

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Penn State vs Utah

Friday, December 30, 2022

Pasadena, California, USA

Utah Utes

Cameron Rising

Press Conference



Q. So what do you think really attributes to the fact that you have ability to come back with confidence. What about your interpersonal skills allows you to do that?

CAMERON RISING: Just unwavering belief. I believe in this team. I believe in what the coach's game plan is, just unwavering and not going away from it and just falling back on our training when it is times of chaos to make sure that you are prepared for whatever comes.

Q. What was the point in the season where you realized the team had that?

CAMERON RISING: You can kind of get a feel for that just going through fall camp, when we're running gases and guys are still going hard, and it's rep 10 you just get that feeling that guys don't have that quit in them. And then once the season came around, it just started to be evident.

Q. What can you guys do to deal with all the pass defense and pressure up front the Clemson defense brings to the table?

CAMERON RISING: Do what we've done all year, just have those guys up front, those five linemen that just do everything they can. They take it personal with whoever they are facing, and just want to make sure that they dominate the line of scrimmage and so that's what it's going to be about.

Q. How fortunate do you guys feel to get a second shot so soon as winning the first Rose Bowl for the school?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, just happy to be back and just unfinished business we want to go get done this time.

Q. Does last year play into this year at all? You've been through it and know what a Rose Bowl is like now?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely, I remember seeing them celebrate and have the ceremony right after and seeing that after I walked off the field and that's been engraved in my head ever since and want to be on the only side of it now.

Q. You and Penn State sort of had similar seasons, high hopes in the beginning, you suffered some losses in midseason and then you rallied at the end does. That make for a fascinating matchup that you traveled the same road?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely it's two gritty teams that's going to do everything they can to put themselves in position to win a football game and that's why I think it's going to be a fun game come January 2nd.

Q. Nobody is greater than you, we think back to the collision where you lost your helmet in the USC game. Does that epitomize what this team is all about?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, these are some hard-nosed guys that do everything they can to make sure that they are ready to go and I just want to make sure that I'm right there next to them doing everything that I can as well.

Q. Does this game come down to how fast each team starts in the first quarter?

CAMERON RISING: It's a fourth-quarter game so you have to make sure that however you start, you've got to finish better than that, and just make sure you're doing everything you can.

Q. What does it mean to play in a Rose Bowl game?

CAMERON RISING: It's unbelievable. To go back-to-back is crazy. It doesn't really make sense but just happy to be back and time to get it done.

Q. Do you have family here?

CAMERON RISING: Oh, absolutely.



Q. If you had a message to your family for the season what do you say?

CAMERON RISING: Thank you, guys, I love you. It's been awesome having you guys come out and spending time with you after the game everything and. I look forward to seeing you guys January 2nd. It's going to be a good day.

Q. Given that this College Football Playoff is expanding what does it mean to have a chance to win the last traditional one of these?

CAMERON RISING: It's big and that's why it's going to I think be etched in history whoever comes out on top and that's why you've just got to make sure that we continue to prepare and just do everything we can be ready for it.

Q. Does it feel surreal at all to be doing it again?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, absolutely, it doesn't really make sense. When it happened, it kind of didn't feel real at first but now that we're here, it's all coming together.

Q. When you were growing up here in this area, what was your favorite moment --

CAMERON RISING: Vince Young running the touchdown against USC. That's one moment that's always stuck out to me for sure.

Q. Is that why you went to --

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, after that game I did start to become a fan, absolutely.

Q. You weren't at that game; right?

CAMERON RISING: No, I wasn't. Watching at home.

Q. What does it mean to you to be here back-to-back?

CAMERON RISING: It's unbelievable. It's the Grand Daddy, so it doesn't really get much better than that and just got to go get it done this time.

Q. What did you learn playing in the game last year that you applied in preparation for this year?

CAMERON RISING: That it's a four-quarter game and doesn't really matter what you do in the first three. You have to go out there and finish the game and just put yourself in a good position for it.

Q. What are your impressions of the Penn State

defense? And do they remind you of anybody you've played this season?

CAMERON RISING: I think they do some different things. They have a great athletic front seven and the secondary I think is very good. They have a corner out but the guys that are behind them are good players and they will step up. It's going to be a fun game for us.

