

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Alabama vs Michigan

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Pasadena, California, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide

Jalen Milroe

Press Conference

Q. Coach Saban is old enough to be your grandfather; how does he do it at your age? Do you feel kinship with him?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, it's funny, since the time I stepped foot on campus, he's been the same person every single day, the same person since I've been here.

I don't know what it is. I think some secret formula that he built up to allowed him to be the person that he is to this day. I don't know what that secret formula is, but he's something different, and he's separated himself from other coaches, for sure.

Q. Mack Brown of North Carolina, saw tape of him dancing with his players. Could you imagine Coach Saban doing that? Have you tried to drag him into the locker room after a victory?

JALEN MILROE: Since I've been here I have not seen him like that excited after no win at all. Like he just like -- I don't know, we'll have a good win, I'm talking about we're excited after the game, we're happy. We get to the locker room, he's just like ready to leave.

I'm like, man, we just won. You know what it took to win? He's a unique guy. But that's what makes Coach Saban.

Q. He said he had some moves after the SEC Championship game. Do you remember what those were?

JALEN MILROE: He did? I missed it.

Q. He said he did a little dance but he didn't tell us what it was.

JALEN MILROE: Man, I should have videotaped it. I missed it.



Q. The student manager for the quarterbacks, from our area, what kind of guy is he and what does he mean to you?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, no doubt. I think the biggest thing we've got to do is appreciate everyone within the building, and that's someone I do appreciate, because for our team, everyone matters. We're a team.

That goes for everyone a part of our staff, equipment, our football staff, medical staff. Everyone is important because it takes a village to be successful.

I'm appreciative of him.

Q. Did you see the video of Michigan finding out that they were playing you guys?

JALEN MILROE: No, I didn't see it.

Q. They were surprised. It seemed like they thought they were going to be playing Florida State. Do you think you guys still have some intimidation factor over teams that don't play you regularly?

JALEN MILROE: A hundred percent. This A means a lot to people. We take a lot of pride in wearing the A.

What it comes to opponents, it's a hard task to beat down Alabama. It's a credit to Coach Saban, how well he coaches, the supporting cast he has with his coaching staff and his medical staff and everyone that's all a part of it, his recruiting staff, as well.

It's a lot of contributing factors that allow a team to be successful, and then when it comes to playing another opponent, like I said, it's a hard task to take down Alabama, so it definitely is intimidating.

Q. When you found out you were playing Michigan, what went through your mind?

JALEN MILROE: Really when I first found out, it didn't really click for me because I was trying to figure out some things I needed to improve from the Georgia game and



being where my feet are, because at the end of the day we didn't play them until January 1st.

So it was all about cleaning up some little details, and then we had a lot of time to improve. That was a big time for me to improve fundamentals, reads, little things like that. I took it as a time to look in the mirror and try to be the best leader I can be and also physically be better for my team.

Q. What have you learned about Michigan?

JALEN MILROE: They're a physical team, play really hard, have a veteran group that play well together because they have great chemistry. There's a reason why they're undefeated. They force a lot of turnovers. They play disciplined. They're fast to the football.

They have a lot of components to them that makes them successful, and statistically you see that, and it's evident when you put on the tape.

Q. I wanted to learn more about how your role has maybe expanded, grown at Alabama. When you were getting recruited, was it different than what you eventually came into with the offense this year?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, prior to coming to college, I wanted to be an SEC quarterback. I wanted to start in the SEC. I wanted to be the best version of myself once I touched foot on campus, and it's been a journey to be where I'm at today.

But to speak about your question, I try to do all that's asked of me. Playing quarterback here at Alabama. Alabama was the best fit for me when it came to choosing the right school.

But there's not a certain type of play I try to play, whether it's running, throwing. I try to do all that's asked of me when it comes to game planning because I talked about it before, in the off-season I do zero running. All I do is throw the ball. That's something that I train to do.

It's a credit to my dad, the work we've done growing up, and it got me honestly to where I'm at today because it was all about beating on your craft and sacrificing things now at the time when I was younger to be where I'm at in my future, which is right now.

Q. How has your relationship with Coach Rees evolved from the beginning of the year until now?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, this is the first time I had an OC that played the position, that played the quarterback position. I see quarterback in the lens of him as a play

caller.

I think I'm very receptive of his coaching because he played the position, played at a high level at Notre Dame, and now that he's coaching. He's able to coach the position, and I'm able to absorb it as much as possible. It's been great. It's been great having Coach Rees here.

Honestly I'm trying to build as much as possible and be the best quarterback I can be.

Q. Is there anything you've noticed Michigan does to cause turnovers?

JALEN MILROE: Got to start up front. Up front they have really good defensive line, good edge rushers on the outside. Their interior D-line play really hard, physical. They do a lot of stunts, do a lot of picks up front, which is something that we're trying to prepare as much as possible for that circumstance because they do a really good job forcing pressure on the quarterback, making him throw the ball and affect him as much as possible.

