocks like he's 240 pounds and he's been doing it his whole life. I mean, the physicality that they show throughout their whole offense is what makes them so unique.

Q. Yeah, Coach. I'm just curious. You talked about preparing for football teams and preparing for offenses. Where does that process start, and what does it look like? You don't have to give me too many secrets, but how do you go about breaking down a football team?

BRYANT HAINES: Well, I start with what they do best. It's

like if you play one-on-one basketball against somebody, is this person right-handed? Well, I'm definitely going to force them to their left, then. Let's take them out of their original game plan.

So I always want to identify, what does an offense do best? What's going to allow them to win the game most easily? If you can identify that, take that away, priority one.

Priority two is, what do we do well? What are their vulnerabilities versus what we can do? So how do we attack them? So I want to make them play left-handed, and then I want to find a weakness that we can exploit. So it starts from there.

And then we have such a large playbook, amount of content, we just start picking and pulling the things that allow us to attack those weaknesses most effectively.

Q. Bryant, you talk about maybe taking away some of those strengths, you talked about what Miami's done in the postseason that maybe they haven't done in the regular season is Carson Beck scrambling and making some plays with his legs. What have you seen on tape from that, and how do you guys try to incorporate that into your defensive approach here?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I think that Carson Beck is leaving the pocket and scrambling, I guess, because his primary reads aren't there. And I think one huge step that Carson has made, in my opinion, is he's taken the ball. So if the first one or two options to throw aren't available, now he's running. And maybe it's a gain of two or three yards, and he hasn't put his offense in peril in any way.

I feel like he's very much a point guard of this offense. He wants to distribute those plays to his playmakers. If those aren't there, running it and gaining two, three yards is a positive play. I think that's a big step for him. He's not throwing the ball over. He's protecting it.

Get the ball to your playmakers or don't put it in peril I think has been what he's going for. The goal is to try to take away both things, to take away those primary options and also, if he runs it, to put our face masks on him. So that will be our attack.

Q. Before this season, the chart said that the Indiana turnover margin of plus 15 is not sustainable. Y'all raised it to plus 21. So you forced a lot of turnovers. Miami has lost their games when they had a lot of turnovers. Do you adapt to your game plan to look like that you're giving them to make Carson Beck feel uncomfortable and maybe force those turnovers?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I would love for that to happen. We're going to be looking to create turnovers, whether by the deception of our shell disguise, maybe some blitzes, simulated pressures to make Carson Beck uncomfortable.

But, again, going back to it, he hasn't turned the ball over recently. I think he's protecting it and playing it a little bit more safe, which makes sense because they have weapons. They don't need him to put the ball up in the air for grabs. So yeah. I mean, we're definitely going to try to turn the ball over, as we always do.

But credit to our offense. One of the reasons that we're plus 21 is because our offense doesn't turn the ball over. We could have three turnovers every game, but if our offense is also turning it over, then we're back to square one; correct?

Q. Yeah, Bryant. Sorry for my voice, but your defense -- you guys have been elite all year. Some guys do it for a month or a stretch. Why do you think it's been season-long dominant, season-long elite play?

BRYANT HAINES: Gosh. I can't hear. I'm sorry. I can't hear. Something about season-long?

Q. Sorry. My voice is shot. Your defense -- it's been elite all year. Some people do it for a game, a month, whatever. Why have you guys been able to put together the whole season of this level of defense?

BRYANT HAINES: I think it's because we break it down one game at a time. We're not trying to be great for the whole season. That's not the goal. The goal is to be great for one game, right, and then put that game to bed.

I think we do a healthy job as a staff of identifying miscues, trying to clean those up. That way, as you do go into the next game, just a one-game season, you correct some of those issues that might be attacked again. So rinse and repeat; right? Correct the mistakes, correct the issues, and then attack one week at a time.

So obviously you can extrapolate that, look back on it, and say, well, you've been great for 15 games now, but all we see is what have we done most recently. We had a lot of errors in this most recent game, especially in the second half against Oregon. I didn't like the second drive of the game after D'Lo got the pick-six. I mean, I think it was a 12- or 14-play drive, 75 yards. Big, big errors in there. We've got to clean those up. If we do, then maybe we can be successful one more week. Yeah. Absolutely.

