

# CFP Semifinal

## Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl:

### Georgia vs Ohio State

Saturday, December 31, 2022

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

### Ohio State Buckeyes

### Ryan Day

### C.J. Stroud

### Zach Harrison

### Postgame Press Conference



Georgia - 42, Ohio State - 41

THE MODERATOR: Coach Day, we'll take an opening statement from you, and we'll go right into questions.

RYAN DAY: Not much to start with other than the fact that I thought our team came out and swung and played hard in this game, came up short. It came down to one play. It wasn't just the last play. There were a lot of plays in the game that you wish you had back as coaches and players. That's what happens in a game like this.

But I told the guys I'm proud of the way they played. I'm proud of the way they competed. For the older guys, the seniors, proud of what they've done for the program. For the younger guys, the guys that are coming back, it's an opportunity to learn and grow and see what it takes to win in the CFP.

**Q. C.J., on that last drive, it was just do whatever it takes, right? You took off running several times there in the fourth quarter. Just what were you thinking there near the end of that drive and stuff obviously to try to set up the field goal?**

C.J. STROUD: First of all, I want to give all praise to my Lord and Savior, my Lord Jesus Christ. Just amazing to be out there in that atmosphere and have the opportunity to play my brothers again.

Yeah. I just try to leave it all on the line. I honestly -- games like this, it's a loss for words when it comes down to one play. Honestly, it doesn't come down to one play, so

many things that line up to those plays.

The last drive, man, I seen how much time we had with timeouts, and I knew we could do it. I tried my hardest to get us down here. I got to maybe split somebody else, make another move, just try to get a little more, but I tried my hardest.

I think I left my heart out on that field. Of course, it's something that's heavy on the heart. It's going to be tough, but I'd rather -- I don't want to go out there with anybody else. I love my teammates so much. We put everything on the line, and I would never want to do it with anybody else.

**Q. Real quick, Marvin Harrison, Jr., was he ruled out protocol-wise? Concussion protocol, couldn't go back?**

C.J. STROUD: Yeah.

**Q. And a lot of people are going to be asking about the first down call after C.J. got down to the 31 yard line, I think it was a run to Hayden. What were you all thinking there?**

RYAN DAY: Two timeouts left adding that into the field goal. If we didn't have two timeouts left, they were going zero. If you split one, you could come out the back end there. Two timeouts left, any couple yards right there could add to the field goal, and that was the idea. Didn't quite execute it as well as we would like to, but I wouldn't change that call.

C.J. STROUD: It was a good call, great call.

**Q. Ryan, obviously a game of attrition. Both teams lost significant players in this game. And then in the third quarter, when you lose Marvin, he was in such a rhythm, he and C.J. together. Very difficult to guard. When he comes out of the game, did it change things for you? Did it change the way you were calling**



**plays? Just a pretty big adjustment, I would imagine.**

RYAN DAY: We lost Cade early in the game, which really sent us into a little tailspin in a couple of groupings. I thought Xavier and Mitch and even Joe stepping in did a nice job with something we had to work through all season.

To say that losing Marv didn't have an impact on the game, it absolutely did. What this guy did and the way he competed in the second half with all those things coming at him, I just can't say enough. I'm so proud of the way he played.

He's not the only one, but he's sitting right here, and he's the quarterback of this team. Just the way he attacked this game, I couldn't be any prouder of the way he did that. Like you said, we were missing some guys out there, and we were trying to figure it out. On the biggest stage, he played one of his best games, in my opinion.

**Q. Did you get an explanation for them picking up the targeting call, and what did you make of that?**

RYAN DAY: I was told that it was not targeting, that he didn't take a shot to the head, which is hard -- I didn't see it, so I don't know. But to get a concussion and not get hit in the head, I'd have to see the replay.

And they said that it happened after he got hit, but I'd have to take a look at the video. I wasn't able to see the replay.

**Q. C.J., what you were hoping to do offensively in this game, was this what you thought you guys could do? How well do you feel this offense played overall for this game?**

C.J. STROUD: I mean, I think, at the end of the day, we had the mindset of we were going to let everything hang. We were going to go out and fight as hard as we can and swing as hard as we can. I felt we did that.

We were very efficient in the pass game. In the run game, started rolling a little bit, got a lot of positive runs. I felt we were very efficient. Just a couple of those drives where I maybe missed a read or protection broke down and I got sacked, whatever the case may be, maybe those were the reasons why we lost. No one really knows, man.

We got to get on the film and see what went on, but I'm proud of my guys. I can't say too much about how we fought. Like it was time and time and time again that we kept swinging, kept fighting, kept swinging, kept fighting, and it is what it is.

Of course you're going to have some regrets on certain

plays. Wish you did this, wish you did that. At the end of the day, man, it's a man in the arena. It's hard to do what we do. It's hard, but it's a blessing at the same time. You got to be joyful in these moments.

Of course I'm not sitting here smiling and happy, but God is still amazing to me. Still blesses me, blesses Coach, blesses Zach in so many ways. Of course you want to win things like this, and this means a lot to us. I mean, me and Coach Day, man, like we get up early every morning on the phone constantly, whatever we can do to win and put smiles on people's faces.

