

# Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Alabama vs Michigan

Thursday, December 28, 2023  
Pasadena, California, USA

## Michigan Wolverines

### Rod Moore

#### Press Conference

**Q. So how do you guys handle sort of the turmoil with coach because being in and out of the lineup. What was that like on a week-to-week basis?**

ROD MOORE: I think we kept a one-track mind each and every day. We didn't pay attention to what was going on outside of the facility. I mean, Coach Harbaugh knew -- we knew how to handle it and when he left, it was nest man up. It's just like that with the players and just like that with the coaches. We just took it in and took it to the chin and just kept going.

**Q. Do you feel like it's put you in a better position to win a playoff game?**

ROD MOORE: Not necessarily. I think it just made us stronger as a team. Like just I mean you have -- you don't have your head coach for about six games of the season and you still go undefeated. It makes you a strong team overall. I think it made us a strong team and come together more.

**Q. When you look at the film of Alabama, obviously Jalen Miller is a different kind of quarterback than you've faced all year but so is pretty much everything did this team. What stand out on film to you?**

ROD MOORE: I mean, everybody knows overall they are a good team. They have really good speed. I just think it's not really a different team that we haven't seen. I think every team has speed that's a high-level team that we've played. I just think that we've just got to stop everybody that's on their offense.

**Q. Are there any differences of what happens with your position in the secondary when you have a quarterback that can run like he does?**

ROD MOORE: A little bit. Just maybe when he's on the move, staying on your man which we call a Plaxster (ph),



but not really us involving the defensive back with the quarterback. It's just more of us with the receivers and stuff like that.

**Q. What team have you seen that looks like them schematically?**

ROD MOORE: I would say Ohio State. Just when they have -- when you have a core group of receivers like that, I mean, they have about three, four receivers that are good, just like Ohio State did. And I just think, besides the quarterback, you minus the quarterback's legs, I think that's the closest team that comes to comparison.

**Q. Are you guys getting tired of hearing that Alabama is so different from anything you've seen?**

ROD MOORE: Yeah, I do, because I mean, I really don't buy into that little SEC bias thing. It's just football at the end of the day. Maybe they are faster. Maybe they are not. The film shows it. We'll see. We'll see on Monday.

**Q. What are you hearing and what are people saying to you about this stuff?**

ROD MOORE: Just Michigan can't beat an SEC team and that they are too fast, we can't run with them, which I mean, like I said, we'll see on Monday.

**Q. You have a beat Georgia drill that you implemented at the beginning of the season and at the Georgetown Final Four --**

ROD MOORE: I don't know if they still call it beat Ohio or beat Alabama. I can't remember because I'm not in it. DBs are in it. It's the front seven. I really don't know.

**Q. How has your life changed after that Ohio State interception?**

ROD MOORE: A lot, actually, I would say I know who I am and maybe just for me, myself, just being able to close out the game and how personal that game was to me, it felt really great to be able to do that. And yeah, that's really it.



**Q. Was there more NIL opportunities that came from that?**

ROD MOORE: Yeah, somebody came to me trying to propose an offer with shirts and that's never happened till after that game.

But yeah a lot of them were -- NIL opportunities popped up.

**Q. Is that a Christmas gift for your families, shirts with your interception?**

ROD MOORE: I think they got their own.

**Q. The SEC bias, has that been a topic of discussion with your teammates?**

ROD MOORE: Not at all. We don't buy into that. At the end of the day it's just another football game.

**Q. Did you say they might be faster?**

ROD MOORE: People say that. People say that.

**Q. You've seen the tape?**

ROD MOORE: Yeah.

**Q. Source of motivation?**

ROD MOORE: To me it's motivation for sure because I don't like how people try to count us out without even seeing the game first. You can't really just do that.

**Q. What do you think of the Final Four and Alabama getting in and Florida State not?**

ROD MOORE: I really don't want to comment on that. That's really not my area.

**Q. What about the chaos of the season, coach missing three games, how have you been able to stay focused?**

ROD MOORE: Like I said to the other guy before, as a team we just kept a one-track mind. I believe he missed the first three or four games of the season, I can't remember. But I think that really helped us when it happened again out of nowhere against Penn State and he missed the last few games of the season, and Coach Moore stepped up because he had already coached a game at the beginning of the season. It's just like Coach Harbaugh said, next man up with the players. So when he stepped down it was the next man up and that was Coach Moore and we just took Coach Moore as our head coach and road with it.

