

Alabama Head Coach Nick Saban Talks Jaylen Waddle Update, Preparation For Ohio State In Thursday Zoom



Alabama head coach Nick Saban spoke to the media over Zoom call Thursday to discuss the current status of wide receiver Jaylen Waddle, as well as his past experiences with Ohio State and how he is preparing to take on the Buckeyes in the national championship on Monday.

- Saban opened his press conference by congratulating wide receiver Devonta Smith for winning the Heisman Trophy, while also congratulating quarterback Mac Jones and running back Najee Harris for being finalists.
- On the status of Waddle, who returned to practice this week after suffering an ankle injury back in October: "I know there will probably be questions about Waddle. He has been able to practice some. His status for the game is still relatively up in the air and it will probably be a game-day decision."
- When asked if this season is a success simply because college football as a whole made it to the national championship through COVID-19, Saban said "we're pleased with the way this season has gone and the number of games we've been able to play, the players having the opportunity to compete and now to culminate it with actually a playoff and a championship game."
- Saban said that most of the preparation for Ohio State comes from inside the Alabama program: "We do the best job we can preparing internally. I think we obviously watch other teams play against them and try to analyze the strategy that they have on offense, defense, and special teams."
- On that same subject, though, Saban said "sometimes if you know somebody from another team that played them, you ask some advice and maybe get some knowledge and experience, because I don't think there's any question about the fact that when you play a team every year, you develop a little better history for what you would do against them as opposed to when you just play a team once sort of every four or five years."
- On what has made head coach Ryan Day so successful so fast: "He does a great job of coaching. He's a very good offensive sort of play caller. He's got a great scheme on offense. Certainly does a great job of coaching his players to execute that scheme."
- More on Day: "I think he's taken advantage of a great opportunity and certainly done an outstanding job with it, and they've got one of the best teams in the country, no doubt about that."
- Saban on what he remembers from his experiences coaching in the state of Ohio: "I think Ohio is

one of the great states in the United States when it comes to football, football tradition, really good high school football, lots of good football players. There's still a lot of places in Ohio where the school is sort of the center of the community and there's a lot of great support and fans for football programs."

- Saban was asked about the rumored discussions about moving the national championship game back to Jan. 18. He said that he thinks "there were some issues relative to COVID, and there were discussions as to whether it was fair to continue or to move the game back." He also said that he think there "would have been some difficult management issues if we would have moved the game back," including school starting next week in Alabama and Jan. 18 being the date where players have to decide if they enter into the 2021 NFL Draft or no.
- "The whole timing of the whole thing would have been a tough management. But I would have put player safety on either team as the most important factor in this decision."

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