

# University of Oregon Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 21, 2020  
Eugene, Oregon, USA

## Mario Cristobal

Postgame Press Conference



Oregon - 38, UCLA - 35

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Hard fought game. Obviously, proud of the way our guys found a way to win along the way, certainly a lot of things we need to do better and would have liked to have done better, while at the same time found a way to come up in the last, I believe, five drives, four really critical stops by the defense. So all in all, lots to clean up, but come out with a W. Questions, please.

**Q. A lot of things to talk about. I'm going to bring one up first is that, just it hurts your heart when you see one of your kids go down with an injury and hope that Noah Sewell is okay. I know there's nothing really to say about the injury. But can you let us know that he is okay. We saw him come back out on the field afterwards.**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, we got to run some more tests on him. I feel like it's got a chance where he'll be okay. But we'll, that's all I can comment on right now until we run some further things. But, and again, I want to stay along the policy we don't disclose all this stuff, but hopeful that things aren't as bad as they originally seemed.

**Q. A game of momentum swings and I guess it starts with turnovers. You were minus five coming into this game but turnovers were a huge difference in this game for you, weren't they?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Yeah, they sure were. They finally came. A couple went in our favor. Certainly, we lost one the other way as well that resulted in seven points right away. But our defense has been really working hard at it and we ended up, it ended up paying dividends today a little bit.

**Q. Getting Hunter Kampmoyer back on the field made a difference today too. He made some big important plays for you.**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Yeah, he really did. Hunter is conscientious, tough, hardworking guy, unbelievable teammate and leader, just really important guy to this football team. And having him out there today, he provided a spark and made some critical plays and some critical blocks as well. So really happy to have him back.

**Q. Jordan Happle had a night tonight, none more important than at the end of the half that interception and that score. He was impressive. I think he led the team in tackles tonight.**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, it was a really important acquisition in the off-season, as it showed tonight. He's been in Coach Avalos's system, so knows it really well. He just came in and worked his tail off and has fit in really well. And at the end of the half there with the pressure we got, the ball popping up like it did, not only picking it off, but running it back because, you know, we're out of time, so it's score or nothing, and he found a way just to out-race the running back and get into the end zone and was a monstrous play in this football game.

**Q. New guys adding too, Devon Williams, a really nice night for you, just another weapon that steps up.**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Devon is, I probably haven't been harder on anybody as hard as I've been on Devon and I think for reasons where I think it's the ultimate sign of respect when you really challenge someone. And his last two weeks of practice, everyone has noticed what a tremendous job he has done pushing himself, learning the system, and practicing and working really, really hard and found some opportunities to make some contested catches that ended up being huge plays as well. So really proud of Devon and I really feel like he's another guy that's just kind of getting going now. We feel like he's going to be an excellent football player.

**Q. Your offensive line in the first couple of ball games came together so well for a group of young guys that didn't play a lot together. Tonight they struggled. 88 yards rushing. UCLA just kind of seemed like they stacked that box in there and just cut down that run.**

## **What was with that run game tonight?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: I think first and foremost you got to give credit to UCLA. They have changed schematically significantly from what they have done before, and some of the stuff they did we didn't handle as well as we're used to handling. They have a couple really good players. And credit to them. We did some things that we hadn't quite done before, but at the same time, again, the difficulty of blocking some of the movements and pressures when we were caught in certain plays, they showed up in negative plays today. We got to do, I got to do a better job setting them up for success.

**Q. Following up on what you're saying about Devon Williams. In what ways have you had to challenge him over the past couple weeks, and how are you harder on him?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, he's just, he's got, when a guy had as that much ability, when they're blessed with that kind of talent, anything less than getting the very best out of them is kind of cheating the gift. So we really, he's done a great job just attacking practices and attacking processes, especially the last two weeks, just constantly, just consistently has just been improving, improving, improving, but these last two weeks it really popped. It was obvious in practice that he was due. He was due for a big performance and certainly came through. It came out tonight.

**Q. Just following up on Jordan Happle's play. How did that change the mood in the locker room and just the momentum of the game where it was going back and forth?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, we knew where we were in a battle, and anytime you can gain points, like we did last game, right, right before the half, you find a way to gain seven points. Momentum is the biggest monster in college football and when you get it, you want to keep it and never give it back. This thing went back and forth a few times tonight, but that certainly just brought a huge just momentum boost to our guys. Credit to him. Credit to the defense. I mean, the pressure, the pick itself and running it back, huge play in the game.

**Q. Probably up until Thursday or Friday the expectation was it was going to be Thompson Robinson for UCLA at quarterback. Difficulty of kind of having to make that change and prepare for Chase Griffin, and then just what did he do out there that allowed them to hang in this game?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, difficulty is the unknown. You

don't know, you're probably preparing for two different game plans. Some things showed up that we had seen and others that we hadn't seen before. And some other stuff will show up on film as well that will be like, well, okay, well, that's something, that's a wrinkle that we just hadn't seen or they hadn't done with their other quarterback. But a credit to them, their staff, and Chase Griffin. He did a really, really nice job running their offense.