Q. Coach, Miami -- a lot of tight splits up front with their offensive line. How does that affect you,

especially with the movement that you guys do up front?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. It's a great question. They do a really nice job, and it really plays into their skill set. Their big cut down on those splits take away our ability to kind of fracture and create angles on some of those run frames.

I don't 100 percent know how that's going to look at what we do, but we have a plan for it. We have a plan to exploit it. Because anytime you try to take something away, you open something else up. So maybe the tighter you get opens something else up that we can look to attack.

But there's no doubt about it. With the size that they have, with the strength that they have and their ability to kind of make every single play, a wrestling match -- it should be unique, a unique matchup in the trenches there. Yeah. Good question.

Q. Coach, I wanted to ask about Jamari Sharpe and his improvement over the last two years. What's led to his improvement in becoming an elite corner in these last two games?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I think he's got a fantastic corners coach. Rod Ojong is an elite corners coach, and D'Angelo Ponds will second that. So he's improving his technique. He's improving his presnap indicator, which leads to faster reaction times.

So, you know, we talk about the pick-six that we saw from D'Angelo. There's a lot that goes into that other than that D'Angelo is a fantastic player; right? There's splits, there's tendencies, there's tells, there's backup location. There's splits of all the linemen. Jamari is tapping into those same things. What does the split of one mean? Where's one? Where's two? Where's three? Who is three? What can you glean from an offense before that ball is snapped? That's football IQ.

So I think Jamari is tapping into that, his technique, like I mentioned. His physicality has improved, which is going to need to show up in this game. I'm proud of Jamari Sharpe. I think he's growing as a corner, and the future is still bright for him. He's still young.

Q. I want to ask about, too. What is his relationship like with D'Angelo on and off the field?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I can't say I'm super -- I'm not like -- it's not like Jamari, D'Angelo, and B. Haines hanging out together. They seem like they have a great relationship. I think that -- I think a lot of these guys, to be honest with you, are really close. I think it's one of the

things that makes us a good defense, a good team. These guys are brothers. They play hard for each other. They believe in each other.

I think D'Angelo gives other people around him confidence, the same way I think Aiden Fisher does. I think a sign of good leadership is what impact -- how much better can you make the people that are playing around you? Do you make your teammates a better football player? I think the answer for D'Angelo in his relationship in how he affects. He makes him a better football player.

Q. Coach, I know you and Corey are very tight; right? I mean, best men in each other's weddings. Tell me the root of that friendship and kind of -- I mean, this is pretty small world. Surreal; right? I mean, I know football coaches cross paths a lot, but this is on a rather large stage. What's that like, to go against your buddy?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. It's a unique situation. I was in Corey's wedding a couple years back. I think it was in 2021. He's a good friend. He and I have stayed close. I respect him as a football coach.

When he -- when he got hired by Coach Cignetti at James Madison, I was kind of hoping that I would get a chance to run the defense at James Madison, and I wasn't. I got the codefensive coordinator title, and we brought Corey in, and I wasn't sure how that was going to go because I felt like I was maybe ready. I felt that way, but maybe I wasn't. I thought I learned a lot from Corey.

And what I love so much about Corey -- and this is what makes him such a good coach -- is he wanted to collaborate. He came in with a great scheme. "Hey, here's my main stuff." Like, puts on the board, we're looking at it. We're watching the film. We're watching crazy amounts of cutups because he's a football junky like the rest of us.

And we had a good staff. We kind of bounced some ideas. We were doing some things similar, some things differently. He was open to my ideas. He's a collaborator, you know? He didn't slam the scheme in our face and say, "Hey, this is what we're doing." It was all of us -- me, A.Jacks, Ryan Smith, Matt Burkett, Corey Hetherman. We were working together to try to make the best defense that we could. That's the sign of a good defensive coordinator.

And from day one, I've known that Corey's a good man, a good human being, a damn good football coach, and a good friend.