**Q. Did it feel any different with coach more?**

ROD MOORE: Not at all.

**Q. When Coach Harbaugh was there -- felt the same?**

ROD MOORE: Me personally I couldn't tell the difference.

**Q. I was going to ask if Coach Moore is more aggressive but that's more of an offensive question?**

ROD MOORE: I really can't tell. I really just want to get back on the field. I don't really care, really.

**Q. During the season, having a Georgia period of practice, not exactly sure if that was accurate but when it's Alabama you are playing, not Georgia, is it the same principle or different mentality?**

ROD MOORE: Yeah, I think, I'd say it started off in beat Ohio until we beat Ohio State and beat Ohio State and went to beat Georgia, and you know what happened then. I can't really say if it's beat Alabama because it's the front seven, so I'm not down there. When they are doing that, the DBs and receivers are doing one-on-ones. So I can't remember. I think it's beat Alabama.

**Q. Is that one of those things that sort of indicates, like, the standard you guys have to play to to win one of these things?**

ROD MOORE: Yeah, I just think that it's nine on seven -- I think it's nine on offense, seven on defense, it's just a physicality of the game. Like I think that emphasizes the physicality of each and every day that we have to go out there on the field and play.

**Q. What makes -- tough to stop --**

ROD MOORE: That's the backfield and out wide. I just believe that -- I mean, obviously they do have a lot of speed. We just have to keep them boxed in and stop them. I know we can run with them. We shall see.

**Q. Do you think this type of matchup going against a bunch of four and five stars maybe elevates your NFL Draft stock for when you decide to turn pro?**

ROD MOORE: I don't think the four-star or five-star plays any part of it. I think it plays a part of it of the team and game it is. I think that's what could elevate my draft stock which is making plays in a game like this. Especially in the next game, whoever wins this and goes to the National Championship, both of those games can elevate anyone's

draft stock if you make those type of plays in that type of game.

**Q. More people know you after the Ohio State interception. How does that affect you on a day-to-day basis?**

ROD MOORE: In Michigan when I'm out, people will recognize who I am, and back at home, it's funny because people really know who I am. But then yesterday when we were at Disneyland, people were saying my name, and that's never happened before. It's kind of crazy.

**Q. How quickly did the game merchandise and stuff, how quickly did that come together?**

ROD MOORE: I want to say --

**Q. Is that something a few years ago, you wouldn't have been part of it?**

ROD MOORE: I think it was two days after the game because it was a guy who, I don't know if you remember when Ringo got the -- inaudible. It was a guy who did it last year. He came to me with the idea and we just went on with it.

**Q. How did that work? Did he contact you directly?**

ROD MOORE: He contacted me directly. Because I did something with the guy before.

**Q. Who was that?**

ROD MOORE: I honestly can't remember the game.

**Q. Any difference for you playing on grass?**

ROD MOORE: I like grass a lot more than turf. It gives more. Turf, sometimes you get stuck in your breaks, but grass is more clean breaks. The only thing I just hope that doesn't happen is the grass gets moist and that's when it becomes a problem when it's slippery. But I love grass more than turf.

**Q. Was it slippery last year?**

ROD MOORE: Some people say it was but I didn't slip. We were slipping yesterday in practice and we were talking about how in the Fiesta Bowl they were slipping but I don't remember it being that bad.

**Q. What difference in approach technical-wise going into this week and the preparation, have you noticed any differences?**

ROD MOORE: I would say our approach on the whole entire season as a whole because this is our goal to get back here and win from the start after we lost against TCU.

I just think the way we practiced, the way we play, and just the mindset that we bring each and every day, I think that's the difference this year.

**Q. Going back to the moment, just that phrase, called game -- represents this iconic moment. What has that experience told you about sort of media platform -- just the platform and NIL. Just it's been like a perfect storm, I imagine, from the outside.**

ROD MOORE: Kind of. I mean, I know what you're trying to say. Are you asking me like --

**Q. Just it seemed like it was sort of an innocent thing that you said in the heat of the moment and yet it's sort of taken off.**

ROD MOORE: I didn't even -- that called game phrase, I didn't know, like, people took the called game part of the whole entire sentence that I said and took it and run with it. I literal just said, I called game, and took it and ran with it, like, okay, we can use that in something.

