

Indiana University Football Media Conference

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Mikail Kamara

Press Conference



Q. You're about as bullish as anyone about this team through the course of this season. But I am just curious, from your perspective, you talked about watching it come together in spring camp and different things. Was there a moment for you or a handful of moments when you looked around and whatever it was that kind of triggered it, you just thought, all that ambition, all that belief, now I know we can do it, now I know we are a team at that level, whether it was something you saw behind the scenes or the way you guys played in the game, just a moment when all that kind of slid into place?

MIKAIL KAMARA: I think it was kind of like, the way we started like interacting with each other in the locker room, I think our team chemistry like got to a point where everyone was able to talk to everyone about different things.

I think noticing that from the beginning of the year to where it's the middle of the season, I started seeing things like that. And most importantly, was seeing the way we were all able to lock in during practice, lock in during games and be very communicative with each other. Especially seeing that from the JMU perspective my freshman year and seeing different levels of chemistry, different levels of team camaraderie, seeing the way that we started to come together in the middle of the season, I think that was the biggest turning point.

Q. It feels like you manifest this, almost. How much of a manifestation or minds over matter player are you?

MIKAIL KAMARA: I'm big into manifestation but more importantly big into religion. I feel like the more and more you talk about things, the more and more you talk to God about things, those things will start to itself. That's the way I've lived my life, especially when you come from a place where you don't really see a future, right. The only way for you to see that future is to manifest it and talk to God about it, right. That's kind of always been my thing.

Q. How special will it be for you guys specifically as a defensive line group to go through this College

Football Playoff, however many games you play, how special will it be knowing you're going out with this group?

MIKAIL KAMARA: It's going to be great, especially with Coach Kuntz, him coming from Notre Dame. This is a big moment for him and then just going forward, it's big, especially us proving ourselves. Every single scout, every single beatwriter that said that our D-Line is not the best D-Line in the country.

Just continue to prove it and prove it against Notre Dame and then go out there and play against an SEC team and show it on every single level. That's something I'm excited about.

Q. Before the season, you said, look, you want to prove yourself this year. You get all this recognition. Lead the FBS in quarterback pressures. What's been the most meaningful part of that, outside of reaching the playoffs, for you personally?

MIKAIL KAMARA: Just to show all my production that I did at JMU wasn't a fluke. I think that's something important. And then especially just, really just me personally just all the work that I ever put in, really, to manifest and to show itself right in front of me, it's a blessing, and I'm forever grateful for it.

Q. When you look at Notre Dame and the way that they rough with the quarterback, what challenges does that create for you on the edge?

MIKAIL KAMARA: It definitely creates extra numbers, especially with having a laid back lead blocker with the running backs and having that extra man blocking.

But for me, I feel like their scheme is pretty simple. It's just for us to go out there and fit our gaps and do what we need to do. We've practiced it. We've seen it. It's something different but nothing that scares us at all.

Q. You've been confident from the beginning, even from the season started. Where does your own personal sense of confidence come from and where



did you feel that was the right way to express yourself as-football player?

MIKAIL KAMARA: Just going back to the other question, the confidence kind of comes from God, and then the second piece of it is the work that I put in that no one really sees.

So once you know when you work your butt off every single day, you kind of understand that not everyone works the way that I work and not everyone works the way that my teammates work. So that confidence kind of shows itself in games, show it is receive in practice, and then just continues to bubble and then once you see the results show, that confidence just skyrockets.

Q. Notre Dame very good rushing team and mobile quarterback. What are you trying to prove being one of the leaders on the defensive front?

MIKAIL KAMARA: That we are physical. That's the biggest thing. When you play against a team that wants to run their quarterback, that means they want to grind it out. This is going to be a physical ballgame to see who outlasts the other, and I know it's going to be us on top.

Q. Would you describe your play as playing with intensity, with rage, with joy? How do you approach it?

MIKAIL KAMARA: It's kind of all of the above. Depending on the situation it calls for different things, but I think it all starts for me, it's just playing this game with so much joy and passion, right. Once you start from there, you know, you run out of the tunnel, you're screaming and excited and get your team pumped up.

Those key plays, fourth and shorts, goal lines, that's when you're like, I have to must evident up and bring up whatever demons I need to attack these offensive linemen. But it starts with having fun and understanding that this game can be taken away from you at any moment. So you have to go out there and play every single play like it's your last.

Q. You got All-American honors. With guys that came from lower levels, what is the chip on their shoulder? Is it always there? Do you talk about it? What is it that drives you guys?

MIKAIL KAMARA: I think it's just something that's just there, right. I think it's something that we've all had because we've always been underdogs and now to come in this situation and still be looked at as an underdog that chip continues to grow to be honest with you.

No matter how many sacks I get, no matter how many plays Pond makes, Rourke makes, Fish makes, the chip just gets bigger and bigger every single time because you know if you have one good game -- but one bad game they are going to trip you so every single game, you've got to trip it.

Q. Coach Haines talked yesterday, he wants you guys to get northbound every play. What's the rush that you and the other D-Linemen get from being able to go straight at somebody?

MIKAIL KAMARA: It's fun. Like all the things that we work at in the pads, all the smooth pass rushes and cute wins that you see on Instagram, right, you get to go hit those and hopefully you see the highlights on ESPN.

But it's go out there and wreak havoc and make plays, right. You have a one-on-one, every single time, just go in. Simple.

Q. Can you explain your process of watching film of an opposing offensive line? Do you try to key in on you specific matchups? Try to watch the group as a whole? Find tendencies? Talk about that.

MIKAIL KAMARA: I go based off of formations, formation, tendencies, what do they like to run. In this formation are they run heavy? Are they pass heavy? Do they like gap scheme? Are they a zone scheme type of team?

You go from there, and then once you start to understand the scheme, then that's when you start to analyze the player specifically. Are they high hands? Low hands? Does this guy come off with a lot of intensity? Is he kind of more finesse? So you kind of go based off that.

And once I understand all of those aspects, then I start to understand my strengths and weaknesses based off of what he does, and I start -- try to attack his weaknesses with my strengths.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...