Q. Coach, you obviously are known for a lot of chaos, a lot of twists and stunts and wraps and whatnot. I'm

more curious how you do so while maintaining gap integrity, because there's still six gaps to fill, and we've got to make sure we've got a guy for each, not two in one. How are you guys not allowing explosives while still seeking havoc?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I'll try not to get too deep into the weeds schematically, but a lot of that falls on the second and third levels of the defense. If you're a stunt, twist, you know, game the operation up front, like we tend to be, a lot of the coaching of gap replacement falls on the guys at the second and third levels because, to your point, there are, depending on box count, a number of extra gaps. Flowing and falling back to proper gaps is what makes the whole thing work.

If you're going to be a one-gap linebacker operation, you can't do many twists and stunts in games. You've got to keep your defensive linemen in their gap so everybody can just fit their gaps. So the teaching, the eyes, the train, the gap replacement theories that we use at the second and third levels allows us to junk up the front.

Q. When you talk about kind of junking up the front against a gap scheme team, I know that means one thing, but against a team like Miami that's going to give you a lot of zone, a lot of man-blocking, duo-type stuff. How does that kind of change what you guys do, if at all?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I mean, it kind of goes back to your first question. I'm curious how that's going to play out because how are they going to handle some of our twists? Because some of our twists are devastatingly good against duo and downhill frames. Some of them, not as much. So, you know, they still have to block our stunts now too. Like, how are they blocking some of what we do?

And if a certain stunt isn't hidden, what that tells me is that a different one will, so -- and to me, that's the game within the game, is after those first few drives, after quarter one, at halftime, what changes need to be made? How can I call the defense more effectively? Because that stunt's not working. That game's not working. This blitz didn't hit. We've got plenty more, so if something isn't hitting the way we want, better change that scheme up because something -- something out there in our scheme is a banger. We've got to find it.

Q. Hi, Coach. What are the keys to containing Malachi Toney?

BRYANT HAINES: Malachi Toney? The keys to stopping him? That's a tough one. I would love to be able to stop number 10. Not all my calls are going to be able to do that.

That being said, a number of my calls do highly, highly account for where he's at and where he's located. We typically play a lot of zones. We play some man. We play some quarters. We play some Tampa 2.

I think one way that we can potentially slow him down is to confuse him. If he's not 100 percent sure what coverage we're in, how does he know how to adjust his route accordingly? So I'm a big fan of deception, one, to a quarterback, but, two, also to playmakers on the perimeter. If they don't know exactly what hole to sit in to find the soft spot of the zone, I think it plays to our favor. So I like to have great deception and keep number 10 maybe a little confused.

Q. Hi, Coach. I just had a quick question about -- like, when you see your resume coming with Coach Cignetti from IUP to Elon to here, were there times back in those days where you had doubts where your career was going, or did you always think this is a stepping stone, that this day and this week would come down the line?

BRYANT HAINES: Are you kind of asking about where my career was going each step of the way?

Q. Yeah.

BRYANT HAINES: I didn't. I didn't, no. I think I've always been where my feet are. I think I've always been thankful to do something that I love.

My father, when he got out of the Air Force, was a factory worker because that's what he had to do to provide for his family. And his message to me was, "Whatever you end up doing in life, just make sure that you love what you do." So even when I wasn't making money and I was falling on hard times, at least I got to wake up every morning and go do what I love, which is coach football, lead young men, develop them, make them work hard, make them work towards a common goal.

So I think I just got lost in that along the way. It probably wasn't until, you know, last year I was able to, like, look over my shoulder at what we had done, where I -- how far I had come, and I was proud of that. I was thankful for that. I lost my dad years ago, but I think that he would be proud of that too. He would be happy that I do what I love, and he would say that I finally made it, because I think there were some doubts at times with him if I was going to make it in this career.

But as you're in it, as you're in the heat of the moment, I never really saw where it was going to go. If I worked

really hard and was good at my job, maybe it would lead to something really great, and thankfully it has.

Q. Good morning. I was wondering how much you relied on the guys you had taken with you from your defense at JMU to help with your install -- and not as much with the install, but even more so helping you deliver the message, deliver what you guys were about, deliver expectations. Did you lean on them a lot to help you kind of get these guys up to speed, maybe even before Spring Ball last season?

