

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Alabama vs Indiana

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Indiana Hoosiers Elijah Sarratt Press Conference



Q. What is your favorite Cignetti saying?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Oh, favorite saying? Put me on the spot, first one. I don't know if I have a favorite saying from him to be honest. Just his -- whatever he -- he jokes with you but yells at you at the same time. If you do something wrong, he like screams at you but gives you a little wink after.

I guess on his (indiscernible.)

Q. I love that. Do you watch fan edits of yourself?

ELIJAH SARRATT: I'll see them on TikTok and I'll watch them sometimes, but I try to skip them. I definitely do see -- there are some good ones out there that I've reposted on TikTok.

Q. You don't want your algorithm messed up.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah.

Q. When you hear Rose Bowl, what's the first thing this comes to mind?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Just legendary. I've been saying all week I just think of that Alabama-Michigan game a couple years ago. That's the most recent memory of watching a whole game, seeing how crazy that game was, whole Rose Bowl situation.

Q. If you could make a Rose Bowl parade float, what would it be?

ELIJAH SARRATT: A bison, yeah.

Q. I love that. All right, final question for you: How does Indiana compare to LA?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Two totally different spectrums. I love Bloomington, but LA is a different tier, you know what I mean?

Q. Makes sense. Thank you.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Have a good one.

Q. Elijah, you believed in the staff's success from James Madison to Indiana. Now you're No. 1, playing in the Rose Bowl. How rewarding is it to see that success pay off?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Man, super rewarding. A lot of hard work to be in this moment, so just being here this morning, seeing all these events and stuff, it's a blessing to be here for sure.

We out a lot of work in, but still got a lot more work to do.

Q. How would you describe your junior journey from St. Francis all the way to the Rose Bowl?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah, it's crazy. It's testament to me not giving up. I had a bunch of people around me who helped push me, didn't let me give up, and a lot of coaches and a lot players that gave me a chance to go out there and show my talent.

Q. A more fun one for you. Morning workout or night workout?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Night workout. I'm a night owl.

Q. Okay. Signature shoe or award named after you?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Oh, signature shoe. I love shoes.

Q. Favorite road trip snack?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Some Reese's. I love me some Reese's, and then maybe Doritos or something.

Q. So extra healthy.



ELIJAH SARRATT: Sometimes, sometimes.

Q. Song that gets your mind right?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Anything Rauw/Raul (phonetic). Even in the morning for pre-game. I love me Rauw/Raul, Lil Durk, or Young Boy. Those.

Q. Your most used emoji?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Laughing emoji. I feel like that's almost everybody.

Q. But the tears, the skull, the crying, which one? There is several.

ELIJAH SARRATT: The regular laugh with the two tears coming out, that one.

Q. Describe the Rose Bowl in one word?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Legendary.

Q. If you could steal a skill from one of your teammates who would it be and what would it be?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Oh, that's a good one right there. Omar Cooper's explosive position.

Q. And do you have in any (indiscernible)?

ELIJAH SARRATT: No shopping in January.

Q. I'm inspired. Thank you for that one. Appreciate you.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Have a good one.

Q. Have you been able to reflect at all with the JMU guys? Two years ago playing at a G5 school and here you are at the Rose Bowl.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah, honestly not too much just because we been so in the moment going on. But not too long ago that me and the JMU guys were in the locker room talking, man, it's crazy. Next year -- I don't know how many going to be left, like maybe one or two they most.

So it's crazy just seeing us all here right now and where we came from before. We haven't really sat down and reflected too much.

Q. What would you say to your ten-year-old self knowing you're playing in the College Football Playoff, chance to go to the semis...

ELIJAH SARRATT: Man, you're close. The dreams that you're dreaming, the things that you're wishing, they're going to come true soon. Just stay true to yourself and continue to keep on working.

Q. If you look at the season so far, what's been your favorite part?

ELIJAH SARRATT: That's a good question. Favorite part? Of course winning is always my favorite part. Some of the road wins, going to Iowa, Oregon, those are super fun. I always love playing in away territory, that hostile environment, so those moments are probably my most favorite so far.

Q. Talk about Cignetti's influence.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah, he comes to work every single day and preaches, he demands excellence out of us. He talks to us every day about eliminating the clutter and staying focused and stacking things day by day.

We really believe what he says and he stays true to what he says. He's a great coach and great leader of men.

Q. Is there a moment that stands out in the season where you (indiscernible.) Oh, man, this is real?

ELIJAH SARRATT: I've always known it was real since my first time meeting him at JMU. I understood what he was about and he was about his business. So just seeing how he operates through his daily process, you know it's real. Like he comes to work every single day so I go to the come to work every single day.

Q. Thank you.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yes, sir. Have a good one.

Q. What is your why? What's the thing that drives you to perform at the highest level?

ELIJAH SARRATT: My family 100%. FTF is something I got tatted on me. It means for the family and it means I do everything for them. Without them I wouldn't be here. I want to be able to buy a house for my family eventually, God willing, so they're my rock and everything I do is through them.

Q. When it's an unconventional, what goes into some of the mental preparation when you're here a lot earlier, all the media stuff?

