

# CFP Semifinal at the Capital One Orange Bowl: Penn State vs Notre Dame

Friday, January 10, 2025  
Miami Gardens, Florida, USA  
Hard Rock Stadium

**Penn State Nittany Lions**  
**Coach James Franklin**

**Drew Allar**

**Nick Singleton**

Postgame Press Conference

Notre Dame 27, Penn State 24

**JAMES FRANKLIN:** I want to thank our fans for the support that we got all year long. It was phenomenal. Could not be more proud of these two young men that are sitting next to me and really all those guys in that locker room. We played our tails off tonight and really played our tails off all season.

Obviously we need to give Notre Dame and Marcus a ton of credit. They did a great job. We knew it was going to be a fourth quarter game, come down to a possession, and that's exactly what happened.

Give Notre Dame a ton of credit. I wish them the best of luck moving on to the National Championship. But I love every guy in that locker room. I love every person in that locker room. Proud of them. Played our tails off tonight.

Obviously we made too many mistakes that were costly. Give Notre Dame credit. We'll learn from this, and we'll be better.

**Q. Drew, can you just walk us through the interception?**

**DREW ALLAR:** Yeah, I mean, I was going through my progression, got to the backside, and honestly I was just trying to throw it at his feet but I should have just thrown it away. I felt the first two progressions not open just because of the situation we were in, but I was just trying to throw it at Amari's feet, but just didn't execute what I was trying to do.



**Q. Drew, can you evaluate your performance tonight? What worked and what they might have done to make things more difficult?**

**DREW ALLAR:** I mean, we didn't win the game so it wasn't good enough. It's plain and simple. I'll learn from it. I'll do everything in my power to get better from it and just grow from it.

**Q. Nick, just thinking about where you played at this year, I know you're a junior, but the National Championship is down here in this stadium. Will you use that as motivation to get back here for another chance?**

**NICK SINGLETON:** Yeah, really I don't even know what I'm doing next year right now, but I'm worried about being with Drew, Coach Franklin, all my teammates right now, just spending time, because again, it's not going to be the same team as last year.

Whenever that happens it happens, but right now I'm enjoying the time with my teammates.

**Q. Drew, what did this season mean for you, to kind of become the vocal guy, one of the leaders on this team, and what have you learned about yourself during that process?**

**DREW ALLAR:** I mean, I learned a lot about myself, and I think it's a credit to the coaching staff for just allowing me to be me. I think I grew a lot, on the field, off the field. Just looking forward to continuing to grow, learn more about myself, get better in any way I can, on the field, off the field. Just looking forward to the opportunity. Definitely going to learn from this and move on and take it on the chin right now.

**Q. Drew, I know 3rd down was big on both sides of the ball. What did you see them doing or why was it so hard to convert those 3rd downs tonight?**

**DREW ALLAR:** I mean, coming into the game I think they were -- I don't know what they were, but they were



definitely one of the top defenses in the nation in terms of just 3rd down conversion percentage against them, but I think it came down to just executing.

I thought we had a really good plan. I thought Coach K and the offensive staff had a really good plans for normal downs, 3rd down and red zone, but I missed a couple throws on it, so it comes down to just execution. A credit to Notre Dame for making it tough for sure, but I think if we just execute those moments that we would have put ourselves in a better position, and it starts with me hitting some of those throws.

**Q. In the second quarter especially, did they do anything to slow you down in that area in the second half?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: No. I mean, I think your point is a good one. The two biggest points of the game are, in my opinion, what you guys just brought up. 3rd down. We weren't effective enough on 3rd down.

And then the middle eight. That field goal right before the half was big. We almost had a chance to hit a fumble recovery right there off a strip sack, and then to open the second half with them going down and scoring a touchdown and us going three-and-out, those things, that was significant in the game.

You looked at Notre Dame when we study them, they're one of the better middle eight teams in the country. So were we. But that was a major factor in the game. Then on top of that, I would say big plays. Just we'd make them earn it, we'd make them earn it, we'd make them earn it, and then they'd capitalize with a big play, which is again, something that we've done really well all year long is making people earn it.

They had a good plan. Give their coaches a ton of credit. Their players made plays at specific times. But that was probably the two biggest points in the game from my perspective.