BRYANT HAINES: I did. I did. Yeah. It's hard to even calculate the importance of that, but I know that it was big because it's one thing to sit in a room as a -- maybe a kid that was at Indiana, and here comes a new coach. And yes, I saw they had success, but if it wasn't for the guys that actually came with us, the -- James Carpenter, Aiden Fisher, D'Angelo Ponds -- like, how is the sausage really made? Like, how did these guys do that? How are they actually successful?

If they didn't get to see that, this person sitting next to them go through that process, it wouldn't have had the same level of impact. So, I mean, I'm so grateful for that group of guys, that initial group that came. Again, I go back to James Carpenter, Mikail Kamara. Aiden Fisher was huge. I mean, he was the leader. Even last year as a junior, unquestioned leader. And then, obviously, D'Angelo Ponds.

So not only did they get the messaging from us, but they saw it. They saw the day-by-day effort, energy to the ball, the accountability in every single thing that you do, the culture standpoint, the coaching that he puts on the guys. Like, they saw how it operates in real time. I mean, there's no better way to grow a team quickly than that right there.

Q. A couple of the guys -- the holdover guys who you didn't bring with you -- they said that it was about the Nebraska and Washington two-game run last season, where they were able to combine messaging with results, and it led to, in their mind, like, a -- we get it now. And not just we get it, this is going to be something big. Does that at all match up with the timeline in your head, that it took on-field results to maybe get to the point where it was 105 guys in unison?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. That's -- I mean, those were big games last year. I mean, I remember that stretch. And I guess maybe even -- I thought to myself after that two-game stretch, like, oh. Maybe we can go win this thing. Like, that moment hit for me.

But honestly, maybe even Games 1 and 2 for me, like, seeing it, because I had to prove it to myself too. Keep in mind I had not been a Big Ten defensive coordinator. I felt like I knew how to be a successful coordinator. I had done that at JMU for two years. But can I do this stuff with a new group of guys in the Big Ten?

So we played FIU in the opener, and I remember the first couple series, it looked like I wanted it to look. It's TFLs. It's fast. It's aggressive. I felt like we're right there. There was a step forward in what I wanted Indiana's defense to look like.

I think we've taken that further and further as we've gone, but I thought -- early on, it looked differently to me. We weren't kicking a field goal to tie Akron to run into overtime. We started smashing people, and that's -- that was what we wanted as a staff. So we got to smashing people pretty early.

Q. Yeah. Bryant, with you guys and Corey -- with you and Corey, why did it click so well? Because you didn't know him before you got together from Maine, did you?

BRYANT HAINES: No, I did not know him until we met for his interview, when he came and spoke with Coach Cignetti and was offered the job on the spot.

The reason it came so easy, one, is because I had already respected what he did. We had some crossover games when I was at Elon, so I saw his Maine defense play, and I liked their style. Again, there are some similarities between him and I. He has a D-line background. I have a D-line background. So his defensive line was fast and physical and violent and vertically charged. I liked his style. I liked his system.

And then it was early on when we started working together. He was a collaborator. His ego wasn't so big that he didn't want to take on other ideas. He didn't slam the main playback in our face when we all got to JMU and said, "We're all going to do it like this. This is the letter of the law." We had guys -- he had a corners coach come with him from Maine. Myself and the Coach Ryan Smith, the coach that came from Elon. We brought A.Jacks in from Mississippi State at the time. So we had a unique cluster of people. We all had ideas and ways of doing things. He was open to all of it. So to me, what that showed is he's a good boss, he's a good coordinator. He can take in different ideas and be a great collaborator.

And then other than that, he's similar to me. You know, he's competitive, talks junk, is confident. You know, so it just -- it meshed well very quickly.

Q. And you mentioned kind of collaboration. Matt Burkett talked about how you maintain that. Like, how important has that been for you? And you mentioned learning that from Corey and seeing that in action. How has that helped your success and develop as a defensive coordinator?

