

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

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Pasadena, California, USA

Ohio State Buckeyes

Thayer Munford

Press Conference



presented by



VENTURE X

Q. What's it going to be like playing left tackle?

THAYER MUNFORD: You know, I feel like -- I think I feel at home, like the warm play everybody wants to hype up, because I feel like it's so important for me. Not really, but it works -- it makes me get better at the position that I used to play, and I just need to get better at it. I'm just happy that I am back at left tackle right now, and just can't wait for this game.

Q. I know you talked moving to left guard about the versatility. Where do you see yourself at the next level?

THAYER MUNFORD: To be honest. I see myself at the next level wherever I'm at. That could be right tackle, right guard, left guard, left tackle. It really doesn't matter where I'm at. As long as I can get on the field and play and try and see where I can fit in most, I think I'll be better wherever I'm at. It's going to take time, but I need to know what I'm doing.

Q. Obviously throughout the season you had to move around even in games sometimes. To kind of know where you're going to play, assuming everything goes to plan, to know you're going to be at one spot for a whole game, how is that going to feel, especially with a position you're pretty familiar with?

THAYER MUNFORD: You know what, I feel pretty good about it, instead of moving position to position during the game, of course. It will be nice to know that I can practice that one position for that week, then come game time I know I'm going to be doing that position, not just left guard, left tackle throughout the whole game.

Q. Is there any adjustment for you going back to left tackle? Are there things you have to make sure you're doing as you go from left guard to left tackle or is it

like riding a bike?

THAYER MUNFORD: It's a little bit of things I've got to do differently, but also it's like kind of second nature to me, but I need to get my hips more looser than guard because guard you've got to be uptight. You've got to take on like a 325-pound man every play, so you've got to get used to that.

Q. Do the seniors talk at all about last game stuff? Do you reminisce? Curious what you feel on a game like this.

THAYER MUNFORD: Some of it's all right, let's talk about I can't go out like this, like the loss to Michigan, of course. Some of us are just like, yeah, we've got to get this taste out of our mouth, go in here, beat Utah and call it a day, so we leave on a good note, not just a loss to Michigan. But this game is going to be a very important game on both teams. Their team has got to go out on a big note, we need to go out on a big note, too, so I think it's going to be a great game.

Q. I know some guys on defense yesterday said they want to be more physical. How do you become more physical?

THAYER MUNFORD: Yeah, practice against it every day. Going into the Michigan game we were getting a lot of slights of not being physical enough, and it's like, we are physical, but we've got to show it, though. That's what we've got to do is got to show it. I firmly believe that we are going to show our physicality up front, and that's where everybody was saying like that was our weak point of the game against the team up north. We'll be ready. We'll be physical.

Q. Has Matt been the guy next to you now?

THAYER MUNFORD: Yeah. He'll be the guy next to me now for my last game, of course, but I'm happy that he is because he's been through a lot his past four years, and he deserves it.



Q. Is it crazy to say your last game? I know you kind of went through it last year before coming back, but it's been a pretty long journey for you.

THAYER MUNFORD: You know, it is crazy. It is my last game, and it's like a bittersweet moment for me because I'm just ready to leave but also at the same time I'm really not ready to leave because I love these guys. I love everything about my teammates and stuff. I just don't want to leave yet, but I've got to because I've got to move on, do my own thing, get in the NFL. But I'm always going to be a team-first person.

Q. When you look at Utah on film, what stands out about Devin Lloyd?

THAYER MUNFORD: He has run to the ball very well. He knows his plays. He knows what to do. I give all respect to him. He's coming into this game very big and stuff, big on the media side, and getting attention from us as players, of course, but also at the same time we're going -- we're not going to bow down to him, though. I give all of them the respect that they deserve, but when they start disrespecting us, I don't have to respect them more.

Q. How exciting is it to get this opportunity to finish your career playing another game at left tackle?

THAYER MUNFORD: You know, it's very exciting. Even though my man Nick -- I love Nick, man. He left, and he's like, yeah, I need to do what I need to do. I was like, all right, I got you. I'm not going to fault him for that. But I'm happy that I'm back in my natural habitat.

Q. I'm guessing Matt Jones is probably going to step in there at left guard. How much confidence do you have in him stepping in?

THAYER MUNFORD: I have very much confidence. Like I said before, he's been working like nonstop, and he can't wait to be out there again.

Q. I know you said you don't have a preference in the NFL what you play, whether it's tackle or right tackle or left, but do you feel having played both positions, you feel more comfortable in one position versus the other as far as your skill set?

THAYER MUNFORD: You know, I feel better at tackle all the way, but also at the same time I will get on the field no matter where I'm at. In the NFL there's only seven or eight spots that you can get on the offensive line, and you've got to know every position. If you don't know that position, all right, you really can't play for -- I can't wait to show the NFL

what I can do and go against the best.

Q. Can you snap the ball, line up at center if you needed to?

THAYER MUNFORD: I don't know about that yet, but I haven't tried that at all through my career in football. I haven't tried that at all.

Q. Do you view this as a big opportunity to show NFL scouts that hey, I can still play tackle after not playing very much this year?

THAYER MUNFORD: Yeah. It's versatility, of course, but also I did have like a month to actually train for it instead of that day to actually train for it. I'm happy that I'm back at tackle and I'm happy that I can show NFL scouts that I can be versatile, too.