**Q. James, I know it's a tough loss and you've been asked a lot about the offense. Just your thoughts on what Abdul Carter was able to do in this game? Obviously he wasn't 100 percent but he was out there a lot and he was very disruptive and also Dani Dennis-Sutton against the run and against the pass. He made one of the most incredible plays to give you a chance to win the game. Those guys overall and your defense overall?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, those two guys are warriors and have been warriors all year long. Abdul, I'm really

proud of him. He gutted it out today, showed tremendous mental and physical toughness and was disruptive in the game, and Dani is a guy that's really done everything right since he stepped on campus, and to see him be able to make some big plays tonight at critical moments was huge. Really gave us a chance to go win that game.

Proud of our offense, proud of our defense, proud of our special teams, but the two guys that you singled out, they deserve a ton of credit, and really not just tonight, all year long.

**Q. You didn't have any completions to wide receivers tonight. What was Notre Dame doing defensively that made that so difficult?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, we tried a couple early on in the game and weren't able to convert them, tightly contested coverage. They're a man coverage team. But yeah, that's a storyline of the game. That's one of the storylines. I don't think there's any doubt about it.

But early on we had some throws, tightly contested balls that we didn't come down with. So again, give them some credit.

**Q. After the Ohio State loss your players talked about wanting another crack, needing to handle their business so they would have a chance to play late into the season. What can you say about the player-led leadership of this team and what they proved with a run like this?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah. You know, when you're talking about a 16-week season now that we have in college football, there's opportunities to bounce back from setbacks. Notre Dame was able to do it, and we were able to do it. Kept getting better as the season went on, got better, especially the second half of the season. Some big wins, some adversity that we were able to overcome, and the guys just kept battling.

I could not be prouder of the young men in that locker room and the staff and how they represented Penn State and the Big Ten all season long. They deserve a ton of credit. Obviously we would have loved an opportunity to get a win tonight and then be able to watch the game tomorrow night and figure out who our next opponent was going to be.

But again, very, very proud of our guys.

**Q. You could see the emotion obviously on Drew's face. With everything that he's done for you guys, how do you think he'll respond, and what's going to be your message to him going forward?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I mean, Drew is a passionate guy. He invested so much into his development but also to his teammates and to Penn State, and he'll handle this like he handles everything else, with a first-class approach and with an investment level that's as good as anybody in the country. His jump as a year-one starter to a year-two starter was significant. He's got a chance to take another step next year.

But he'll handle it the right way. He's hurting right now. Should be hurting. We're all hurting. This ain't easy to get in here right after the game and have a conversation after you just poured your guts out on that field and really did it all year long.

He'll handle it great. He'll be hurting tonight and he'll be hurting tomorrow and he'll hurt a little bit less the next day and so on and so forth. But he's a committed guy that's going to do it the right way, and he said it. It may not feel like it right now, but he'll learn from this and he'll be better for it, and so will we.

**Q. I know you've got a lot to unpack, but I'm just wondering how you feel. You've been doing this for a long time and you get this close, play a great game. How do you feel as the head coach?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I wanted it for the guys. I wanted it for our players. I wanted it for the staff. I wanted it for Pat Kraft and Neeli Bendapudi who have been awesome, and I've been doing this long enough to know when we have the support from our athletic director and president. That's been phenomenal, so I wanted it for them.

But most importantly, I wanted it for the guys in the locker room and the staff. As you can imagine, there's a thousand different emotions going on and feelings, but as the head coach, I've got to put on the right face for the guys in the locker room for what they need right now and for my family.

And the sun will come up tomorrow, and the one thing I want to make sure that all those guys do is walk out of that locker room with their heads high and their chests out because they have a ton to be proud of.

There's about 128 teams that would give their right arm to have the season that we just had this year. It doesn't feel that way right now, but there's a ton to be proud of.

**Q. Along those lines, when things change in this era of college football so quickly and next year things will look different than they do right now, this type of**

**season to be at this point in the year for your program, what do you think this does in the big picture for Penn State to be at this point in the season?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Well, obviously it was a tremendous experience for our guys, and they know they can play with anybody. There's a lot of young guys in that locker room who played. There's a bunch of young guys that just were able to experience it. It's an experience that they'll remember for the rest of their life, this season and how it went.

