

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

Friday, January 1, 2021
Arlington, Texas, USA

Mac Jones
Miller Forristall
DeVonta Smith
Chris Owens
Alabama Crimson Tide

Alabama 31, Notre Dame 14

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to this 2021 College Football Playoff Semifinal at the Rose Bowl Presented by Capital One news conference featuring the Alabama student-athletes, Miller Forristall, quarterback Mac Jones, offensive lineman Chris Owens, and wide receiver DeVonta Smith.

We will open it up for questions.

Q. Mac, last few teams that you have played dropped a lot of guys into coverage. We've also seen this offense be explosive in shootouts. Is there a comfort that you can play any style of offense the defense wants to play?

MAC JONES: Yeah, that's just the basic adage of football, is take what the defense gives you. We have a great offensive line. We have plenty of time to take shots down field and then plenty of time to hit the quick game stuff to our receivers, tight ends, and running backs. Really Sark dials it up, and we make the plays for him.

Q. Mac, when they have so much possession of the ball, how do you as an offense stay so sharp?

MAC JONES: I mean, we definitely have a lot to clean up. We got to take advantage of every play and play each play play by play. A team like that, that's what they kind of wanted to do, is keep us off the field. I think they probably did a good job. I haven't looked at how many drives we have or anything like that.



We have to take advantage of those third-and-longs we had that we didn't convert. That's on me, have to stick to my reads and find somebody to get the ball to.

Q. DeVonta, I wanted to ask you, obviously winning the game MVP is a big deal. Tell us how you're feeling about getting that award, your performance tonight as a whole.

DEVONTA SMITH: Well, my performance, I wouldn't be able to do it without my quarterback, offensive line, running backs, just the whole team. Defense getting me prepared for the game today. I wouldn't be able to do none of it without them.

Q. DeVonta, obviously you had a great game today. You set a few records as far as the Rose Bowl, the College Football Playoff. What goes through your mind after you hear all the accomplishments that especially in this special year you've been having?

DEVONTA SMITH: Just coming into practice every day, working hard. I truly believe if you work hard, you're going to get the results that you want.

Q. Chris and Miller, Chris, you were playing in your hometown. How did you feel you did today? Did you have an extra motivation playing in front of your hometown fans? Miller, did you like lining up outside to catch those passes?

CHRIS OWENS: I think the extra motivation came from having the opportunity to play in the Playoffs. I mean, being home is great, but no matter where we play, it's my job to play as well as I can, which I feel like I can play better.

There's going to be things to clean up, but just getting the victory in the Playoffs is hard enough. Appreciate that victory and move on to next week and get ready for it.

MILLER FORRISTALL: Yeah, I always appreciate catching a pass or two (laughter). It was fun when they let me split out, play a little bit more receiver. A nice wrinkle in



the offense. Whatever it is, I just want to do my job.

Q. For all four of you. What was your reaction on Najee's hurdle?

MILLER FORRISTALL: I don't know why I'm surprised every time he does it because I've been seeing it for three years. You're just like, geez. I play with some really good players and I'm thankful.

MAC JONES: Like Miller said, he's been doing that for years. At this point just kind of what he does. He makes plays, so that's what he does.

CHRIS OWENS: Just like they said, we expect it from him. He's athletic. He can get a lot of things done. When he did it, my first thought was just go chase the ball, get ready for the next play because you know he's going to run for a long time.

DEVONTA SMITH: That's what he do on the regular. That's just something that we see normally.

Q. Mac and DeVonta, now that the game is over, now you can think about what's going to happen Tuesday. What are your thoughts as you look to that ceremony, and how much does it mean to be a part of? How much thought have you given or will you give to an acceptance speech in terms of writing it in the next few days?

MAC JONES: That's a rat poison question. I don't know what to tell you. We were really focused on this game, which I'm really proud everybody just locking into this. We've won a lot of games, a lot of people are going to get awards. It's just part of the team effort.

Then obviously the most important thing is not letting that be a distraction for our next game because the next game is the most important game. That's where we want to be. We're finally here. We got to score one more point than the other team. That's kind of our goal.

DEVONTA SMITH: Whatever happens happens. I mean, I'm looking forward to the next game.

Q. Mac and Chris, this was the Rose Bowl, but it wasn't in the Rose Bowl. How interesting was that moment for you to play in a game called the Rose Bowl in Texas? The postgame celebration, what was that like, not having a huge crowd out there?

CHRIS OWENS: There hasn't been a huge crowd all season. 2020-2021 has been an interesting year. I mean, as long as we can play in the Playoffs, have a game, that's

all that matters. It doesn't matter what the venue is or what's the name of it, whatever it is. We just want to play.

MAC JONES: The only cool thing was obviously our families got to come, so we're really grateful for that. Other than that, like Chris said, play ball, hundred yards along, 53 and a third wide, just do what we do.

Q. Mac, talk about the offense. It's amazing that we're talking about 31 points being the lowest point total of the season. What were some of the struggles out there offensively?

MAC JONES: Yeah, I mean, we kind of protected the lead a little bit. Obviously we have to do a better job of just playing the plays, not look at the scoreboard.

But really that just starts with me. Stay aggressive, do what the offensive coordinator and Sark tells us to do. So really just getting ready for the next game. We got to make improvements, find out what we did bad, find out what we did good, just grow off that.

Q. Chris, you played a lot of football here. Since Landon's injury, what are the things he has shared with you to have you ready for this one?

CHRIS OWENS: Me and Landon are really close. We talk all the time. All season, whether I was playing tackle, backing him up at center, we always talk about different techniques and stuff.

One of the things he told me was to be myself, make sure I'm getting everybody on the same page. I think he helped me out a lot throughout this week just looking at different things they did on defense, giving me some of the tips of what's helped him be successful.

Q. Mac and DeVonta, typically the Heisman ceremony, you'd have your family there, it would be a big celebration. Do you plan on having family in town for that or too much of a distraction with the game coming up?

MAC JONES: I don't know. You'll have to ask my family. I don't really know what they're doing. I know they're here right now. They got to watch us, a lot of players' families got to watch us tonight.

I'm just happy that they're here. They're obviously going to be at the next game. We're looking forward to that.

DEVONTA SMITH: Just get in and get out. I'm not trying to have too many people around. Just trying to make it to the next game.

Q. Mac, another dominant game for you. How much easier does it make playing football when you're with guys to the left and right of you and guys like Najee Harris?

MAC JONES: These guys up here did a great job playing today. I've always said this, they make me look a lot better than I am. I'm not very athletic. I just try to get the ball to the right people. We have the best offense in the country in our mind. But we have to prove that every week and every snap.

You can't base things off the past. We got to fix what we got to fix and move on.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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