It's tough. My mom, she goes through a lot. Coach Day's wife goes through a lot. My family, people from home. But I wouldn't regret anything. I wouldn't take anything back. I'm blessed to have a coach like Coach Day. I'm blessed to have my teammates that I have. And I wouldn't want to go out there and do it with anybody else.

**Q. Zach, tonight there were times when it looked like the defense just had a grip on those guys. Basically, it slipped away and stuff. What are your thoughts now as you reflect defensively about the way the defense played tonight?**

ZACH HARRISON: Yeah. 42 points, we can't let up 42 points in a game like that, especially with the offense playing the way it is, but as C.J. said, the plan was to go out there and let it all out, and we definitely did that. You can't say we didn't play hard. There's definitely some plays we definitely could have went back, could have executed better on, could have made tackles and been in a better position.

But we played hard, and I'm proud of my guys, and I love my guys for doing that.

**Q. Ryan, we understand there's no moral victories here. You're here to win, and that's what matters. You had talked all these weeks about swinging. These guys are using that phrase, to come out swinging and take your shot.**

In that way, how do you feel about this team that you didn't win, but did you swing? Did you take the shot that you wanted this team to take?

RYAN DAY: Yeah. Like you said, it doesn't mean anything if you don't win though. And I think that's probably what hurts the most is that, when you put that much work and that much energy and that much time into something and you're right there and you just -- you don't get the victory.

This is a performance business, and you win or you lose, and we lost the game. That's just what hurts to our core. And that's what it is. We're here to win, and it didn't happen.

That being said, yeah, we came out. Guys were flying around. We were competing. In the end, we came up short. So we'll have to figure out how to get it fixed in the off-season so that when we're here again, we're on top when it comes to it.

This is the way that we need to play football. You can see the energy and passion on the sideline, and you can see the way guys were playing physical. I mean, listen, that's a good team. Let's call it for what it is there. They are defending national champs, undefeated. They're a good team. But I don't think there's one guy in that locker room that doesn't feel like we shouldn't have won the game.

Again, that's a part of this thing that is going to sit in our stomachs for a long time.

**Q. Ryan, already a lot of people praising your game plan, the efficiency. Can you share some of the keys, some of the things you saw in the Georgia defense that enabled you to be that effective tonight?**

RYAN DAY: I mean, I could tell you we had this guy right here. They're all good plays when you have good players. We worked hard.

I'll say this -- and I'm not just saying this because he's right here, but the work that was put in over the last month by C.J., just inputting the game plan, get in front of the team, the leadership, all of our guys. I thought the receivers, I thought the O-line was unbelievable this week, just the way that they worked.

Everybody had some input on this game plan. I'll say it. Keenan Bailey, one of our assistants, went into a study. We had 1,500 reps over the last month. 1,500 reps going into this game. 1,500 reps in bowl practice to get ready for this game plan. I thought our guys executed really well at times. Again, there were some calls that I absolutely wish I had back.

In the end, game plans are only so good by the guys who can put it on the field.

C.J. STROUD: I'll be his guy. It is a great game plan. I mean, without the right plays, you can't make plays. We all have jobs. Coach Day did a helluva job. Coach Wilson did a helluva job. Coach Keys did a hell of a job. Coach Dennis, Coach Fitch, Coach Alford, Coach Frye. So many moving pieces, even the defensive coaches did a helluva

job.

RYAN DAY: Coach Hart too.

C.J. STROUD: Coach Hart. Really everybody. We really were dialed in on what we were going to do, and I felt like we did that. Coach Day called a helluva game. Our game plan was superb.

Like I said, we had 1,500 reps. When we were out there, it was kind of like you knew what was going to happen. When you're playing like that, you're playing free. You're having fun. I think that was one of the most fun games I ever played in my life. That probably was the most fun game I ever played in my life.

It just sucks that it has to come down like that, but God's plan, it's something you don't really understand in the moment. It's something that you really won't understand maybe ever, but He thinks greater than us. He knows greater than us, and He does greater than us. That was his plan for that to happen.

Georgia's defense, offense, they fought too. Helluva team, great team. Coach Smart, Coach Muschamp, D.C., did a helluva job. But I think we should have won the game of course. I definitely think we should have won the game.

Just got to lick our wounds and keep going. Coach Day did a helluva job, man. His leadership -- even though people would talk and talk and do this and do that, he just keeps showing up. When you see a man like that, that's a true man, a man in the arena.

Really everybody on our team, we didn't splinter. We didn't turn eye to eye or point fingers when we lost. We owned our mistakes and kept swinging, like our culture. I wouldn't want to play for anybody else, with anybody else.

Coach Day, helluva coach.

**Q. After that, Ryan, I hate to bring this up, but the bottom line is what really bit you all in the end was deep pass, the passing and stuff, just like a few other times this year, but does that bug you to your core a little bit?**

RYAN DAY: It's a team loss, and I thought the defense played gritty at times. They got that huge interception. They fought. They kept grinding. They had the fourth down call come back. They got the negative play. They forced a field goal.

So, again, all we were talking about was just swinging as hard as we can. We did give up some explosive plays

again. We did. And it was something that we spent a lot of time talking about is avoiding the big play. I think the difference was, in this game, it didn't demoralize us in this game. We kept swinging and fighting, and we just kept going at it.

But call it for what it is. If we're going to win these games, we can't give up those big explosive plays. They're hard to come back from, but there was still a lot of positive things out there.

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