And there's going to be a ton of guys coming back for next year that are going to be hungry and are going to be motivated for more. They've gotten a taste of what this feels like and what it looks like and what it smells like.

We'll all be better for it, including myself. We'll be better from this experience because there's so many guys in that locker room that have a chance to come back and use this as fuel and experience to get back here next year and the years after that.

**Q. You talked about the guys that are coming back. There's a lot of guys that have probably played their last game for Penn State. (Audio interruption.)**

JAMES FRANKLIN: We didn't approach it that way. It was a 65 play season. Averaged 65 plays on offense, 65 plays on defense, and about 27 on special teams in a game.

And how you approach and treasure those 65 plays gives you an opportunity to play another 65 plays. That's the hard part. Like Tyler Warren, big gangly kid from Virginia that we recruited as a basketball player and was committed to another school at quarterback, and he shows up here and will go down as one of the greatest tight ends in college football history.

Pretty cool to watch his total development, graduate from Penn State, just get better. Should be the first tight end taken in the draft. Just had a phenomenal experience. I'm proud of him because he's up to like 27 words at Penn State. He hasn't really said anything.

DeWan Elise didn't want to come off the field. DeWan has been playing for us for six years and two years recruiting him and knowing all these guys' families and their moms and dads and brothers and sisters, that's the hard part.

That to me is what it's all about. I love the winning and I know how important winning is at Penn State. Trust me, that's been made very clear to me, time and time again.

But to me, it's about the guys in the locker room, and it's

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

about their development. I take so much pride in how our guys go about their business, how they grow, how they develop, academically at a time in college football where that's being challenged.

But I take a lot of pride in how our guys conduct themselves, how they carry themselves, the degrees they get, the type of men that they're going to be, the type of leaders, fathers.

Maybe I'm old school. I don't know when I became the old coach, but I did at some point. But we've got a throw-back program with throw-back uniforms and I still coach them and love them. I guess like the dinosaur I've become at some point. I don't know when that happened.

But to me, it's about the guys. It's about the guys and their development. I want them to get drafted as high as possible. I understand the transfer portal is a part of college football now and NIL is a part of college football and we'll embrace those things, too, but I want this experience to be so much more than a transactional experience. I want it to be transformational.

Again, that's what it's all about for me.

**Q. Your first scoring drive you guys got down to the 4 but had to settle for a field goal. What went wrong that you guys weren't able to punch it in there, because you guys were able to punch it in when you got close to the end zone later in the game?**

JAMES FRANKLIN: Well, I don't need to talk about -- I'm not going to talk about specifically obviously what happened on that play, but first of all, you've got to give Notre Dame a ton of credit. Al Golden, Penn State grad, you've got to give him a ton of credit. We watched them on tape. We had so much appreciation for how they played defense, and they make you earn it, and we had some opportunities that we didn't capitalize on.

And we'll go back and watch the tape and struggle with it and be upset because there's things that we could have done better.

But again, the game of football is about execution. You call your defense, you call your offense, and whoever executes it better on the specific play call, they have success on that play, and the more plays you put together like that, the better. They've got a ton of talented guys on scholarship, too, just like we do, and we came up just a few seconds and a few inches shorter than they did.

But to your point, I mean, I think in games like this at this point of the season, everybody wants to pick out a specific

play. There's probably eight to 12 plays in that game that if we could have found a way to make a few more plays in that game, we're that close. It's a game of inches.

I'm not going to call out or talk about specific plays or specific players because there's a ton of plays that we're going to look back on from that game that we could have did better and that we should have did better and that we could have called better.

But it starts with giving Notre Dame credit. That's a good football team. We lost to a good football team that's led by a good man. I don't know Marcus very well, but he's a class act after the game. One of my good friends, Gerard Parker worked for him, and he thinks he's the best, thinks he's a great guy.

If you're going to lose to somebody -- I don't want to lose to anybody, to be honest with you, but you've got to give Notre Dame credit, and I know Marcus will do a phenomenal job, and I'm happy for him and their university.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.