Q. Have you been able to work out at tackle for all the bowl practices?

THAYER MUNFORD: Yes. Yes.

Q. Obviously you mentioned that Nick decided not to play in this game. Why for you personally was it so important to play in this game?

THAYER MUNFORD: Not to leave off on a bad note. They put that little video of me of course getting bowled, of course, against Aiden. Which I give all respect to him, he's a good player. He's a good player, I'm a good player. You see people get put on the ground by good players all the time. It's not like I'm just weak. I got put in a bad position at a bad time, and all respect to him.

Q. Does that particular play sting? I'm sure social media people attacked you and stuff, that there were lots of comments --

THAYER MUNFORD: Oh, yeah. Social media people love to sit there and stuff, but I barely pay attention to that. Got a couple people DM'ing me saying like some crazy stuff, but also at the same time I don't care about it. It's irrelevant. They probably just sit on the couch eating cheat owes, and I don't really care for that at all. Whatever they do right now, that's motivation for me. But really they're really irrelevant to me.

Q. How much motivation are you seeing from this team this week as you go into this game?

THAYER MUNFORD: You know, I'm very motivated. They've got 42, he's a good pass rusher. They've got 7, of course. It's going to be very interesting, too, because he's

like the guy with the most pressure on the team, 42. He has the most pressure on the team. I can't wait to actually see what he can actually do up front instead of just seeing it on film. I just can't wait to play this game, see what they've got.

Q. I've got to compliment you on your shirt. Are you a horror movie fan?

THAYER MUNFORD: Yeah, I am. I love Chucky. Even though he's a small little guy, he'll still come after you no matter what. You can just kick him, put him through a chain saw and he'll still come after you.

Q. Were you a Halloween guy?

THAYER MUNFORD: I am not a big Halloween guy, but if I can watch a couple movies, it would be Chucky, and my kid side I'd be watching Disney, like Hocus Pocus, Halloweentown, all that stuff.

Q. You mentioned getting the bad taste out of your mouth. The history of the Rose Bowl, though, how much does that mean to you in this era of playoffs?

THAYER MUNFORD: You know, it means a lot, especially with like growing up seeing the game getting played on the Rose Bowl field, of course. It's just an honor just to play here. Even though I was here before but I didn't play, but I was like, okay, I like this, because it's a nice scenery. The mountains are nice. Everything is nice. The roses are very beautiful, of course, hence the Rose Bowl. Everything about this place is very beautiful.

Q. I'm sure somebody already asked you, but was there any conversation with Stud maybe about Paris getting to play tackle in this game?

THAYER MUNFORD: Yes and no. We've kind of mentioned it, but it wasn't like, oh, let's get them some reps at tackle, of course. He was just like, all right, go in at tackle. I'm like, all right, that's fine with me. I don't care. It was like, all right, you've got to do this, and I said, okay, that's fine with me. That's all it was.

Q. You've sacrificed enough time out there, you didn't get to play left tackle --

THAYER MUNFORD: Yeah, I've sacrificed a lot of time here, of course, a lot of time. COVID hit last year, of course, but if it wasn't for COVID I would be in the NFL playing whoever in the NFL right now.

Q. Did this decision play out the way you wanted now that the last week is finally here?

THAYER MUNFORD: It didn't play out like how I wanted. I wish we was -- I wish we could have won a Big Ten Championship and possibly the gnat at this, of course, but I'm still happy that I'm alive, I'm happy that everybody is still alive and well, healthy. But God put us here for a reason. How can we -- how as players can we come from adversity like this. That's why I always believe. How can we go forward from now. We can pack it up and go, or just like, all right, we're here, we've got next year -- they've got next year to actually play again, and I can't wait for that game.

Q. Do you think in a bowl game you should be allowed to wear the number 0?

THAYER MUNFORD: Yes, 100 percent yes. As a lineman, yes, I want to wear the number 0. If they allow me to wear the number 0, I would do it. I would not care.

Q. When you got it, did you already know that that was the rule that you couldn't wear --

THAYER MUNFORD: Yeah, I knew it was a rule. I was like, dang, I really want to wear it but I can't. But if I get the go-ahead, I'm for sure putting it on. I will take off number 75 and put on number 0.

Q. Do they hang one in your locker every week?

THAYER MUNFORD: Every week they do, because it's my jersey. Like what you want me to do? I can't do nothing with it, but I'm happy that I'm kind of leading this team on the right track, of course, but I didn't do this on my own. We've got CJ, Chris, Zach, Kam Babb, all of them, Jerry Rucker. They were helping out along the way, too. It's not just -- they wasn't just looking up to me, they were looking up to everybody else that was older and had experience playing.

Q. When you take a look back, was there any moment where you felt this team really came together?

THAYER MUNFORD: After our two losses, I know for sure we didn't fall back. We lost against Oregon, which Utah beat Oregon, of course, but we didn't back down. We didn't back down for nobody. We kept going. We had our head up and just kept pushing. Obviously we had our head down for a little bit because it just sucks that we lost to them, and we was like, yeah, we can't do this no more. This past month we've been training hard every day, going against each other every day, making each other better, of course, and making sure that everybody is like on the right track, like all right, we've got to win this game, so let's get this taste out of our mouth. If we don't win this game we're

going to have this taste in our mouth for a good minute,
and we don't want that.

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