

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

Saturday, December 31, 2022

Pasadena, California, USA

## Penn State Nittany Lions

## Sean Clifford

### Press Conference

**Q. Obviously you've set a standard for where you want to get to. Now that it's your sixth year, what does it mean to you to be at the end game that you set out?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: Yeah it's crazy for sure, but I'm definitely ready for it. I think -- I talk about this a lot, but one of the first days that I was at Penn State, we had a nice -- all the freshmen got together, my class got together, and there was a panel of the older guys. Andrew Nelson told me and the crew, whatever you do, just don't have any regrets. Whenever you have a decision to make, just make sure that you're not going to regret that decision. That's the one thing that I can say that I took to heart that freshman year, and six years later, I can really truly say that -- like I said before, do I regret a pass? Do I regret this? Yeah, in-moment things that you can't really control sometimes, yeah, but in the big scheme of things, I don't regret one thing at Penn State because I've had such a blast. I've had so many great experiences with so many great people.

I just can't thank Penn State enough, the fan base, the coaching staff, the administration, and especially, especially my teammates.

**Q. Has this week exceeded expectations?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: Yeah, this is first class as it comes. They roll the red carpet -- literally yesterday at Lawry's, the red carpet was out. Everything about this place, Pasadena, the Rose Bowl, the committee that has put this game together, can't thank them enough. It's been a blast. It really has. A lot of great experiences.

**Q. What's it going to take for you guys to come out victorious?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: I think it's going to take four quarters of football. That's for sure. I think it's going to take a lot of grit, a lot of effort. Utah is a great team. They're a great football team. Very similar to Penn State in my mind.



They play hard, they play smart and they play aggressive, so just matching that energy and making a few more plays than they do because they're going to make some plays, too.

**Q. How was last night?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: It was great, a great spot, best prime rib I've probably had. Kudos to them. They did a fantastic job, and the environment was also a lot of fun, too.

**Q. What was the highlight of your season?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: Man, there's been so many great moments. I think going down to Auburn was a lot of fun, being able to get that win in a big fashion, as well, getting another white-out win was definitely a lot of fun. But it's every single game there's highs and lows that you just love to experience, so realistically it's hard to pinpoint one.

**Q. Talk about Rose Bowl day; how will those emotions translate into your performance?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: When the lights are shining the brightest you've got to perform at your highest level, so realistically it's just taking it all in when you first run out, being out there for a second or two, really take it in, and then it's about winning the game. It's about the same thing that you've done day in and day out, making sure that you're staying consistent and playing the game that's supposed to be played.

**Q. How meaningful is it to you to have 10 wins?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: To be honest with you, I really don't think about that part or what anybody has to say about anything because I said this a little bit earlier, I'm not going to take advice from you the same way you're not going to take advice from me on broadcasting. It's one of those things where you're just taking advice from the right people, the coaching staff, the people that are in the building, your teammates, and then just putting your head down and working. I'm very proud of this team, very proud of 10 wins. It's been a blast, and excited to finish it in the Rose Bowl.



**Q. Talking to your young quarterbacks in the quarterback room, the dynamic has been the old man and the kids. What's it been like this year?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: It's been fun, just being able to share wisdom and knowledge that I've learned over the past few years. It's crazy to be able to say at 24 you've got to be the wise man in the room, but it all starts from when I got there with Trace, Tommy, Jake, Billy, the list goes on and on, the quarterbacks that have come through and affected me personally, and then coaching, as well. It goes all the way back from committing to John Donovan, Joe Moorhead, Ricky Rahne, Coach Rocca and now Coach Yurcich. It's just an absolute honor to learn under such great OCs, see balance, see different schemes and realistically just become a better player over the years.

**Q. You've played in so many big games. How do you control your emotions as you get closer and closer to game day? Is it a challenge?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: Definitely used to it. Definitely used to, I guess, the pressure that's put upon it, just because Penn State and the way that we practice, the way that we train, you train for moments like this. We talk about it all the time, you don't come to Penn State to play in games like this, you come to Penn State to win games like this, and that's our mindset, and it always has been.

Realistically it's about waking that up morning the same way I wake up for any other game and making sure that I'm prepared, and if I'm prepared, then there's no reason to be nervous.

**Q. From your perspective as a quarterback, the defense throws a lot of different looks at you. Does it help you having a bunch of guys on your scout team that do similar things?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: Yeah, like you said, it reminds me a lot of Penn State. They play fast, aggressive, and they're smart. That's how our guys are trained, as well. Realistically it's about staying on your keys, making sure that you're getting your reads right, and then you watch the tape, they'll pressure heavy, as well. A lot of zero, a lot of one fire, different concoctions of different blitzes, try to get sly in certain ways and get guys on one-on-ones. Just being able to counter that and being able to make sure that we're prepared, we see it, everybody is on the same page, and I think it'll be a really good game.

