

Indiana University Football Media Conference

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Aiden Fisher

Press Conference



Q. How did the day unfold for you? Curt didn't bring the team together. Did a group watch the proceedings? What was the level of paying attention this morning and trying to figure out where you guys were going to land?

AIDEN FISHER: This morning I kind of woke up and did my normal routine for a Sunday morning. Me and my roommate watched the selection show, kind of saw where things fell in place, and we're happy for that.

Q. I think I recognize you probably just started to dig into Notre Dame, but especially from a linebacker's perspective, they do a lot of stuff on the ground, the option as a quarterback, he's a threat to run. Both as the middle linebacker, the voice of Coach Haines in your helmet, how much responsibility falls on you in a game like this where there's got to need to be a lot of pre-snap communication, a lot of correct reads, and getting things lined up right?

AIDEN FISHER: It's going to be huge. I talked to Jailin Walker already this morning about it. We're pumped for this opportunity. Really good football team. Got in some film this morning. Really good football team, really good on the ground. They always look to establish the run game, and that's been their identity all year.

We're excited for it and look forward to it.

Q. I know what people say nationally doesn't matter to you guys, but when you watched the show, there were a few shots taken at your guys' schedule, your resume. I guess how much fuel -- you guys played with a chip on your shoulder all year. How much fuel has that been for you guys' fire? I know it doesn't matter, but they did disrespect you guys a little bit.

AIDEN FISHER: I didn't even see that part. Once they placed us with Notre Dame, got my headphones, got my book bag, and came here to watch a little film and get ahead of it.

People have opinions everywhere. You can say strength of schedule, who we play, how we play. We'll handle it when the time comes, and that stuff is just opinions. Everybody has one.

Q. Aiden, human nature would dictate you see your name up there on the bracket today and you think we've arrived, we've done something. Did that happen, how do you keep that from happening, and how do you keep going?

AIDEN FISHER: Kind of going back to the previous question. When you see your matchup and then obviously we've gotten a lot of criticism for our schedule and things like that, so it just kind of gives us more of an edge. It's something that we look forward to.

It's a blessing to be in the position we're in, but we've earned it, we've worked for it, and this is the standard for Indiana football to be in this position year in and year out now.

Q. Aiden, we hear a lot about crowd noise and how it affects offense. How does it affect defense? Maybe from the Ohio State game, what did you learn about letting just the road environment in general, forget the noise, how did you learn from that game, and what can you apply to this one?

AIDEN FISHER: That was definitely a big learning experience, a lot of people, not a lot of cheering, a lot of boos.

I think the biggest thing we learned is just to be able to keep the main thing the main thing. No fan has an impact between the white lines when it comes to Saturdays. Especially when you're in a hostile environment, you've really just got to block it out. It gets loud. It gets hostile. You're hearing a lot of different things. The biggest thing is just blocking it out.

For me on defense at away games like that, it gets a little quiet for us to figure out how the offense works. In my opinion, I love it. You go into a stadium, and you can quiet their fans. It's a really good feeling.

Q. Just want to get your thoughts on the way your defense has played overall. I think you guys are No. 1 against the rush, No. 2, 3, 4 in meaningful categories. Coach Haines is up for the Broyles Award, top assistant. Why do you think you guys -- what are the factors that have made you guys this good over the course of a whole season?

AIDEN FISHER: First it starts with Coach Haines, obviously up for the award, and I can't think of a coach more deserving than him to win the award.

But I just think it's the edge we play with. A lot of new faces this off-season, and we gelled really well. If you look at the course of the season and the continuity that everybody's got with each other, the continuity we've built, we're all meshing really well and playing good football at a time when it's good to get rolling now.

Q. You mentioned Notre Dame's run game, but especially with their quarterback also being a capable runner, can you relate that to any opponents you've played this year, or even in the past like in terms of when you guys prepare for this? Just how much of a challenge is it to stop the run game?

AIDEN FISHER: He's a great player. Really good O-line, really good backs. Quarterback is really good, receivers are solid, tight ends are really good too.

Definitely got a challenge coming up, but when you look back at the teams we've played, we've seen a lot of pocket passers, we've seen those mobile guys as well. We've just got to take into account we've got to be ready for option plays, designed quarterback run, stuff like that, just making sure we're not falling asleep if he pulls the ball.

Q. Maybe a weird question. If 10-year-old Aiden saw you in this position playing in games like this, competing for a National Championship, how would you react then? How cool is it for you to be in this position?

AIDEN FISHER: It's really a blessing. I think God has put me in this position that I'm in here, and I'm really blessed by what he's done for me in my life. I think that little kid would be smiling ear to ear and just happy to be here and making his family proud and playing for the Lord.

Q. You talked a lot about the Notre Dame run game. Your defense, the Indiana defense has been really good against the run all season long. What makes this team and your defense so good against the run?

AIDEN FISHER: I would just say the angles that we play with, the pursuit to the ball, that edge that we play with.

I've talked about it before, a lot of guys that are here right now aren't supposed to be here. They aren't big enough. They aren't fast enough. We carry that with us in the Monday walk-through to Saturday kickoff.

So it's really just being able to play together, play off each other extremely well, and just doing our assignments and playing fast.

Q. You talked about it against Ohio State, the give and take of football obviously last week against Purdue was a much better situation. How do you guys come together and keep your heads up when you've got offense having a tough day, which could happen against Notre Dame, and how do you guys just keep going on defense?

AIDEN FISHER: Yeah, offense has had an extremely impressive year, and even those games where it looks like they struggle, we've got to pick up our end of the bargain as well.

Going into a game like this, we know we're going to have to play really good, complementary football, and I have complete confidence in Kurtis and the guys up front on offense. I believe completely in them, and we're going to get the job done.

Q. Quarterbacks a lot of times get a lot of fame for how much film prep they do, but from your standpoint, how much film prep do you do? How many games back will you go? How many hours, say, in a week will you do? Do you do it at home, here? How obsessed are you with the film preparation?

AIDEN FISHER: Film is huge for me. Anything that can set me apart and get me ahead in my prep, I want to make sure I'm doing it. I think film is that for me. In a normal week, I'd probably say I go through five or six games. I've got two weeks now, so hopefully get to maybe eight, just make sure I'm getting everything.

If you look back through a season, there's some things, trick plays, little things, that will give a tell they ran here and there week 1, week 2, and maybe they think it's a good look for our defense.

I just want to make sure I'm prepared in everything I do, and I think film is a great way to do that.

Q. I know you guys are focused on winning for the sake of winning, but from the beginning of the year,

people have talked about this team was made up of guys from JMU, all these other transfers, and all that. You mentioned taking some of that with you. Do you carry that with you still all the way through the season now to this point, say these are those same guys that they were talking about that couldn't compete at this level, and now you're at the College Football Playoffs?

AIDEN FISHER: Oh, absolutely. Every week I want to prove myself, and going back to high school, going back to when I was in the transfer portal, none of these schools called me. None of these schools wanted me to come play for them. I carry that every Saturday, and next Saturday is no different. That will be with me.

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