

Indiana University Football Media Conference

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

D'Angelo Ponds

Press Conference



Q. We've asked maybe linebackers, linemen about this, but when you face a team that runs the ball as well as Notre Dame does, what role does the secondary play, both in terms of obviously your keys and tackling and things, but especially when you are facing a defense where the quarterback is going to be as intentional about being part of that rushing attack and being basically that 11th man on the offense, even running the ball what is important for a secondary in helping get that under control?

D'ANGELO PONDS: Secondary basically just have to read their keys, stay disciplined, and don't fall asleep, basically. Just do their job.

Q. D'Angelo, I asked Elijah about his impressions of you and he said you're the best cornerback he's ever faced. What are your thoughts on his skill set?

D'ANGELO PONDS: Man, that's my guy. Man, he's the best receiver I've faced. He got me way better, especially starting from our freshman year. That's who I always wanted to go against in practice.

So he's definitely great competition. Every time I see him it's iron sharpens iron, so he definitely got me better to the point where I am now.

Q. One of the guys in here made a comment about your future and your progression going forward and having your brothers' backs and having them going forward.

D'ANGELO PONDS: My future? You said about my future?

Q. He gave you a compliment.

D'ANGELO PONDS: That's nice to know. But I had to put it on the field myself. I just continue to be my best version of myself each and every day and try to get better. I'm not really focused on the future. I'm focused on now.

Q. What have you seen as far as changes in the town, the student athletes, all the attention, people showing up? What was it like when you first got here and what's it like now? Give us a sense, the change in your eyes.

D'ANGELO PONDS: Everybody noticed the crowd changed since the first game, but even around campus things are a lot different. People walk up to me around campus and stuff like that. That wasn't happening in the first couple weeks. So that changed a lot.

And the support we just get around football changed as a whole. Yeah, it's definitely good.

Q. A lot of you guys have exuded confidence throughout the season, but one of your defensive teammates that I think has exuded it maybe most of all has been money Mikail Kamara. What's he like as a teammate and his confidence, the way he speaks so confidently about the team, kind of infectious for everybody?

D'ANGELO PONDS: He's a leader and he leads by example. And he doesn't speak that much, but you can tell he's a guy that leads by example. When I talk to him he's definitely a confident guy. He's always trying to get to the quarterback and he is just telling me to do my job. He tells me to cover for three seconds and he'll get there. So, yeah.

Q. A lot of people see Mikail as an edge rusher, imposing guy. Who is he and what is there off the field that we may not know about?

D'ANGELO PONDS: You may not know Mikail -- that's a good question. I don't know. I want to say you may not know Mikail is a family guy. He likes his family. I guess that.

Q. In a position like this, how are you balancing that it's just another game going into this versus allowing yourself to appreciate the position that you guys are in?

D'ANGELO PONDS: You have to take it like another game. You can't just do extra things. You can't be Superman. You've got to do your job. It's really another game. You've got to do your job. Don't make it too big of a game for you.

Q. You received some All-American recognition. What was your reaction to that and how do you reflect on your accomplishments this year?

D'ANGELO PONDS: It's a blessing to get noticed by everyone in the country, especially me coming out of high school. It's definitely a blessing for my talents to be noticed around the world.

Q. It's been decades since Indiana and Notre Dame have played. To have them as the opponent that's drawn, in addition to the stakes and the stage, do you sense extra excitement on campus and in the community that it's an in-state rivalry that you get to play for the first time since the early '90s?

D'ANGELO PONDS: Yeah, especially around Bloomington. You can tell people are excited and getting tickets. You can see by the ticket prices there's definitely a lot of support coming from Bloomington.

Q. You're not the only person to say iron sharpens iron with this team. How special is it to make to this point with this team?

D'ANGELO PONDS: We've been working hard since I came here in fall camp. We've been going at each other, so it's definitely time to go at other opponents and we were ready for it. I felt like we prepared well for that each and every day. Definitely we've got each other better and we were prepared well for the season.

Q. You play what's arguably one of the hardest physical positions in football. How are you able to practice every single day, getting better, and now you've become an All-American nationally?

D'ANGELO PONDS: I start with my Coach honestly. He's teaching me everything I need to know and preparing me well. Trusting my technique, that's what it is. Going out there, trusting your technique and winning your one-on-one. That's basically what I do.

Q. Guys today have talked about brotherhood and family and what this team means. What does this team mean to you specifically?

D'ANGELO PONDS: It means a lot to me. All the guys in here, even the transfers, everything, they took me in with

open arms. It definitely means a lot to me, and I definitely want to bring a National Championship here to Bloomington.

Q. Having a chip on your shoulder has kind of been a theme of this team all season. Is that something that you've carried throughout the season? And if so, how has that affected you?

D'ANGELO PONDS: I definitely had a chip on my shoulder since the beginning of the season.

When I first transferred here there was a lot of naysayers or people saying whatever. But I definitely had a chip on my shoulder the whole season and felt like I had something to prove. I knew I could do it but a lot of people said I couldn't. I definitely have a chip on my shoulder and played with a chip on my shoulder all the time.

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