ELIJAH SARRATT: We understand we're going to have a



bunch of extracurriculars and stuff, but we know the main goal. We're not treating it like a bowl game. We're treating it like it's a playoff game, which it is. We want to just continue to stack days. We are trying to keep it as regular as we can through a game week, so just have great days leading up to that game. That's all it is.

Q. As a team how do you approach when people talk about strength of schedule what Alabama might have played versus what you guys might have played?

ELIJAH SARRATT: To be honest, as a group we don't talk about that too much at all. We just got to go out there and play who we play. People are going to talk good or bad about us regardless, so it's always about focusing on us and doing what we can do to win games.

Q. Thank you.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yes, sir. Have a good one.

Q. My mom is a St. Francis college grad.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Really?

Q. Yeah, yeah. So you get to Indiana. When did you realize you had something special at Indiana?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah, honestly I knew we had a good group going through the spring and summer workouts. You really don't know until the bullets start flying and you're in the game and stuff.

So as the season progresses we had like two games before UCLA. It was really that first big time game here at the UCLA where I was like, okay, we got a pretty good squad. We just all got to continue to do what we do.

Then the season went on and we continued to get better as the season went, so really that UCLA game was when I really realized we had a pretty good team.

Q. You know Indiana has never been on this level before.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah.

Q. What's it like seeing you guys take this program to where it is?

ELIJAH SARRATT: It's a blessing really just to be here with the guys. We put a lot of work in in the offseason, during the season. So to be here competing with the team and a chance to win the Rose Bowl is pretty cool.

Q. You guys don't think the moment is too big? Have you guys talked about the moment and being grounded and not letting the moment overwhelm you?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah, we're treating this like it's any other game. We understand it's the Rose Bowl, it's a big game, but we're treating it like any other game. Just got to go out there and execute and do what we do.

Q. Coach has been here before. Has he said anything about what this place is like?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Nah, look, we expect a crazy atmosphere just because it's the Rose Bowl. He's been keeping things the same, preaching the same things he's been preaching the all: Just to focus on us.

Q. All right. Congratulations.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Thank you.

Q. What's your best explanation for somebody for why all this is happening? Why has it gone like this?

ELIJAH SARRATT: A bunch of -- a community that really bought in is what I'll say, from the fans to the staff people to the coaches to the players, everybody just buying in and going to work every single day and trying to stack days to be better than they were the next day is really what built this.

This doesn't happen without talent and hard work. We have both of that and mainly the hard work. You can have all the talent you want, but if you're not putting that time in every single day in the weight room, on film, on the field, then you're not going to have that success out there on the field.

So really a testament to the work my work put in, my coaching staff put in, and testament to the fans supporting us.

Q. We hear all the time from Indiana players. (Regarding details.)

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah.

Q. You have an example of one?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Every single day what Coach Shany, receiving coach, offensive coordinator. I was split squad, so if I'm supposed to line up at the top of the numbers and I'm about a yard away from that he's going to scream at me to be at the top of the numbers. Little details like that I feel like makes us successful on the field.

Coaches do a lot of film study to make sure we're in the right spot. Those are the details right there I would say.

Q. It's that much down to...(indiscernible.)

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah, really, really is.

Q. Thank you.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yes, sir. Have a good one.

Q. You and Fernando have had an incredible year, connection this year. Is there any look or signal that he give you at the line of scrimmage that tells you, okay, be ready; the ball is coming?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Not a signal or anything. Of course we call certain plays so I know I have a chance to get the ball, and sometimes I'll give him -- like presnaps I'll try to look at him like, hey, man I want the ball right here. Sometimes he sees me; sometimes he don't. I think he knows when he wants to give me the ball, and I also know when he wants to give me the ball, too. So we have a good feel for each other.

Q. How did you guys build that connection?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Just the amount of work we put in in the offseason. Started with spring ball, going through the spring ball situation and some workouts. We had a lot of 7-on-7 sessions and then just continue to build through camp rep by rep.

It doesn't happen overnight. This is my fourth quarterback I've had in my college career, so I kind of understand it's ups and downs to all this. It's the amount of reps that you're building and the communication between each other.

Q. (No microphone.) Take us through what you were thinking. Take us back.

ELIJAH SARRATT: Yeah, so before playing that, presnap I had a -- it's called a slot fade. Just a fade from the No. 2 receiver --

Q. (No microphone.)

ELIJAH SARRATT: No, no, you're good. Yeah, so starting presnap I knew I had -- they called a slot fade for me which is a fade from the No. 2 receiver. I knew I had a chance of being man to man. At first the corner, started off with the press and I'm like, all right, I may have a chance to get it still.

And then I seen that (indiscernible) pressed up on me, and then if the corner follows you from outside going to the slot, it's usually 9 times out of 10 man to man. So I knew I had a great chance to get the ball.

I knew I just had to get a good release off the line. I won off the line. He was still playing some pretty good defense. He was on me. But Fernando threw a perfect ball, O-line was blocking great, and then I went up and made the play for the guys, man. That's what I pride myself in doing.

Q. Do you have a favorite saying from coach?

ELIJAH SARRATT: Favorite saying? Someone asked me that. I don't have a specific saying. Sometimes I think it's funny. He'll scream at you and try to give you a wink or smirk like, hey, I still like you or something long those lines.

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