**Q. A lot of the areas that you guys were really strong at these past two games, whether it was pass protection, running offense, you mentioned at halftime some just weren't good enough. What was it that -- you mentioned even in the game week leading up to it -- about the stunts and the stems that were giving you trouble years ago at Wazzu -- what was it that continued to make it a difficulty and a challenge tonight?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, sometimes we just ran right into it. Sometimes we felt like we had an advantage and if you're off by a little bit, you don't get your hat playside, the looper will kind of fall into the read of the back. And some of those things are, some of the more intricate details, I won't bore you with. And then some other times they just, they made some really good plays. That's the bottom line. They have a good front. 92 is a tremendous football player and I really believe he'll play on Sundays. He's a really good player. But we were out of sync. We were a little bit out of sync, and like we told those guys, Look, when you win, you don't apologize for winning, you don't get down for winning, you just recognize where you got to get better. And we weren't at our very best today, and we know that we have to improve certain things. And we weren't, we weren't as stout as we had been, but I don't blame the players. I blame that completely on me. We'll find a way to prepare them better so that we come out with a better result in certain schemes.

**Q. You've mentioned how young this football team is. There was a lot of pressure situations in this game. What do you feel like you learned about your squad?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: I learned we got to start fast. I mean, we have proven that in the second half we're really good. We've come out of halftime and we're getting after it. We practice. We practice the fourth quarter a lot. It's actually part of practice. But we got to start faster. I got to make sure that I just dig deep and just keep just finding ways, get with our staff, all together, all of us as an organization, to just give our guys the best chance to be successful. I mean, these guys, yeah, they're super young, we got some older guys that have been around, and they grind, you know, and they really, they have really worked hard at protocol, at practice, at preparing in some

challenging times, and we want to make sure we give them our best. So I think this team is resilient. I know it's resilient. I know it's tough. I know it wants to be great and I know that whatever you throw at them they will respond. So knowing those things, look forward to getting on this film with them and improving and coming out tomorrow to practice and take another step towards our next opportunity.

**Q. It seemed like in the first two games that the running offense just got better and better and got more downhill as the game went on. That wasn't the case today. Fourth quarter, only like two yards per carry. What was the difference?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, a couple things. We're looking at loaded boxes and if I could calculate pressure off the top of my head, it's high. It's up there. I know on first down it was almost a hundred percent at some point in time, on P and 10, first and 10. So it's an outnumbered box and the quarterback's going to have to run a little bit sometimes. But also, there were some really big play opportunities in the passing game. It's one or the other. And at times we took advantage of that and we hit some big plays, dropped a couple passes that could have kept some drives going, but certainly there were some things in the passing game that opened up because of the loaded boxes, because of the extra man committed to the run and bringing pressure. So sometimes you have to do that. But to your point, we really didn't do as good of a job running the ball. That's obvious. We take a lot of pride in that, so obviously, inside, man, it's painful. But it's something that, look forward to just looking in the mirror, getting back to work on and improving to give our guys the best chance.

**Q. UCLA pretty tough on the run game. Did they do anything that surprised you? I know you made second half adjustments, been pretty good this year. Did you try to make some adjustments to the running game and did they counter with anything? How did that work?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: No, they were doing what we thought they would do, on film. They executed at times better than we thought. And then sometimes, it just -- when you run a, some of your zone schemes against a bear front, you know, with three down inside covered, when it involves TNs, NTs, two- and three-man stunts inside, it's going to be hit or miss, it's going to be feast or famine. Which in turn, again, opens up some of the one-on-one matches outside, matchups outside, some of the nickel, strong safety fire, opens up some vertical opportunities in the passing game as well. And we hit some of those, and you have to do that sometimes because the middle is just going to be clogged up. But we

have blocked it better. I believe we will block it better, so. But credit to them. They did a nice job. But they did what, the stuff that we thought they would do.

**Q. Obviously you would prefer to play a little more cleanly and win more comfortably, but could there be a silver lining of having a game where you need to make plays at the end to determine it and for the defense, which was up and down to come out and make those plays at the end that put it away?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Well, the lesson I think always is, again, if it's not good enough in, in victory, it's, or in defeat, it's not good enough in victory either. But I just want to echo the fact that, look, I look around the country and I look at some of the perennial powers that are winless or won one or two games and I look at the fact that we're 3-0 right now. We were certainly never going to apologize for winning. Is there a silver lining in a win like that? To have the defense out there and to have to come up with a play is huge, right? I mean, the pressure's on, you got to find a way to stop them, they had just hit a big play, we had a personal foul, they were in our territory, a field goal could send it into overtime, they found a way to get it done. And then, at the same time, looking at so many guys stepping up in roles and now making plays. And you mentioned earlier, Devon Williams, who has, really just proud of the fact that he has worked hard and I want to encourage him right here on this to just continue grinding, grinding, because sky's the limit for this guy. Sky's the limit. And was happy to see him have the success he had today, certainly made the difference in the game.

**Q. In the first couple games you had big games from D.J. Johnson in the passing game and today you got Hunter Kampmoyer back. Just, one, how important is it to have Hunter back and what do you think of your tight end guys going forward?**

MARIO CRISTOBAL: Those guys are really good football players. They're tough, they're physical, they're athletic. We felt that there was some stuff in 12 personnel that we could take advantage of, sometimes we did, sometimes it didn't work out. But having both those guys and then Cam McCormick is getting healthy and he's getting, he's really, really close and took some full speed reps this week, so we feel like our tight end group is going to be back and we feel it's one of the best around.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports....