

Rose Bowl Game presented by Capital One Venture X: Ohio State vs Utah

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Pasadena, California, USA

Utah Utes

Cameron Rising

Press Conference



Q. A lot of Ohio State fans, they've only had an opportunity to see a little bit of you play, maybe both of the Oregon games because there was a rooting interest in there wanting to see Oregon go down. How would you kind of describe yourself as a player? I know everybody is like team first, team first, I don't want to talk about the individual, but talk about the individual. How do you describe yourself?

CAMERON RISING: I don't know. Just a football player really. Just go out there. Whatever the coaches give me, just try to take advantage of it. That's what I would say pretty much, just play off the coaches really.

Q. I've gone in and watched a lot of your guys' games. You're an effective runner when you need to run. Do you enjoy running the ball or is it just kind of one of those things that you do it when it needs to be done?

CAMERON RISING: I don't mind running the ball whenever I need to. If it's a designed QB run, I'll do it. No problem, no issue. It's something that I like to do, but I don't want to major in doing it, if you know what I mean.

Q. Do you feel like teams need to spot you maybe?

CAMERON RISING: It's always a smart idea if they do.

Q. This is Utah's first crack at the Rose Bowl in program history. What's the feeling about being here?

CAMERON RISING: It's a great experience. I'm loving it so far right now and just really enjoying being here. We've got a job to do at the end of the week, and I am just looking forward to get the opportunity to do it.

Q. Is it maybe a little sweeter to go up against maybe one of those national name brands in Ohio State?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. That's something we always wanted to achieve to get to one of those levels. When you play against a great team like Ohio State, you get the opportunity to do that.

Q. When you pop in Ohio State's defensive tape, it's kind of been a little bit of an up-and-down season for the Buckeyes. What stands out to you?

CAMERON RISING: They do a great job disguising coverages, and they have great athletes from top to bottom. I'm excited to play them really.

Q. What are your Rose Bowl memories maybe of growing up? It's one of those national games, it doesn't matter if you're from Maine or California or somewhere in between, you've seen this game.

CAMERON RISING: Yeah. I think the best Rose Bowl game probably ever played, USC and Texas. That was really my first experience and just kind of made me fall in love with the game. It's amazing to be here now really.

Q. When people talk about the Utah offense in Big Ten country, they say that it's a physical offense. Is that a proper --

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. That's what we try to make a focal point on each and every week, out-physicaling the other team and really making sure they feel our presence.

Q. What does Tavion bring to this team?

CAMERON RISING: He's a beast, a workhorse, a guy that's going to put his shoulder down and really try to fight for the extra yards. He just knows how to go really. He brings that kind of dog mentality really.

Q. Watched on the telecast, they talked about the start of the season. You were named the captain though you weren't the starter. You come in a couple weeks in. How did you keep that positive attitude and



everything? Obviously, you had to be disappointed with not getting the nod to start the year.

CAMERON RISING: Of course.

Q. But things seemed to work out?

CAMERON RISING: Sure. You've just got to have unwavering belief in your ability and trust the team and trust the coaches and know that it may not be what you want, but it's the situation you have, and you've got to make the most of what you have.

Q. The physicality of the Utah offense reminds a lot of Ohio State fans that maybe what they saw out of Michigan. No two teams are carbon copies of one another. You've probably had no reason to watch a lot of Michigan tape.

CAMERON RISING: Watched some games throughout the year of course.

Q. Do you think there are some similarities?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah. I think they're a very physical team, and I think they do a great job of really controlling the game. I think they have probably one of the best offenses in the nation with a lot of just highly talented guys. Their defense is right there with the offense.

Yeah, I'm just excited to get going and can't wait for Saturday.

Q. It seems like the tickets are going to really kind of tilt toward Utah. So not only playing in your first Rose Bowl, but it may be much more of a home game than under normal circumstances.

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. Somebody told me we may have more fans in the crowd than a typical home game. I'm just excited to see that and can't wait to see the sea of red again.

