

# Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Penn State vs Utah

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Pasadena, California, USA

## Utah Utes

### Gabe Reid

#### Press Conference

**Q. I just got done asking R.J., so I'll ask you the same thing. I like going around and asking football players, who is the funniest guy on the roster this year?**

GABE REID: Who is the funniest guy on the roster? That's a good question. We have a lot of comedians on the team.

I think off the top of my head, Stone Azarcon, safety. Yeah. But then the whole room of safeties is a bunch of funny guys, so yeah.

**Q. R.J. mentioned that Cam Rising might be one of the funnier guys, maybe a little under the radar and people wouldn't know that.**

GABE REID: Yeah, Cam is a funny guy too. You would be surprised with this big caliber player. But, yeah, he is a cool guy.

**Q. Speaking of Cam, how important has he been to this team? Obviously, you guys play defense, but whenever you guys do -- I mean, you guys go up against some him practice every day. So what kind of player is he? What is maybe something that someone else outside of the program wouldn't know about Cam?**

GABE REID: I think for me Cam plays a big role on our team obviously, but something that maybe you guys don't see from the outside is he is a very genuine person. I think he takes the time to get to know every one of the guys, and that really fuels our team where everybody knows that we're a tight-knit group and everybody cares about everybody.

Yeah, it's been great to have them on offense just being successful the way they have been this year because it fuels us as a defense to get a longer break on the sideline, and that momentum builds across the ball.



**Q. Speaking of offense, the Penn State offense, what have you seen from film from them? What are some things maybe you guys are expecting in this game at the Rose Bowl?**

GABE REID: They're a really good offense. I think across the board. O-line, running backs, quarterbacks and receivers, they're all really good. So we're excited for the challenge. Just, yeah, it's going to be a good game, so we're excited.

**Q. Is there anyone that maybe you can compare them to, a previous opponent you guys played this season? Anyone maybe you guys are able to match things up with?**

GABE REID: I feel like they're pretty comparable to our offense at Utah. Just kind of a tough, physical team. Trying to establish the run first and then open up things from there.

**Q. And I know Clark Phillips isn't playing in this game, but he is a California kid. How important has he been to the defense and to this program?**

GABE REID: He has been huge, man. He has made a lot of big plays throughout the season and definitely going to miss him, but feel like we're equipped to handle it.

Yeah, excited for other guys to step up and make plays. We're going to miss Clark, but yeah.

**Q. I want to go back to that. You said you thought that the offense was a little similar. What stands out to you when you look at the two freshmen running backs. That's kind of been what Penn State has been about. What has impressed you? What have they been able to do?**

GABE REID: Yeah, I think, like I said, when I think about our offense, I think about physicality and toughness, and I see that when we watch their film. The offensive line works well together along with the tight ends. They block well together. They play hard. And the running backs run hard. They break tackles and make people miss. So I



think just this kind of calling card of being tough and physical.

**Q. Who on that offensive line has impressed you because they don't know if their left tackle is going to play? He is going to play next year, but they don't know if he is going to play in the game. 74 is the (inaudible) --**

GABE REID: I think across the board, I don't know if I would point out one particular person. As a left defensive end, I focus on the right tackle so I have seen 72 and 79. Yeah.

But I think regardless of the injuries that they've faced, they all work well together as a unit. Obviously quarterback as well, Clifford, adds to that where he is a good general out there calling the plays and also buying time with his legs.

**Q. When you look at film and everything, a lot of people have said these two programs kind of mirror each other in how they approach the game. Do you see that, and is that a fair representation of how this is?**

GABE REID: Definitely. I think we had heard that from the beginning when we found out that we were going to play Penn State. And as I have continued to watch film and study, prepare for the game, I've seen a lot of carry-over.

I haven't watched a lot of their defense. I've heard their defense is legit and tough, and I feel like that's similar to our program.

And what I have seen from the offense is the same type of scheme, same type of physicality that I have seen from our offense, so...

