

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Oregon vs Indiana

Monday, January 5, 2026

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Oregon Ducks

Dillon Thieneman

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What did the first game do in terms of maybe a reset or reminder of what the standard is here?

DILLON THIENEMAN: Yeah, kind of just do what you said, it was a reset. Just showed us we got to bring it all four quarters. Can't let up, let the foot off the gas.

I think it was a good reminder to play to our standard and finish things.

Q. Where do you feel this team in the secondary, defensively, has grown and improved since that game?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I think just our communication and working on the same page. Like there's some other plays in that first game that we played against them where we were kind of hurting ourselves, getting out of the gap, not having proper fits. I think we've cleaned a lot of that stuff up, so excited to get back.

Q. You guys threw a lot of different coverages at Tech that you hadn't done a lot of or at all during the season. How do you think that affected that quarterback, and what does changing coverages at this time of the season do to confuse a quarterback, potentially this week as well?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I think it's a special part of our defense, is that we can switch up what we're playing each game that we come to.

Teams don't really know what to expect, so we play different cover fours, different this, different that. I think it just keeps teams on their toes and makes them react instead of, like, be prepared.



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Q. What are the factors that go into beating a team twice? What makes it hard to beat a team twice? What happens?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I'd say, yeah, a lot of the habits and patterns. Teams really try to break that. You kind of get a feel for how an offensive coordinator might call a game or how players might run their routes or do certain things.

It really just comes to who can adapt and who can just play off of it.

Q. You have obviously had some pretty great defensive performances this season. What you were able to do last week, it felt like something new. How important was it to have a game like that defensively? Do you feel like you're where you want to be heading into this matchup right now?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I do think we are where we want to be. I know Lanning, coming into the Playoffs, he did a lot of research into, like, March Madness, how they have their big playoff, how you want to peak at the right time. I think as a defense, we're starting to hit that peak.

Q. You being a state of Indiana guy, what will it mean to go against the Hoosiers on Friday? You have those family connections to Purdue. Is it hard for you to see Indiana University having the success they've had over the last two years?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I mean, props to them for what they've done. I definitely have my own kind of feelings about the game and that team and stuff, so...

Excited to get out there and play.

Q. Having gone up against their wide receivers recently this season, what can you say about the receiving corps of Indiana, what that test was like?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I'd say they're very good all around. They got Sarratt, the slot, then 80 also starting to



come on later in the season. They got some size. They got some length. They can push you down the field.

They're good at kind of just hitting all areas of the zone. I think Mendoza is a very efficient passer. He can scramble when he needs to.

Q. A lot has been made about the calendar. You transferred. What is the hardest thing as a transfer, I don't mean football, but academically, when you're trying to adjust to all of that stuff on the fly?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I think just the speed at what happens. Like, the transfer portal is like recruiting out of high school, but it just happens within a one- to two-week process. Speed of the flow, you're changing environments really quickly. Being able to, I guess, adapt.

Q. Peyton and Zach have played throughout the course of the season. If you have to lean on them a bit more in this game, what do they each bring to the table?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I'm very confident in them. They've been preparing all season like they've been out there. I trust both their abilities. They've shown in practice what they can do. They prepare the right way. They get out there. I trust them to do their job.

Q. You're a little different team than the first meetings. Do you feel things...

DILLON THIENEMAN: We've both grown as the season has gone on. As you play more games, play the coverages more, just play some more snaps, you get more comfortable. Then teams start to change throughout the season. As I said earlier, peaking at the right time. I think this will be a really good matchup.

Q. A lot was made about Brandon's production, rightfully so, in the Orange Bowl. But can you speak to Flowers, playing next to him, how he's helping you.

DILLON THIENEMAN: Yeah, me and him, we're roommates. The night before games when we go travel, we always room together. Me and him just talking and communicating. We're talking off the field, we're talking on the field. Just being able to play off him, trust him on the other side of the field is a huge factor. We play off each other, we communicate. I trust him to have my back. He trusts me to have his.

Q. Do you have any connections on that side of things with IU as far as former teammates or friends? What has it been like as an in-state guy seeing IU come to

prominence?

DILLON THIENEMAN: Yeah, I definitely know a few guys on that team. Just coming from Purdue, I think you know how I feel about them (smiling). Don't need to say it.

Q. For you as a transfer, you came to Oregon with a purpose of being in moments and spots like this. Knowing obviously you're one win away from being in the national championship game, what does it mean to you to be here in this moment?

DILLON THIENEMAN: I'd say it's very special. It is a moment I hoped for when I first came here. Just to see it come true, it's very special. I'm just extremely grateful to be in this position.

Q. Is there anything before the first matchup that either lived with you a lot the days thereafter or now two and a half months later? Anything specific?

DILLON THIENEMAN: Nothing too specific. Just the loss overall. I think it stuck with everyone. Just a reminder of how we need to play. If we don't bring it, any team can beat us in season. Just now going to post-season, it's win or go home.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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