

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Penn State vs Utah

Saturday, December 31, 2022

Pasadena, California, USA

Utah Utes

Lander Barton

Press Conference



Q. What's this experience been like so far?

LANDER BARTON: The whole week's been awesome, really. It's been a lot of fun.

Q. What's the highlight so far?

LANDER BARTON: The weather. The weather's a lot better than Utah, yeah.

Q. Was this kind of your expectation, you came in in January, went through spring ball, is this what you expected, to end up in the Rose Bowl or what were your expectations?

LANDER BARTON: Yeah, for sure. I knew we had a good team going into this season, so if we did what we should have done, and we did, we would end up here. So I mean, yeah, I expected this to happen.

Q. How would you describe your progression over the course of the season?

LANDER BARTON: A world of a difference. The beginning of the season, I was new to it. It was my first time playing college football. Everything was going really fast. After the first few games it started to slow down and got a lot easier to make reads and stuff. It's been a lot better.

Q. How about the guys that are young, like you, how have you progressed as a team, as a group?

LANDER BARTON: We are all really close. We had spring ball and summer workouts and fall camp but throughout the season we became even closer as a group, as a brotherhood. It's been good for us having a good season, winning together, losing a few games together. It brought us all close, really tight.

Q. I know you're focused on this game but when you

think about the future, what goes through your mind?

LANDER BARTON: I try to think of just the next game. So right now, I've got the Rose Bowl on my mind. But after that, just get the body and the mind right for the off-season and next season.

Q. What kind of potential does this team have going forward, what's already there and what's to be built?

LANDER BARTON: I think we have a really good potential for next season and even a few seasons after that with the guys coming up and the guys in the building next year. I have high hopes.

Q. When you look at Penn State's offense, what is the key to slowing them down?

LANDER BARTON: Stopping that run. They run the ball really well. They are a good, disciplined team, so we just have to be able to be stout on the front seven, and that's where it's all going to start.

Q. You like that?

LANDER BARTON: It's a linebacker's dream.

Q. What was your first impression of Cam?

LANDER BARTON: The first time I met him was last year in the recruiting process. He was really kind to me, open arms. He was just a good dude through and through the first time I met him. So he rubbed off pretty well on me.

Q. I'm sure you've had plenty of opportunities to practice against him. What kind of player is he?

LANDER BARTON: Smart player. He knows how to look you off -- you think he's going to look you off and then he hits it. Very smart player and he's competitive, too. He wants to win in practice every day. It's good having that.

Q. What are your expectations? What have you seen from Penn State's offense, looking at the film?



LANDER BARTON: I'm expecting a good, physical football game. They run the ball really well. They have a good offense, so I mean, it will be a fun one playing in the box, so I think it will just be run the ball, run the ball, hit that playaction. It will be a good game.

Q. What did they tell you? Did they tell you that it would be this far away from everybody else?

LANDER BARTON: I had no idea. I got a text that said I'm going to do some sort of special interview. That's all it said.

Q. They didn't tell you what? They left a lot of details out.

LANDER BARTON: Just a little bit. Just a little bit of details.

Q. Were you nervous at all, got the bright lights and camera?

LANDER BARTON: Not really. I mean, I try to keep a good --

Q. You're going to be on a bigger stage in the Rose Bowl.

LANDER BARTON: Exactly.

Q. Waffle House or IHOP?

LANDER BARTON: Waffle.

Q. I'm going to need an explanation.

LANDER BARTON: IHOP is like a place to go to at 2:00 in the morning. Waffle House is better quality of food.

Q. What food do you get at Waffle House that's better and why is it better?

LANDER BARTON: It tastes better. I haven't been there a whole lot but I've been there a few times. But IHOP is just like, I don't want to talk crap --

Q. I'm sure the CEO of IHOP is not watching this right now. He's not going to pull any NIL deals he had on the table for you. Just be brutally honest.

LANDER BARTON: It's of lower quality.

It's dead over here. Why am I up here?

Q. So I'm a younger brother and you're a younger

brother as well, how often does your brother stay in touch with you when it comes to football?

LANDER BARTON: Weekly. I mean, I talk to my brothers every week, more so, Cody, but me and Jackson still talk a lot, so yeah.

Q. Does Cody usually say the same stuff or is it something new? What's his message to you?

LANDER BARTON: It changes week-to-week. It's not always about football. It's more about just life, what's going on but every once in a while, it's football.

Q. Some hunting?

LANDER BARTON: Oh, yeah.

Q. Duck hunting?

LANDER BARTON: Yes.

Q. What are you most excited for playing in the Rose Bowl?

LANDER BARTON: Just the atmosphere. I mean, I didn't get to go to the game last year and watch. I'm just excited to be there and just see what it's like.

Q. You had a dominant freshman year. What allowed you to have so much success this early in your career?

LANDER BARTON: I mean, I feel like the coaches showed a lot of trust in me this season and put me in positions to succeed. That's a lot of it. Also just kind of taking it day-by-day, trying to get better at the craft. If you just work at it, good things will happen.

Q. What's your fondest memory?

LANDER BARTON: The first USC game. Defense had a rough first half and we came out in the second half and played a lot better defense. Just a great win overall. Crazy ending. It was an awesome game.

Q. Can you walk me through, what was it like being on the field with the crowd?

LANDER BARTON: It was nuts. You couldn't even move there were so many people on the field. Got stuck out there for about 15 minutes trying to get to the locker room, but it was my first time ever experiencing anything like that, and it was breathtaking. It was awesome.

Q. So you're not the only star freshman linebacker in this game. What have you seen from Abdul on film?

LANDER BARTON: I have not watched a whole lot of his stuff but I've seen some of his place. He's a really good player and I respect what he does. I'm just excited to see him live.

Q. Overall as a Penn State offense, a team that predicated their offense on running the ball, what have you seen from them?

LANDER BARTON: They are a tough, disciplined team. They run the ball hard and they are going to try to wear you down. So I mean, it will be a good matchup this week. Just got to be stout and strong in the box and just out-tough them.

Q. What has preparation been like for you personally and the team this week?

LANDER BARTON: Really just going through our calls, executing our players and just being disciplined, gap responsibility, just having that integrity in the box.

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