

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Justin Wilcox

Postgame Media Conference



California Golden Bears 27, Stanford 15

Q. Your reaction to winning the game and remaining Bowl eligible?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Huge win. Obviously for the team goals, but also the Cal community, the players, student body, everybody. I mean, I don't know that there's a better 30 minutes to an hour in the year than when you're able to win the Big Game and retain The Axe. It's just a great feeling and I want the guys to enjoy it. For some of them, it's their first experience in the Big Game and they are understanding how much it means. It's a huge win on many levels.

Q. Can you talk about Fernando, first touchdown in his career, took a big shot and kept coming back?

JUSTIN WILCOX: He's a tough, tough kid. He took a big shot. They did all the tests. He came up. I think Ben Finley did a nice job, we finished that drive with a touchdown. Fernando jogged back up and just ready to go. "I'm going back in the game."

He's a tough kid. He's going to get better and better. He's still growing as a football player, but man, he is a competitor. He's a genuine guy, and he has the respect of his teammates.

Q. Inaudible -- what words best would describe his performance --

JUSTIN WILCOX: Oh, man, it's a big day. Dare you say, big-game hero. He's going to be in the conversation. Trond, from a year ago to right now, has made as big a jump as anybody. He cares deeply about football and the team. He's a competitive guy. It matters to him, and it's great to see a guy like that that puts in all that work.

He walked on from Park City, Utah, walked on, and was not highly recruited by any means, but just goes to show if you commit yourself to it and you have some talent, that you can make this football thing work. So I'm really proud

of him and a bunch of other guys.

Q. Jaydn drove the ball, 36, 37, a lot more than he's ever carried it before. Talk about him being able to handle that?

JUSTIN WILCOX: We knew we wanted to be able to get Jaydn the ball. He was ready for it. He welcomes that. So caught 36 and then -- excuse me, rushed it 36 times and caught a couple I think. You know, he's a talented guy. We want to make sure Jaydn touches the ball.

So when you just look at the number of plays we ran, in about half the time, he's getting it. So he makes a lot of things happen, and again, just went out there and competed like crazy. So really proud of him.

Q. How much does it help Fernando to have someone like that that he can trust?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, it's big. Fernando, the receivers, the O-line, who really start the whole thing, those guys battled today, too. It was a little sloppy at times for us. First half, especially, we were shooting ourselves in the foot. They kept playing and kept competing. Kind of like how this year has gone. Hasn't always gone our way, but the guys stayed with it and you have a guy like Jaydn, you know if you get him the ball enough, good things are going to happen.

Q. Held Stanford to 300 yards, 15 points --

JUSTIN WILCOX: I thought they played pretty dang well. I don't know if there was any one individual. I think Lu Hearn made some plays on the ball; it was great to see competing one-on-one. We got some pressure on them. Didn't sack them maybe as much. Got a couple opportunities to sack them but they got away from us.

Overall, I thought that group played real well. There weren't many busts. They hit the deep ball on us. We had it matched up. Just a good, fast receiver and the guy threw a good ball. But really other than that, held them to a field goal attempt. They have got an excellent, elite field goal kicker but I was pleased with the effort of the defense, and



the defensive coaches did a great job getting those guys ready.

Q. Fernando on the sideline; what transpired in those five to ten minutes?

JUSTIN WILCOX: The trainers take him and it's totally the trainers' call at that point, doctors. There's a bunch of them that go all their assessments and run the tests they need to run. They are talking with the player. We are not involved in that in any way.

Basically when all those tests are done, the trainer will come and tell us whether the player is available or not. So they came up and said, hey, he's up, and immediately after that, he comes jogging over, it's not lobbying but making it known that he was able to play.

Q. The final -- can you talk about that?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, this Pac 12 ending, comes up each week. We are going to continue to play the Big Game and we are all thankful for that. It just feels great to come out victorious and keep The Axe. It means so much, just watch the reaction of the people. I've said it for however many years I've been here. The reaction of the fans in the student body and the people who have associated with Cal after the game, there's nothing like it.

Q. What was challenging about tonight?

JUSTIN WILCOX: It's always going to be a challenge in rivalry games. So this is the 12th game. I think 1892 was the first one. There was a few years it wasn't played for different reasons in the early 1900s, and 55 of those 126 have been decided by (indiscernible) so nearly half, all right. So each and every time, it's going to be a battle, and we knew it would be. We knew they are going to fight. They have got good coaches and they have got good schemes and good players. We knew that coming in.

What's most important is what you do during the week to give yourself a chance to come out and play well, and at the same time I want them to learn about the Big Game and the history of it, and so we talk about all of it.

Q. What did you guys do to defend as well as you guys did?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Collective effort: Rushing, covering, playing zone, playing man, playing split safety, playing single safety. We didn't kind of line up and do one thing. Proud of the entire defense and defensive staff.

Again, it's a tough offense. Troy Taylor is a really good

offensive coach, so we knew they would have some issue plays for us, which they did.

But again, I go back to the guys competing and winning some of those one-on-one pass rush coverages. Really talented players, so I'm really proud of our guys for stepping up to the challenge.

Q. Cade Uluave is coming off best Player of the Week. Do you have a sense of when he'll be back?

JUSTIN WILCOX: I don't know yet. We're hopeful he'll be back as soon as possible. He's a good football player. He's around the ball a lot. He tackled. He tips the ball. I think he almost had an interception today. We'll hopefully get Cade back as soon as possible.

Q. Late in the game, early in the fourth quarter, you had fourth and seven, I'm sure you're weighing field goal versus going for it. How was the decision made to go for it?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, big play. We were kind of at one of those spots on the field where you're in between, whether you're going to kick a field goal, a long field goal, whether you want to go for it.

Punting at that point, it's probably not worth the yardage, and so great job on the offense hanging in there. Great protection, turn getting open. That's a huge play of the game. You're right, that's going to be probably one of the three or four that you circle.

I think we were really in a gray area, and I kind of had a yard line in my mind of where we would kick a field goal. And if we weren't, we were going to go for it. We actually ended up going backwards from the play before, and we ended up going for it and getting it. Great job by the O-line with QB and Turan for making that play.

Q. Can you talk about next week and Bowl eligibility to go to UCLA, and what will that be like?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Well, we've got to carry this momentum. I know the energy is going to be great on Monday. I think we know what's at stake and we know UCLA is going to be a really good team. We have seen them on tape enough. Hell of a coach. We know it's going to be a challenge down there, so we have to have a great week of practice and try to get as many guys healthy as we possibly can and go down there and play our best football. We'll need our best football to win.

Q. How excited are you to be in this position considering you had to win three in a row and now



you've got two of them?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Yeah, I think it speaks to the character of the guys on the team. That was a tough stretch. There were some games that didn't go the way that we probably obviously wanted them to go or felt like they could have gone had we done a few things a little bit better.

But the guys, we kept coaching them and we kind of talking about them all along. We are not going to feel sorry for ourselves. We are going to continue to hold you to high standards, and they did the same of themselves. There was no division offense, defense, special teams, this position, that position. Those guys played together, they compete and they practice and came to meetings, nobody showing up late.

U really appreciate them, and they are the reason. Because every coach would probably tell you the same thing about what you've got to do in order to finish strong, but they are the ones that have done it, and I'm really proud of them for that.

Q. How big a deal would it be if this team got a Bowl bid?

JUSTIN WILCOX: Big deal. Real big deal. That's one of our goals is winning the Bowl game. It also -- I mean, there's a number of reasons. So we are well aware of what's at stake, and I know there's going to be great energy and we've got, like I said before, we've got to go out and play our best football.

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