**Q. Skelly kind of talked about it being similar to the Oregon State game, which kind of resembled a similar type game. Do you feel like that gives you kind of a game that you can look at and say, here's how we can beat a team like this?**

GABE REID: Yes, I think for sure. Oregon State is a really tough team. Now that you mention it, I think about a lot of zone scheme where the offensive line is flowing together. Oregon State's O-line works good together, so I think that's a good comparison.

**Q. When you decided to make the change from Stanford to here, after Utah. Not here, I guess. Obviously you were sold on the idea that this was going to be a big year. Obviously you're coming home and doing different things, but did you really envision**

**maybe being back -- not back, but at the Rose Bowl?**

GABE REID: To be honest, I didn't know what I was going to get. It's kind of crazy. I was here last year in L.A. to watch my brother. Was watching the game from the stands, but I don't know if I ever expected to be on the field a year later at the Rose Bowl.

But obviously I had big expectations. I knew that coming to Utah you're always going to be a contender for PAC-12 Championship and Rose Bowl. But, yeah, it's been amazing, so I'm super grateful I made the change.

**Q. Last year there was a lot of people that wanted to talk about Ohio State is the blue blood, and now it's Penn State that's kind of the blue blood of college football. Do you feel liking Utah is getting into that newer version of the blue blood? I know there are still things to do, but what's kind of your take on that?**

GABE REID: Personally I feel like Utah has really established themselves as a program to be coveted and a program to be, you know -- other programs are trying to imitate Utah.

So I think the University of Utah has really established itself as one of the top-tier programs in the PAC-12.

**Q. What do you feel like you guys need to do to be successful this next week?**

GABE REID: I think just do what we've been doing all season. There's going to be ups and downs throughout the game, but as long as we continue to rely on each other and just focus on the next play, the next drive, we'll be good. We have the guys.

And obviously Penn State has a good team, but I feel confident about our abilities and think we'll make the plays we need to make.

**Q. I'm going to go a little rapid fire.**

GABE REID: Okay.

**Q. So who is the one guy in the locker room that doesn't get the aux cord?**

GABE REID: That doesn't get the aux cord. Um, off the top of my head I'm going to have to go with my brother, Karene. Yeah.

**Q. What are your impressions of their running game, particularly (inaudible) --**

GABE REID: They're tough, man. I would say they're very impressive backs, especially considering they're freshmen. They run hard, break tackles. So it's definitely going to be a group effort in terms of us as a defense getting to the ball and bringing them down.

**Q. How big a role do their tight ends play in their offense, and what are your impressions of them?**

GABE REID: They're huge. I think they're an integral part. Very similar to our offense both in the run game with blocking and opening holes up for the running backs as well as the pass game in terms of play action and other route combos.

So they're a good group of guys that work well together with the O-line and the running backs, so we're definitely going to have our hands full about.

**Q. What makes your defense so special?**

GABE REID: I think we really live our mantra of being relentless, smart, nasty ball hawks.

**Q. Turnovers are obviously big.**

GABE REID: Yeah, they're huge. We're always going for the ball. Then I think we play with passion. We love to play this sport, and I think it shows on the field.

**Q. You guys have a reputation as being physical. Do you see that from Penn State as well?**

GABE REID: Definitely.

**Q. And what does that pave the way for?**

GABE REID: Yeah, I think, like you mentioned and a lot of the coaches mentioned this to us as soon as we found out we were playing Penn State, we're going to be playing a tough, physical team just like us. So I think that's something that you can expect to see on Monday. It's going to be a go ahead game, and we're excited about it.

**Q. A little smile on your face. Are these the kind of games that you enjoy?**

GABE REID: Yeah, it's fun, man. I mean, it's going to be a dog fight, and that's what you live for when you play the game of football. Just a tough, physical game.