Q. How much do you hear from Utah fans? What are those interactions like?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, they just keep asking me and I just kind of say, you'll find out soon pretty much over and over.

Q. Does it get annoying? Do you appreciate it? How does it sit with you?

CAMERON RISING: You've got to find a little bit of a balance but it's nice to always be wanted but yeah, always gets repetitive after awhile.

Q. What have you seen from Ohio State last year and what you've seen from Penn State on film this year, what would you say the defense compares to teams in the Pac 12?

CAMERON RISING: I think at the end of the day, it's football, and you go out there and play and there's going to be a scheme and everything and it's just going to have its subtle nuances that changes and it's really just hard for me to kind of compare two defenses, especially when they do do different things.

But I think both conferences are going to have great defenses and that's why I think both the conferences are so good.

Q. Are there any general nuances that you see between the two conferences?

CAMERON RISING: Not really off the top of my head. I know in the Big Ten there's a lot of different variety on offenses. Some teams like to really run smash mouth and pretty similar to what we do in the Pac 12. It's about the same.

Q. Being an L.A. area guy, must mean a little bit more?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. It was awesome. It's always fun. Those are big games and they really come down to it, especially when you look at the championship implications and the championship, of course. Always like to beat the hometown team, I guess.



Q. Do you hear about it here when those games come up?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, usually that's what everybody is talking about right now.

Q. There was a point in the season you had two losses -- how did you manage to gather yourselves together?

CAMERON RISING: Unwavering belief. We believed in what our game plan was and what was out there from us and we know we had a few pieces all our way, and they did. But we had to handle business to make that happen, and yeah, just didn't really flinch when it happened.

Q. Do you feel like you have within your conference, a physical edge? We've heard comparisons to Michigan. You guys are physical up front. Do you feel like you have an edge over what is seen as sort of not really that kind of conference?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think we do a great job. We stress physicality every day when we are out at practice. It's really just the ground stone for everything that we do. It establishes the line of scrimmage and makes us be able to run the ball downhill and also stop the run because guys are getting hit and then it's a softening process throughout the course of the game and that's why it's so important to be physical.

Q. One of the things that James Franklin mentioned was watching your game, the Pac 12 Championship Game when you took that bit hit and got your hat blown off and got right back up and he was so impressed with that. How conscious are you of sort of the body language, sending a message to your guys in that kind of situation?

CAMERON RISING: I don't really think about sending a message. I just think about getting up and getting ready for the next play.

Yeah, if I'm taking a shot, just got to eat it and go on to the next one.

Q. My apologies if you were asked this earlier but from what you've seen of Sean Clifford, what are your thoughts on him as a quarterback, veteran guy, having been in college football for a long time?

CAMERON RISING: I think he's a very good quarterback who knows how to put his team in a position to win, and I have ton of respect for him because of that, and I've always been a fan of his ever since he started playing.

Q. What stands out to you from the film on Penn State's defense?

CAMERON RISING: Their secondary is the first thing I think that stands out, along with No. 11. He's always going to be a guy that kind of has the red lights around him. Always got to be alert for him. It's a good defense from top to bottom.

Q. How would you describe the impact that Dalton had on this team, and how do you go about replacing him in a game like this?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, Dalton is a big-time player. He's going to be playing on Sundays for a reason. We've just got to have the next man up and that's really what it comes down to. I know the guys in that room have been taking it personal and are doing everything that they can to be ready to go.

Q. What makes him so good?

CAMERON RISING: He's got just a knack to catch the ball whenever you put it in the vicinity. If you give him a chance to catch it, he'll probably just bring it down and that's why it's just so easy throwing a guy like that the ball. I'm going to miss him, and, yeah.

Q. Dumb question but how long have you been growing out your hair?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, since quarantine. Stopped cutting it since then, yeah.

Q. That's your look?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah.

Q. Just a quarantine thing, you weren't going to Barbers, letting it go?

CAMERON RISING: No, actually I was cutting my own hair back in the day and just decided to stop.

Q. Did you get any grief about it?

CAMERON RISING: At first when it got to the middle stages, a little rough. But yeah, just got to work through it a little bit, yeah.

Q. At what point, when will you maybe decide to cut it? What would be the --

CAMERON RISING: I don't know, I'm not attached to it, so



it could be at any time. Yeah, we'll find out. You never know.