Q. How do you go from being super excited to be in this Rose Bowl to now getting prepared to win it?

CAMERON RISING: You've just got to focus on it and take it day by day and make sure you know how to enjoy the times that they give us here and really focus on football when it's there in your face.

Q. Ohio State admittedly wanted to be in a bigger bowl, but you guys are here. What's the excitement level of being in the Rose Bowl, being a Southern California kid?

CAMERON RISING: It's something I always dreamed of playing in ever since I watched USC and Texas back in '06. I'm just happy to be here. I know my family's loving it, and I'm excited for the game.

Q. The season's been outstanding for you. How did you go from a guy who started last year, got hurt, got beat out for the job this year, and now you're the first team all Pac quarterback?

CAMERON RISING: I've got a great team around me. They do a great job of giving me support and believing in me. That gives me some belief and not really wavering in that belief and just focus on the task at hand at all times really.

Q. Did you always feel like you were that guy? That's what Britain said. He said you always were the guy.

CAMERON RISING: I guess so, yeah. If he said it, then yeah, for sure.

Q. Cam, how cool is it to go into a game with fun, for lack of a better word? You know teams aren't used to seeing an offense that has three tight ends like you guys. You get to kind of mess with them like that? Is it one of fun aspects of having three tight ends?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, we've got a three-headed monster in the tight end room. They do a great job controlling the game. I think they can block with the best of them really. It's like having an extension of the line really at times because they do such a good job. A lot of teams don't really see that.

We've only had I think less than 15 snaps of 13 personnel we had to watch on tape. A lot of them are short yardage situations, not a first down typical situation. Yeah, it's fun, and I'm excited to see how they adjust to it.

Q. You're saying 15 for the whole season?

CAMERON RISING: I'm not sure exactly the number, but there's about 15 in our cut-ups that we have.

Q. From Ohio State?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, like going against 13 personnel.

Q. Is there a prototypical Utah tight end or is one of the strengths that they're all a little bit different?

CAMERON RISING: All a little bit different. That's the

special thing about the group there. They have guys that are better route runners, better deep threats, and better blocking. They just do a great job putting them in the best opportunities for themselves.

Q. When you think back to your first year at Utah, in hindsight how important was the experience of being up in the box during games?

CAMERON RISING: I think it just showed me how Coach Lud thinks and kind of how he wants to call the game and go about the game and really how to control the ball and do all that. Just that process kind of showed me what football is more about from that standpoint and has slowed it down really for me.

Q. Do you remember whose idea that was?

CAMERON RISING: That was actually Coach Lud and I think Coach Whit a little together.

Q. During that time, did you learn about not just football, but about quarterbacking that you didn't know before?

CAMERON RISING: I would say just kind of go on how structured you have to be in the box really from a play calling standpoint. Then once you kind of know that structure, you get to see the structure and learn from it. So then you kind of know what call is going to be coming before you get it. That slows down the game.

Q. How has your relationship with him grown over three seasons?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. I love Coach Lud. He's a great coach. I'm just happy to have him really. He showed me so much about football, and I just really appreciate him. Throughout the years, it's just gotten better and more trust has been built. It's still getting better to this day.

Q. We're in Hollywood. I've got to ask, what's your Hollywood ending to this season?

CAMERON RISING: A Rose Bowl victory, of course. Nothing will be better than that, of course.

Q. Are you riding off into the sunset or scoring the winning touchdown?

CAMERON RISING: I have no idea. We're going to play the game and find out how it goes and go from there.

Q. You've talked about how dynamic your offense is. With a guy like Tavion, what does he bring to this?

Does he add any confidence when you're back there?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. When you can give a guy the ball and watch him go really, it's always a fun time. We have a great five guys blocking for him, and it makes it easier for him. He knows how to hit those holes. It's easy when you're giving him a ball on a third and six and he can go get it and stuff like that. Just a lot of confidence there in him in whatever he's doing.

Q. When did you know that Tavion was going to be as impactful force as he was on the game?

CAMERON RISING: Probably when he first got on campus. I saw him, and he went and did a workout and just saw him move and do everything with his thighs.