**Q. Gabe, long road in your college career. What does it mean to end it up in this kind of game and environment and big stage?**

GABE REID: It means the world to me, man. I feel like I couldn't write a better ending to my college career. Yeah, I'm very excited. Especially an opportunity to play with my brother. Yeah, I'm super excited.

**Q. When you look at this game, the defense has been getting better seems like every week. Not having Clark, what kind of impact does that have on you guys?**

GABE REID: It's a big impact. Clark is a playmaker, and we're going to have to pick up the slack with him not being there. We're going to miss him, but I have full confidence in our defense and in the guys who are going to step up.

We have a lot of great DBs and corners in particular that are going to make plays and have been making plays as we've been practicing and preparing for the bowl game.

I'm excited. I think bowl games are always a time for guys to step up and show what they can do because in this day and age we have guys opting out and declaring for the draft or transfer portal, so...

**Q. Does Penn State remind you of anybody that you have played?**

GABE REID: Earlier I was talking to one of the reporters, and he mentioned Oregon State, and I think that's a good comparison. Apart from our own program, which a lot of people have hit on, but I think in particular their offense is similar to Oregon State. It's a pretty run-heavy team, a lot of play action, boot, and stuff like that.

**Q. Do you feel like playing a PAC-12 schedule with so many dynamic quarterbacks has kind of prepared you for games like this?**

GABE REID: Yeah, definitely. I think these guys, Penn State, have a mobile quarterback, but we're used to that because we play mobile quarterbacks every week. We play the best of the best mobile quarterbacks.

So, yeah, excited about the opportunity to play Penn State, and I think it will be a good game.

**Q. Obviously you weren't with the team last year.**

GABE REID: Yeah.

**Q. What do you get the sense of as far as getting back to the Rose Bowl, didn't get it done, tough game, close game, lost in the end, as far as getting it done this year?**

GABE REID: I would say the guys are really focused. I think -- and obviously, like you mentioned, I wasn't with the team last year, but a lot of guys have shared with me, you know, getting to the Rose Bowl was such an experience, and there's all the lights and the stage. Might be a little overwhelming the first time.

But now that guys have been here, it's their second time around, I think a lot of guys are more focused on getting the win.

**Q. What have the guys said about actually the Rose Bowl game?**

GABE REID: Just exciting, man. It's a loud environment, and they just said it's one of the biggest, if not the biggest game they've played in, so...

**Q. What does it say about the program to be able to get back-to-back championships?**

GABE REID: I think it speaks volumes. Utah has really established itself as a top tier program in the PAC-12 and in the country. And being able to have continued success over however many seasons, that span, it's really impressive.

**Q. Gabe, you said you weren't with the team last year.**

GABE REID: I wasn't.

**Q. Did you transfer?**

GABE REID: Yeah.

**Q. From where?**

GABE REID: Stanford.

**Q. One Pac-10 school to another.**

GABE REID: Yeah.

**Q. You knew a little bit about Utah, right? When you joined them at the beginning of the year, did you get a sense of the mentality of this team was kind of a Rose Bowl or bust, we want to get back there again, or was it a little bit different?**

GABE REID: Yeah, I mean, coming in my expectations were high, and I think everybody else's were. So it was obvious we were going to have success. It was just a question of how far we were going to get.

Throughout the season I think there was a little bit of

confusion about where we were going to end up, but things panned out with us making the championship, winning, and now we're back at the Rose Bowl.

I would say expectations were high, and they'll continue to be high over the next couple of years with the success we've had.

**Q. It's interesting. A lot like Penn State. I mean, they had a season where they lost two games, were out of the college football playoff picture. Who knows what bowl game they're going to play in? They wind up in the Rose Bowl. You guys are kind of similar, right?**

GABE REID: Yeah.

**Q. You lost a couple of games, and Oregon beat you. It's like, oh, man, where are you going to go, what's going to happen? Then, boom, you're back here. Had to be a pretty steep emotional roller coaster ride, right?**

GABE REID: Definitely. I clearly remember the night when we finished our game in Colorado, and there was three other games that had to happen, like results that had to happen in order for us to make the PAC-12 Championship. Stayed up to watch the Washington State-Washington game. Just kind of a crazy roller coaster, man. Super happy that it all panned out, and we're here at the Rose Bowl.