**Q. Does it surprise you how, I guess?**

ROD MOORE: It has, yeah. Because a lot of people say it to me in the facility, Call Game Rod. It's just funny.

**Q. It's got a ring to it. That TCU game been coming up in conversations this week, you know, we're back in the same spot? It seems like a lot of the four pillars, those areas fell short in the game last year.**

ROD MOORE: I don't think we really brought TCU game. I think we probably talked about it one time, the way we played with all the four pillars. It was just atrocious.

I think that he's just made it so -- an emphasis of being great in all four phases of the defense and not going out there and doing what we did last year.

**Q. You're playing for Big Ten honor but also you have one of the top defenses in the nation but everybody is talking about 'Bama and not your guys's defense.**

ROD MOORE: I really don't see that. Yeah, I really don't see that. Yeah, I haven't seen any of that.

**Q. You're one of quite a few players on this team to make a decision on your future. How do you focus on**



## **the playoffs with the decisions on the horizon?**

ROD MOORE: Obviously I've thought about it multiple times but really, it will all take care of itself during this game, what I want to do or what decision I want to make.

I really don't want to stress on it too much because I don't want to put myself in a position to where I'm thinking, like, oh, you have to go play a certain way to do what you want to do in the future.

I'm thinking about it but I'm not making it one of the top things in my thoughts.

## **Q. Going against Alex in the practice and the looks he's given Miller, but as a defensive back, what is that like having to deal with a mobile quarterback?**

ROD MOORE: I mean, it's not really just the mobility of Miller. He's got a strong arm and so does Alex. When we're in practice, Alex be like throwing it. When they run those deep routes, Alex throws it. I remember one time he put it in the post and he was probably in the opposite 30 and got to the middle of the zone. You see the film, that's how Miller throws the ball. Then when he runs the ball, I mean, it gives the D-Line and us a good look, especially when we're short in the box and a DB has to come make a tackle, it gives us a good look of how he's going to move.

## **Q. There are times when Miller has lowered his shoulder on defensive backs. Have you even that on film and what is it like when a quarterback is willing to be physical?**

ROD MOORE: I just look at him like another running back. When he's throwing the ball, he's a quarterback. When he takes off, he's a running back. Just got to bring my stuff when I tackle.

## **Q. Their deep ball passing, Burton seems to be a guy who comes up a lot. What stands out about his game and what they are able to do when they do throw it over the top like that?**

ROD MOORE: Jermaine Brown is a deep speed straight line guy. Like he has a lot of speed and so does Isaiah. Both of them a lot of speed. He's really strong at the top of routes. I think the guys on the outside are going to have to handle that very well and whenever we are both on top, we are both going to have to handle it whenever we do.

## **Q. You don't have to worry about that off the line of scrimmage?**

ROD MOORE: No, not me. Like Will and those guys,

Josh, Mikey, both of those guys. I have real confidence that they will.

## **Q. When you talk about you need to bring your stuff to tackle a quarterback like that, can you describe the physical transformation you've had since you were at Michigan? When you were a freshman, you were playing at 175 pounds maybe.**

ROD MOORE: I came in at 169 and probably middle of the season I was between 172, 175. But it's just a mindset, honestly, when it comes to physicality. When you're tackling somebody, I mean, if you -- like if you come with speed and everything, you are going to make the tackle. I think just from that -- from -- I've been doing that since high school, so I think for my freshman year, just not having the shyness of contact really helped me with my size and just up to this day.

## **Q. When it comes to the pillars, obviously defensive players talk about that a lot. What is the value or benefit of having those four pillars outlined like that and having different assistant coaches specialize in each one?**

ROD MOORE: I believe the benefit is consistency of the defense. We all know what to expect on the four pillars because the four pillars come from literally all levels, like communication, ball disruption, block destruction and effort, everyone -- it comes from all levels of the defense. It's just the consistency and it helps just bring the defense at a higher level.

## **Q. Coach was saying how there was no jet lag for you guys. What allows you to have a good week of practice ahead of a game like this?**

ROD MOORE: It's just the mindset of everything. We know what type of game it is and we didn't let the jet lag bother us. Honestly for me I was tired yesterday but when we get to practice it kind of goes away, but then after practice you feel it all day. I think that was for everybody. So I just think just the hunger of this game.

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