BRYANT HAINES: I think it's been big for me. I took that trait in large part from him, but also Coach Cignetti too. Coach Cignetti is another one that -- Coach Cignetti is smart, and he recognizes a good idea when he hears one. It's not, "No, we're going to do it my way." Clearly, he's open to suggestions. So I learned the power of collaborating from Corey, and I think it's been big to my career.

I also think it helps me with my staff, because who wants to work for the guy who's not going to listen to any ideas that they have; right? So we're all in this. We're all doing it together. It's not my defense. It's our defense. And I definitely learned that from Corey. I think he does a great job with that. I'm sure he still does that with Miami.

Q. Coach, Miami has Malachi Toney. He could catch the ball, run the ball. He's thrown the ball seven times. How do you prepare for that as a defense, to keep everybody disciplined to know that he could do anything at any time?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. One of his best skill sets is the one that you didn't mention. He can block. This dude can block his tail off, and holds a lot too. But hey, he's just competing. He's a great football player.

How do we prepare for that? The same way we prepare for any great football player, Jeremiah Smith, Carnell Tate, Malachi Toney. I mean, these guys are elite. We're not trying to take him completely out of the game, but we have to account for him. Where is he at? Where is he located? Where is he motioning to? Why is he motioning there? Know where he's at.

And then within each call are nuances that can be adapted based off of what he's telling us. So that's what's so great about the scheme. If you know the scheme, the ins and the outs of the scheme, then you know how it can be tailored to what you might get from this look.

Q. Then Devan Boykin at that rover position has really come on as good in the second half of the season. How important is he in that position to your defense and him filling in for the guys who played there last year so well?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. Devan's been coming on strong. He's always been playing at a high level, whether he's playing the rover position -- and listen, we have a lot of subpackages too. So he plays a rover, a nickelback position in one package. Another time he might go up to the roof. He's playing free safety.

Amare Ferrell got hurt in the opening kickoff in our last game, and Devan Boykin was playing strong safety to the field, which is not something he has a lot of reps of. It speaks to his versatility. It speaks to his football IQ. Competitive kid, played a lot of football. I'm proud of what he's done for this defense, and I'm going to need a big game from him on Monday night.

Q. So I used to work for Channel 2 in Dayton and lived in Troy, Ohio, and they're in the same company. They want me to ask you about your roots in Piqua and what you learned there as a player in that program and how that helped mold you to be the coach you are today.

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. That's an open-ended one. I could talk for a while about that. I'm very thankful for my upbringing in Piqua. We moved there when I was in fourth grade -- fourth grade, maybe fifth grade, so most of my upbringing -- I see myself as a Piquad. Blue-collared town, tough -- tough area, really big on football.

We moved there because it was closer to my father's work. He was working for Honda up the road, so Piqua was a little closer for him to travel every day.

They had a really good football team, great football coach who's still there, Bill Nees, who was a mentor of mine. I fell in love with football there. I'm grateful for all those moments.

I think a lot of the success that I've had and kind of why, when I look back and how I overcame this -- everybody's talking about how poor I was. It's not too crazy. I didn't have -- I didn't grow up on third base, so hard work pays off. Piqua taught me that, and I've held true to that along the way.

Q. Coach, I was talking to the wide receiver coach earlier in the OC. They said they've never seen a zone coverage like your defense before. What is it about your zone that makes it so difficult for offenses to dissect?

BRYANT HAINES: Which zone?

Q. The entire -- the entire scheme of the zone coverage that you guys are on.

BRYANT HAINES: And I think that's your answer. Well, we don't have a zone defense that we play. We play a lot of zones. Which one are we in? When does the quarterback recognize that? Does he still have time to throw the ball at that point?

So to me, that's maybe what makes it great, is, you know, the spacing of it, maybe the disguise, the deception of it, and the inability to identify it quickly in the frame.