**Q. How do you think Drew Shelton filled in the last couple games of the season?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: I think he's done a really good job. Realistically Olu being an All-American, it's tough to lose a guy like that. But at the same time, the way that he's prepared Drew, just to be ready, stay in the moment, and even on -- when it comes down to game time, making sure that his nerves are settled, and I think Drew has handled it extremely well. True freshman stepping into a left tackle role is a tough role to handle, and he's done it as well as anybody else could.

**Q. Second year under Coach Yurcich, would you say that's benefitted the offense as a whole?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: Yeah, I think whenever you have back-to-back years with an OC, especially in college football nowadays because there's so much turnover at coaching staffs, and I've seen it, as well, just being able to have two years with the same guy it is always going to help.

**Q. (Indiscernible) four OCs like you did?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: I hope so. Of course whenever you have great -- the thing about it is whenever you have great coaches, they're aspiring to do great things, as well. I understand why guys like Ricky Rahne moved on. He's a great coach now at Old Dominion. Joe Moorhead has followed the path of a head coach in the same way. Kurt, too. Realistically it's been a blessing to have all of them as different OCs, but it was really nice to have Coach Yurcich back, be able to have a familiar face in the building and be able to work throughout the whole off-season to refine and make sure that we're all on the same page.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

SEAN CLIFFORD: I did. First thing I think -- the first thing we did, I didn't go home. I always have my bags packed, still in the car, in go straight to Skyline, three cheese coney, plain. It was clean this time. I was so hungry I just couldn't even wait.

**Q. Are you going back home after this?**

SEAN CLIFFORD: Yeah, so I'm actually -- I've got a lot going on. I'll be going back to State College. My girlfriend and I are actually flying out to Iceland, which will be fun. Then I'll actually be going down and playing in the Hula Bowl, as well. So I'll be down there. Really excited, great bowl, great Senior Bowl. Just honored to be able to be there. So playing in that, and then start training. I'll be training down in Miramar, Florida.

**Q. Last year with so many opt-outs, looking toward the season -- it kind of feels a little different this year.**



## What do you see?

SEAN CLIFFORD: I'm just really proud to be in the Rose Bowl. It's surreal, it really is. I think it's really starting to set in, seeing the patches, how clean it is. It's just a beautiful game and a beautiful logo, too, honestly. Just the meaning behind what that rose stands for, the games that have been played before it. We were watching a highlight of some of the best plays in the Rose Bowl, and Vince Young ran in -- I vividly, vividly remember watching that play happen, and to say that I'm going to be playing in the same game as the greats like that, I can't express enough how excited I am.

I just see -- I kind of grew up with Trace, as well, and Trace kind of passed that competitive nature to me and now I'm passing it to Drew and Beau, how to prepare, how to kind of challenge each other the right way, because there's definitely a competitive aspect of it, but you've got to be cordial, but at the same time have fun with it, talk your smack every once in a while and just play the game.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

## Q. (On preparation)?

SEAN CLIFFORD: Yeah, I think once you get past probably your first year starting, you really make that transition to coaching, as well, because you want to be a reflection of what the coaching staff wants to teach, and you also want to be a reflection of the guys, as well. That way you can be that middle man, that balance between the coaching staff and the players. I felt like a coach for a pretty long time, and now with two young guys who are super talented, I see so much potential in both of them. Just being there for them, making sure that I'm giving them little insights, little tidbits here and there. But at the same time, yeah, it's been a long time coaching now I feel like.

## Q. Has there been a little bit of a different feel to these Rose Bowl practices?

SEAN CLIFFORD: Yeah, they're definitely much more advanced now for sure. They worked really hard throughout the whole year, getting here in the spring, being able to be here all the way through, summer camp, fall camp. I've just seen so much growth and development from both of them. They both get out there the first day and balls are wobbling out of their hand, and it's tough to even catch a completion just because -- I remember the same way just getting out there, nerves are going, different speed. You're like, oh, is that the read, is it not the read. But now I see a very confident crew, guys attacking instead of being more passive, both Drew and Beau. Really excited for them in the future. I think they're going to be fantastic quarterbacks here. I can't wait to see them.

## Q. (Indiscernible).

SEAN CLIFFORD: No, it was Beau, Liam and Dominic DeLuca. Beau and I are extremely close. I love Drew, too, don't get me twisted, but Beau specifically, I see him and I as similar, very competitive. When we were, in the summer, a lot of the speed drills I'd line up against Beau, and it was constant chirping back and forth from both of us.