**Q. When you survive something like that, does it make it almost more worthwhile and almost a fate thing that you wind up in a game like this?**

GABE REID: In a way. Just the fact that it was up and down, up and down just makes it that much sweeter, like you said.

**Q. You see a lot of great offenses in the PAC-12. Where does Penn State kind of fit into that with their offensive scheme?**

GABE REID: Yeah, they're a really good offense. I think if I were to compare them to an offense, it would be Oregon State. Very tough, gritty, physical run game. But, yeah, they're a really good offense, and we're going to have our hands full on Monday.

**Q. You mentioned tough and gritty. I think both these teams pride themselves on toughness on both sides of the line of scrimmage. So this is almost going to be a game to see who is tougher, I guess?**

GABE REID: I could see that for sure.

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**Q. Do you guys pride yourselves on that image?**

GABE REID: We do.

**Q. It's funny. A lot of PAC-12 teams are the flashy, speed, blah, blah, blah. You guys are almost more like a Big Ten team the way you're built, right?**

GABE REID: Yeah, definitely. I think -- I guess I said Oregon State, but we've been talking for the past however long we've been preparing for the bowl game about how Penn State really is a mirror image of us and our offense, so it's fun. It's exciting. We actually get to play almost against ourselves this week, yeah.

**Q. Right. You have a lot of experience going up against yourselves, right?**

GABE REID: Yeah.

**Q. Hey, just for starters, I guess what does it mean to be here? I know you have been here a couple of days now, but what does it mean to be here getting ready for a Rose Bowl, and for you with your first year with the program here at Utah?**

GABE REID: Yeah, it's surreal, man. Especially kind of taking a look at my own personal journey with this being my last year of eligibility, being able to play with my brother. I'm super grateful and excited about the opportunity, so...

**Q. What did you envision when you decided to come for your final year?**

GABE REID: My expectations were high. This is where I saw myself. The vision got a little cloudy throughout the season, but things panned out. And, yeah, I'm super happy about being here.

**Q. You talked about how sometimes the vision can get a little cloudy and there can be uncertainty throughout the year. What was it that helped kind of clarify things not only for you personally, but as a unit, a defensive unit, as a team to stay focused and know that the goal was still in front of you?**

GABE REID: I credit the coaching staff for keeping us focused. I think each week game after game they kept harping on us, like we've just got to put our heads down and grind and focus on the task at hand.

That's what we did. We just focused on what we could control and let the cards fall where they did, and it worked

out.

**Q. They both talked about how this team is having a lot more fun again. You go back to week one at The Swamp and just where you are now. Do you feel similarly that this team has gone through a lot of growing pains along the way?**

GABE REID: Yeah, I think so. I try to play with passion every week, and I think that's shown. Especially with the defense. Just playing loose and enjoying the moment, being with each other.

Obviously, it's my last year, so I've tried to embody that. Just embrace the moment and the journey and enjoy every second. So I think we've really done a good job about that as a defense.

**Q. What would it mean to you personally to cap off your college football career by helping Utah gain their first-ever Rose Bowl?**

GABE REID: It would be amazing. I would love to be a part of that legacy and kind of put my stamp on Utah football history. I feel really confident that we can do that. We can get the job done.

So really looking forward to Monday. Obviously, you know, we have a few days until then, but just enjoying the moment, man. Having fun with everything on the field and off the field, so it's been a great experience so far.

**Q. What stands out, early thoughts on what you have seen on tape about this Penn State offense?**

GABE REID: I would just say they're a tough, gritty football team. Their offensive line and tight ends work well together, and their running backs run hard. The quarterback is a playmaker.

So they're going to give us a hard time on Monday. We'll have our hands full, but I'm confident about us being able to contain them.

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