Q. Hey, Coach, you're fixing a good offense this week. Malachi, the quarterback, big-ass offensive lines, you know? They say size matters, but sometimes it don't. I think you have done a great job of telling the guys five wide, "Hey, the ball's got to come out quick." What do you think is your biggest task this week as far as spacing the Miami Hurricanes?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I think all of it working together is what makes it so challenging. I actually kind of look at this offense as, like, a triple-option offense, because they can hand the ball off to this big back. It's almost like a fullback dive, a triple-option; right? It's like these big dudes coming downhill and physical.

And then the next play, they spit it out to number 10 on the perimeter, and now the game's being played down there. So it's like, are they attacking us here or way over there? It's kind of like two wars happening on different parts of the field, if you know what I'm saying. I think that's what makes him great.

I think the key to that is going to be our spacing. You have to attribute the amount of -- the correct amount of resources to the war that's going on there, but you can't go to war just over there because you've got a war right here too. So they pull you in these two different directions, and then they're good on both fronts now, whether it's how big they are and how powerful their running backs are or how they block the perimeter, and then number 10 with the ball and space. So we've got two wars in one, and that's what's going to make Monday so special.

Q. Curt was joking about Corey playing quarterback. How did they show up, knowing him as a defensive guy now?

BRYANT HAINES: Corey -- Corey's a smart football coach. I think that quarterbacks -- even in recruiting. I like recruiting quarterbacks in different positions because they have a different viewpoint of the game.

Same thing with coaching. I think a coach that played quarterback probably has a great understanding of space and route development and coverages and rotations of

safeties, setting protections. So I think his playing days, if you'd call them that, probably allowed him to be a little bit more of a holistic coach and do more than just, you know, defensive ends, which is what -- he was coaching defensive ends when he was coordinating at JMU.

That being said, Corey's a horrible athlete now. There was no other position for him on a field other than just staying back there and spinning the thing.

Q. Hey, Coach. How would your defense be different if you didn't have number 5 on your side?

BRYANT HAINES: Number -- how would our defense be different?

Q. Without D'Angelo Ponds.

BRYANT HAINES: Oh, yeah. Well, we had one game -- we had one game where number 5 was hurt. D'Angelo missed the Iowa game, and he wasn't officially out of that game. He didn't get hurt until Thursday that week. So I prepped the whole week, including Thursday, under the pretense that D'Angelo was going to wipe out one half of the field and all I had to do was worry about the other half of the field.

So when he went down -- I found out he was out on Friday -- that was a sleepless night for me, and we had to make some alterations. The zones change. The spacing changes. D'Angelo Ponds takes half of the field away. So if he's not out there, I have to use all 11 on the whole field, and it spreads the defense out. But it's a testimony to how unique number 5 is in our defense and how much it changes if he's not there. Absolutely.

Q. Coach, you believed in Curt Cignetti, as mentioned, and his vision a long time ago, well before Indiana. What is it about him that keeps you coming back and keeps you believing?

BRYANT HAINES: One, his messaging is very consistent. Two, it's easy to follow. It's a step-by-step plan. You know, every day we have a plan. It's organized. It's detailed. I know what is expected of me on a day-to-day basis. So if there's clarity in the messaging, there's continuity and it's easy to define roles, it's easy to stay in that.

And then ultimately you, if you follow that script, it takes you into a successful place. It has since I've been with him. Him and I -- he's never had a losing season as a football coach, so every year I've been with him, we've been successful. But why? Clear messaging, consistent messaging, and then a day-to-day plan. That's a sign to

me of a great boss, a great leader, damn good football coach.

Q. And then as far as Carson Beck and what you see from him on the other side, I don't think he gets necessarily the credit that he deserves, but what do you see from him and what he's been able to do?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah, I would agree with you. I don't think he gets the credit he deserves. I think that he, to be honest, is maybe the perfect quarterback for this offense when he's not making mistakes.

Again, when you look back at their losses, you know, some turnovers and probably some miscues there. But outside of that, I mean -- I was going to say he operates, to me, kind of like a point guard. He distributes the ball to his playmakers. He doesn't make a lot of errors. He understands the box. I think you can see in the film that he's a veteran. He's been around ball. He understands it. He knows when to throw the screen, when to get the ball out of the box, when to hand it off and the box is light. So I think a lot of the offense flows through him; and when he's on point, so is that offense.