I thought he was going to be special. Once I saw him put on the pads, I knew for sure. So that was probably early in fall camp right there.

Q. That was a padded practice?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, padded practice, I got to see him really go and get some contact going.

Q. There was a period where he had some struggles with the ball coming out. How did you see him get through that?

CAMERON RISING: Pretty much the whole team told him that we believe in you and we know that you can do this. Coach has made it a standpoint to really always work ball security with him. He took ownership in doing that, and that's why he became so much better with it.

Q. Do you know if he's planning to come back next year?

CAMERON RISING: I'll leave that up to him.

Q. As you look at this Ohio State defense, what is it that you feel that's something as a quarterback you're going to have to solve going into that game?

CAMERON RISING: Just really focus on their disguises and making sure that I can see through their disguises and make sure I know, have an idea of what the coverage is. Even if I don't, being able to adjust on the flip and being ready for whatever they bring.

Q. Did you guys go back and look at film from the whole season because obviously they changed things?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. We watched a little early film, but that's a long time ago. There's a lot of things that go on throughout the season. Yeah, just focusing on those last few games and really seeing what they did and focusing on those and taking advantage of that.

Q. What are your impressions of their defensive line?

CAMERON RISING: They've got some great athletes up front. I'm looking forward to going against them. I know I've got a lot of confidence in the O-line. I'm ready for it. I know they are too.

Q. What do you think Ohio State's defense does the best? What's the biggest challenge that they present for an offense?

CAMERON RISING: Probably disguising their coverages and disguising their pressures and all that. They make it hard for the quarterback to see any subtle differences really.

Q. What do you think has been the key for you guys to really kind of hit your stride and get better and better as the season's progressed?

CAMERON RISING: Just really believing in each other and really focusing on the goal and the task at hand at all times. No matter what arises, just focusing on the next thing up. That's what's made us successful.

Q. With you guys running the ball as well as you are, how much does that help you in your job as a quarterback?

CAMERON RISING: It makes it a world easier when you give them the ball and they can take off and go and get yards. It makes it easier because you're not putting the ball in the air, and it's also making ball security a little easier in those situations. Yeah, it's always easier when you don't have to let go of the ball really.

Q. How have you seen Tavion specifically grow over the course of this season?

CAMERON RISING: For one, I think ball security. Then I think just that run to win mentality and always focusing on getting those extra yards, I think that's where he's made a lot of growth.

Q. What makes him a special running back in your eyes?

CAMERON RISING: I think he's got that dog mentality that you have to have to be a different level of running back,

and he has that. It's something you can't really teach. Either you've got it or you don't, and that's what makes him special.

Q. You mentioned how Ohio State disguises coverages. Explain to somebody who doesn't play quarterback. What do you have to do to kind of combat that as an offense?

CAMERON RISING: If it's a pass situation, you have to be ready to adjust on the fly. Just because you may not see somebody coming, somebody bringing some pressure off the side or even the safeties just rotating the one high from a two high, stuff like that. Even seeing the corners press, stuff like that.

You just have to focus on the little things and just be ready to adjust on the flip and not always expect what you see. That's why it makes it harder for the offense.

Q. So when you look at Ohio State, have you compared them to any other team that you've seen maybe disguise coverages? Where do they stack up in terms of other competition?

CAMERON RISING: I haven't really compared them to anybody else. I kind of try and keep it organic and just take it for what it is and see how it plays out, yeah.

Q. Now that you're here at the Rose Bowl, considering the season that you and your team have had, coming to the Rose Bowl for the first time, how much motivation does that just alone give you coming into the game on Saturday?

CAMERON RISING: We just want to prove ourselves and make sure it's a great game and make sure that we put what we want to put on tape.

Q. Does playing Ohio State give you any extra edge playing a team that was in the National Championship last year and with the success they've had?

CAMERON RISING: It just kind of makes us know that we have to kick it up a notch and come ready to play because that is a great football team. We're excited for it.

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