That is something we have to prepare for, and they're really good at it.

Q. Where do you feel like you've improved personally from week one of the season?

JALEN MILROE: I think the biggest thing was embracing hard. For a quarterback to strive in the SEC and to play at an elite level you have to hard, because there are a lot of uncertainties while you play the position, and with that, you have to have the right proper mindset.

So I think that's the biggest thing is having the right mental to approach the games, approach the week, and approach everything that goes on with being a starting quarterback, especially in the SEC.

I think that's the biggest thing, trying to learn as much as possible.

Q. Coming off the Texas loss being told you weren't going to play, how did you approach that week and get back on the horse when you were reinstated to starter the next week?

JALEN MILROE: God makes no mistakes. Biggest thing for me is follow through with God's plan and lean on him, not on my own understanding. That is something that I truly took to heart, and I have a great support system around me that will lift me through anything.

During that situation it was big for me to lean on my Lord



and Savior and also my family, and that was something that got me through that situation.

But also I took it as a learning moment, looked in the mirror, figured out some things I need to improve on. At the end of the day it's all about being the right teammate, being the best teammate I can be.

I lean on the family acronym Forget About Me, I Love you. That was critical when I went into that week. No matter who was in, I prepared the same way, but at the end of the day, when it was an opportunity for someone else to play, I was just trying to be the best teammate I can be.

Q. Teams use their bye weeks differently, and it seemed like the bye week for you guys was really pivotal in helping this offense gel around you, and finally you have a chance to look at what you're going to do as a team. Can you walk us through what you worked on during the bye week and how that helped lead to the surge at the end of the season?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, the bye week was very great for our football team. Number one, especially playing in the SEC, every week is a hard task. Playing in the SEC I think is the best conference in the country without a doubt, because every single week you have great competition. With that, you put your body through a lot of things.

Mentally and physically it's a lot playing an SEC schedule and playing in the season, no matter what conference you're in, football in general. There's a lot that goes on. Then to have a bye week is very important for a football team.

For us, we try to soak it up as much as possible and enjoy that, meaning taking some time away physically maybe by not playing on Saturday, but also mentally maybe getting ahead with some film, try to register and fix some things from the last game, from the previous week.

I took it as a positive to have bye weeks because there's a lot of takeaways that you can have from a bye week.

For us, it was very good for us to have the bye week and also mentally and physically get ready.

Q. (Indiscernible) ...said that you guys are not watching film on your individual iPads right now as of the last week because of the Michigan sign stealing stuff. How has your changed your prep?

JALEN MILROE: Well, I watch film all day. That's something that I've done, because the biggest thing was to try to be most prepared for all situations in the game. So

I'm watching film as much as possible. I can't really speak on that.

But for me, I'm preparing as much as possible.

Q. What are your thoughts on adding headsets and tablets to the sidelines in the college football, kind of going off that a little bit?

JALEN MILROE: Well, that is a key resource. That would be great for teams to have, especially seeing in the league how beneficial it is for them using iPads and seeing some things that they missed throughout the game.

Because at the end of the day during the game it's more lip service when you're communicating with your coach on the sideline, but to actually see it on the iPad or whatever, that would be really helpful.

But that would be great to have for sure.

Q. How important is it to you to be considered a true passer?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, when you look at me, you don't think I play quarterback. You think I play DB, tight end. You don't think I played quarterback. Growing up when I went to camp they labeled me as a receiver or they saw me as not playing the quarterback position.

With that, I beat all odds by playing quarterback, and that is something I try to do as much as possible, be an efficient quarterback, be the best version of myself playing the position, because at the end of the day I want to be the best that I'm doing right now.

I think passing is the biggest thing, because as a quarterback, it's a lot of elements of your game that you need to be clicking. Number one is playing quarterback is throwing the football because the ball can get there quicker than my legs can.

That's something that I emphasize when it comes to the off-season is to get me to where I'm at now because that is very important, a very important piece of an efficient offense to move in the right direction.

Q. With some of the merchandise like the T-shirts and the grave digger things, how does that work with kind of getting your sign-off and -- I don't know if you can describe sort of the infrastructure to make something like that come to be in pretty short order?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, LANK was a model that we came with through the off-seasons. It was good for our team.



But we have a great support system around me, like I talked about earlier, because our marketing team does a really good job marketing it.

All we do is pitch our ideas and they take it off and push it to different outlets and allow us to build a brand off of it. They do a really good job off of that. And that goes for the LANK and also Grave Digger, as well.

Our marketing team does a really good job with that, and they do a good job just allowing us to focus on football, and they do all the marketing pieces for us.

Q. Is that through the NIL people or is that through the athletic department?

JALEN MILROE: More of the NIL.