Q. Sorry if you've been asked this, but you go against Fernando every day. What makes him special in terms of going against him and just watching him every day as your defense goes against him?

BRYANT HAINES: So, interestingly enough, we thankfully do not go against Fernando at all during this season. Yeah. There's a little bit of seven-on-seven time, but very, very little.

That being said, we went against Fernando for all of Fall Camp; and at the beginning of Fall Camp, I think Fernando was still kind of figuring out our defense a little bit. There's a lot of illusions to it, a lot of deceptive looks to it, and I think it was bothering him that we were having success early in Fall Camp.

And then about a week to go before the opening game, Fernando started to see our defense in a different way. He could decipher everything that we were doing. We couldn't get home. We couldn't hit him. We can't hit him anyway, but we couldn't -- even if it had been live, we wouldn't have gotten to him. The ball was always making the right marks. And I thought to myself in that moment, we're going to be really bad on defense or this kid right here is going to be special. And thankfully, it was the latter. That's a very intelligent kid, can see the game so well, can see spacing. Great rhythm and timing to his game. And then he's an ultimate competitor. So he has all those boxes that you want checked if you want a lead quarterback. He checks

every single one of them.

Q. How would you describe sort of the reception for this program, from when you got a glimpse of it as a GA in 2012 to what it is now, at a place that for so long basketball was everything?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. It's night and day, night and day. And I don't say that lightly. There wasn't -- it didn't mean anything to be an Indiana football player as a GA here. It didn't mean anything to be a GA. It didn't mean anything to be a coach. It was a program that was still trying to get out of the mud, I think.

Now, I think that that staff, and Coach Wilson in particular, were on the forefront of getting it out of that place. So I always saw the value in this place. I knew that it could take off. I remember telling Coach Cignetti when he first pulled me in his office and it was about to go down -- I said, "That place can take off." I truly believed that. To see that it actually did has been -- has been unbelievable. It's been unbelievable.

Q. Yeah. Bryant, your players talk about at halftime you go straight into adjustments and that kind of thing. You're not a flip-over-a-table or fiery kind of speech. Like, it's all business. It's all process. How did you kind of come to that, and why do you think that's more valuable than -- it's not motivation, it's process-oriented with you at all times?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I think that that's probably just my style. I mean, if it was going to make us a better defense to punch a hole in a dry erase, then maybe I would do it, but I just don't think that's what makes defenses good. I don't think that's -- I don't think that's going to solve the issue of a bad first half, is for me to drop-kick a trash can. I think what's more effective is what went wrong and why. Let's identify the issues.

When I was a player, that's what I wanted. Confidence in my game came from a coach that had a plan, had solutions to flaws, not, you know, the ability to do damage to the locker room.

Q. Going against an offense like Miami that likes to use screens, get guys out in space, how much of a luxury is it for you to have a trio of linebackers that have shown they can make open-field tackles on a consistent basis?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. I think that's probably one of the better qualities of our football team, is that we tackle effectively. I think that we do that because we understand the spacing of the game, even within different coverages.

I'm a big teacher in leverage points, meaning that there's usually two guys in a zone that should be able to corral or vice a ball carrier. Using your help, using your leverage point usually can help you against elite athletes like what Miami has.

But, again, this is a different deal, you know? These guys are elite. Number 10 in particular, when he has the ball in his hands and we don't find those leverage points, it's going to be a tough night.

Q. (Off microphone) against the running back, who through the college ball playoffs, no team has really had an answer for so far?

BRYANT HAINES: Yeah. It's unique. It makes you think, like, is what they're doing so spectacular that it can't be stopped, or has nobody found that flaw in it yet? And that's what I like you to think, is that there is a hole in this thing somewhere. It's my job and it's our job, as a staff, to find some of those ways to fracture what they're doing and just make them play off schedule and with their left hand.

Q. How do you teach disguise and decide which players are good at it or have an innate ability to disguise?

BRYANT HAINES: Real quick, shell deception is all about teaching the guys what we want the look to be. What story are we trying to tell? Are we trying to tell field pressure? Bounty pressure? Man?

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