

CFP Semifinal at the Rose Bowl Game presented by Capital One: Alabama vs Notre Dame

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Arlington, Texas, USA

Patrick Surtain II

Alabama Crimson Tide

THE MODERATOR: We're back and we're going to start the players' portion. We're here with Patrick Surtain.

Q. Patrick, what does it mean to you being back in the College Football Playoffs?

PATRICK SURTAIN: It means a lot to come back here reach our destination, to keep on building the standard here.

Q. Wondering, what you may have missed this season away from football, with all the protocols and things that needed to be restricted because of COVID, missed friends, missed family, anything in particular that you missed that you would normally have gotten out of a season?

PATRICK SURTAIN: Missed the fans. What is college football without fans? But we had some fans in the stadium but it's still not the same atmosphere. That's what I probably missed.

Q. What exactly is the iceberg and how do you get yourself mentally prepared to meet that challenge?

PATRICK SURTAIN: The iceberg is definitely -- is something where you've got ice cold in your veins, you're ice blooded. And when you're on the island you make your opponents feel your iceberg.

Q. I was just curious about, Coach Saban has a great reputation for teaching guys in the secondary. Can you give me some specific, a couple key technique things that he's taught you and that he's harping on about that you have gotten better at?

PATRICK SURTAIN: He's very technique, fundamental in the press coverage, especially he's very hands on about using your hands on the line, being comfortable with your



technique and also being physical at the point of attack. He also harps about that as well.

Q. I know that John Metchie is on the other side, but what does he bring to the team on and off the field?

PATRICK SURTAIN: He brings a lot of talent on the field, of course. But he's also a very hard-working guy. After practice he gets on the dregs (phonetic), works on his routes, does whatever it takes for get him to be great. You see it on the field each and every week. He can only keep improving and getting better.

Q. Those practices in the days after Ole Miss game, what did you guys learn the most from that game, and how did Coach Golding lead you through that?

PATRICK SURTAIN: It humbled us a lot. We learned that we must be on the same page. We learned that that game, we should learn from that game and learn from our mistakes, learn from the things that we didn't do good on. And throughout the course of the season we've gotten better and we've improved on those certain things, on those fundamental techniques, even communicating defensive play calls and just flying around to the ball. As a unit we put our heads high and kept on working.

Q. Wondering what you've seen from Notre Dame on tape, and specifically what Ian Book might do that might give you guys some problems?

PATRICK SURTAIN: It all starts with their O line. They've got a good front of the O line. They're very physical. They're very oriented. They've got a great quarterback who makes plays for them and they've got great perimeter players. And they're a very well-balanced offense.

Q. With some of the modern tight ends playing a lot more outside, Pitts being one of them, just how much time do you spend each week preparing for tight ends relative to wide receivers, as a cornerback?

PATRICK SURTAIN: Tight ends, I believe this week tight ends are very physical. They're good, pass catchers as well. But they're also very key to their success in their run



game. They're very balanced. And you have to look for that as a corner, their tendencies and what they like to do.

Q. Talk about the Notre Dame running game and wide receivers, how good are they? If you can't catch up to them they can just take off and just explode.

PATRICK SURTAIN: They've got a great running game. They're very balanced, as I should say. They're also (indiscernible) and one-cut, quick-to-the-line guys. You also have to tackle them, rally to them, because they're very physical.

Their receivers are great at the point of attack. They use their body well to gain advantage on corners and they high-point the ball, which helps their quarterback a lot.

Q. There's a lot of reasons for recruits to come to Alabama, a championship program. Playing for Nick Saban, who develops guys to the NFL. What was the one key factor for you to come to Alabama?

PATRICK SURTAIN: Just to get developed and become the best version of myself each and every day. We work hard here, but also off the field you learn a lot from this program which helps you in life and succeeding in life.

Q. Pro Football Focus named you the best press corner in the country. Wonder what that meant to you, and how hard is that to train that way to get that way when you know that one mistake and a guy can be past you?

PATRICK SURTAIN: I'm very thankful for that mention and for the honor, but it all starts with the work in the offseason and the work you put in leading up to the season, that's what helps you get those accolades.

But those accolades come from team success as well. So just thankful for the team and the coaches for helping me prepare and be the best player I can be.

Q. To that point, if you could speak to -- you mentioned the offseason and no spring and now really have gone through this gauntlet since July. How different has it been on your body and how differently have you had to take this with no spring?

PATRICK SURTAIN: It's a very different process leading to this season. There's so much uncertainty, but you've got to understand that you've got to work hard and keep understanding your goals for the season. And as I mentioned before, you've got to work even harder in the offseason for a season like this.