Q. The Learfield --

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, the NIL department.

Q. You spoke about the fear factor. Michigan had a beat Georgia drill going into the season. I guess their assumption was maybe facing Georgia later down the line. How much was Alabama having to get back that fear factor, especially after the Texas loss earlier this year and then the USF game?

JALEN MILROE: Well, everything is a learning experience, so throughout the whole season we took it as a chance to learn. Each game that went by, whether it's a win or a lose, we took it as a time to build and grow as a football team. The biggest thing is you want to turn all weaknesses into strengths and make all strengths stronger.

That is something we emphasize as we prepare and that is something that is going to allow us to grow.

No matter the opponent, we try to prepare as much as possible and also have singular focus, singular focus meaning focusing on the task at hand and whatever opponent it is, put our all into that opponent.

No matter who the opponent is we prepare the same way, and that is the emphasis. That is something that we take a lot of pride in and that is something that we're going to do.

Q. Was this season about getting Alabama back to that position in that sense, kind of viewed in the same way they've been viewed pretty much throughout Coach Saban's tenure?

JALEN MILROE: Alabama is the standard of college

football, so if you want to learn what true football is, you look to Alabama.

Q. (Indiscernible) same page with them.

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, they're a key resource for our offense. We have a really good core within our receiving group. Coach Wiggins does a really good job with those guys. With them we have a lot of playmakers within the whole room, and they do a really good job preparing and do a really good job getting their body in physical shape, and they're a key resource for our offense to continually move in the path we want to go, and they do a really good job for us, and I love to see their development throughout the whole season.

Q. You've been with this team a few years and seen how the offense has changed this season, and one thing that seems prominent about the team is the ball is spread around, there's not a 1000 yard rusher or receiver. Have you noticed that as a person that's in charge of running the ball and running the offense that you're spreading it a bit more?

JALEN MILROE: I didn't realize it until you said that. Shoot, I don't know, that's a good thing that's going on. The biggest thing Coach Saban told me earlier in the year was just be a point guard with the ball and get the ball to playmakers to allow explosive plays.

When you simplify football and a quarterback does that, just distribute the ball to the playmakers, allow them to do some good things with the ball.

If it's spread it around to multiple guys, that's what I'm going to try to do as much as possible. But the biggest thing is just continuously move in the right direction as an offense.

Q. You mentioned some of the stunts and twists that they do up front. For a guy that can escape the pocket the way you can, is it enticing when a team is willing to loop guys around and expose gaps in different ways?

JALEN MILROE: Well, that's for them to game plan. I don't care what their defense look like, just going to have to do whatever they think they can stop our offense. That's for them to think and prepare as much as possible, because they have a hard task stopping us.

Q. How different a quarterback are you from week one?

JALEN MILROE: The biggest thing is just learn, learning as much as possible and just try to be better each and

every day I try to step foot in the facility. With playing the position, no one is perfect.

You can look at the NFL, you can look at college, you can look at high school. You're going to make mistakes. Mistakes is common. The biggest thing you have to do is rise from it and not dwell on it or linger on a past mistake. Everything is a learning experience.

Even now I'm still learning because I'm not a finished product, so the biggest thing for me is continuously grow and try to look in the mirror and figure out some things I need to improve on. Coaches do a really good job with me, putting me in position to be successful, so now it's all about just mastering the game plan and being the best version I can be for my teammates.

Q. Isaiah and JC were talking about how they can't watch film on the iPads. What's that been like as a coordinator?

JALEN MILROE: Well, for me, I'm going to watch film.

Q. Do you have your iPad?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah. I watch tape. Like I watch tape all over the building. That's what I'm doing right now. I'm going to be prepared for the game.

Q. With the catapult system...

JALEN MILROE: Yeah.

Q. Do you still have your own iPad?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, no doubt.

Q. What's been the most impressive part about Isaiah Bond's progression this season?

JALEN MILROE: He's constantly willing to grow. When you have a player like that, that is something that's hard to beat, because he's continuously trying to grow. He's continuously trying to be the best teammate he can be. He's continuously trying to be the better version of himself when he hits the practice field because practice would allow you to be successful in a game.

He's done a really good job preparing. He does a really good job physically getting his body in shape, and so I'm just proud of his development because he's constantly willing to grow.

Q. He's your most targeted receiver this year. Is that a product of play calling, chemistry? Why do you think

that is?

JALEN MILROE: I think it's a product of how he practices. When you have a guy that practices really good, he's going to have some plays for him within the system, within the game plan, and with him, he's a consistent receiver. He does a really good job at practice. That allows him to make plays on Saturdays.

Q. How cool has it been to see him come through in a lot of big moments this year?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, no doubt. As a quarterback, to have a playmaker like that is great. For him to come through in those type of plays and those type of things, it's really good for us, and I'm just proud of him, and I'm happy to have him as a teammate.

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