Q. You mentioned Penn State's secondary, and you obviously know Joey Porter, Junior. Who stands out there? It's been a moving target for them this year.

CAMERON RISING: I mean, I think the whole entire secondary does a good job. I think they have guys top-to-bottom that can come in and play and step in and fill that gap and I think that's why the secondary has been so good.

Q. You mentioned 11, he's a freshman. Like you said, he popped watching film. Were there moments where you have to make sure you identify this guy?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. He's wearing a No. 11 jersey at Penn State for a reason and he's just a good athlete and to be doing it as a freshman, it's very impressive.

Q. We've seen Penn State, Manny Diaz with his blitz packages, they have done it a good bit and they have all been a blitz-heavy team. What stand out to you when you see that? Do you think they pressure a lot?

CAMERON RISING: Absolutely. When they do it, they like to bring in their dime packages so that they have the fastest guys on the field. I think what they do is some very good things and it makes it really hard on the offense because they -- just as much as they come, they drop out into coverage, so that's why you've got to find that happy medium and just be able to adjust to whatever they want to do.

Q. Their pass break-up numbers were pretty crazy impressive. Is that something where maybe in the back of your mind you're more cognizant of that because they have gotten their hand on a ton of footballs?

CAMERON RISING: Of course. And when you have guys standing up on the line, chances are that they might come and just drop out and be ready to jump at a given time. I was actually watching some film this morning and I saw about, like, seven or eight of them. Yeah, that's kind of how it goes and just got to be ready to find the window and fit the ball in.

Q. Is there another defense that you played this year that you think is maybe similar to what they have done?

CAMERON RISING: I mean, maybe Oregon, but they had

a different scheme, so they did some different things. But yeah, they did a good job getting their hands on balls and doing stuff like that.

Q. How far back do you go on when you're breaking down film? Obviously tendencies, third down, those types of things. When you're looking at this defense, Purdue week?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, Purdue has been on there. Yeah, you go as far back as you can, especially when you have a lot longer time to prepare, and a lot of it just comes through watching cut-ups and stuff that the coaches put together for us and just doing everything we can to be ready that way.

Q. Talking to some of the defensive guys yesterday, Karene was talking he senses a more serious attitude from the coaches, not that the emphasis wasn't there last year but maybe this year is more serious in terms of you did everything you were supposed to do last year, you had fun, blah, blah, blah, but the one objective, the most important objective, you didn't win the game. Do you sense any differences in that in terms of seriousness this year?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, I think being the second one, you kind of get rid of all that hoopla that was kind of built up around it. Not that it's not still there but you kind of just know what to expect when it comes to that and I think the coaches have just made sure that ever since Bowl prep start that this is a business trip, and we go out there when it's time to have fun and go out there and handle business when it's time to handle business.

Q. You're a southern California kid metaphorically growing up in the shadows of the Rose Bowl. What would it mean personally to you?

CAMERON RISING: It would mean the world, watching this game every year, it's been my favorite Bowl game ever since I was a kid, and just to be on that podium holding up that trophy is something I always dreamed about and I just hope to find out what it feels like.

Q. Penn State, their defense, Andy called them elite; the best defense you'll face this year.

CAMERON RISING: I agree. I think they do some things top to bottom on the defense. Their front seven is fast and they know how to get to the quarterback and just disrupt up front and also do a good job getting hands on balls up front.

So that, with a great secondary, is an elite level defense,

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so I think I agree with what coach was saying.

Q. What do you need to do to make sure they don't get to you?

A. Make sure I'm flipping protections when it needs to be flipped and just communicating with the offensive line to make sure we are on the same page and have the back on the same page as well in some different situations and just be ready for anything.

Q. How gratifying would it be if you were to win this as a team, given the fact that you had two tight ends -- now you don't have either and you have other guys, you had top two running backs and you don't have them and you have a quarterback who was in your room for most of the season now being a running back. If you could pull this off, it would be pretty sweet?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, any time you've got great plays like that not on your side, it just going to make it that much tougher. But I know that the guys that are right behind them are up to the task and they have been doing everything they can throughout this month to be ready to go and I'm just looking forward to seeing them go out there and go to work.

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