

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Alabama vs Michigan

Saturday, December 30, 2023
Pasadena, California, USA

Michigan Wolverines Michigan Wolverines Blake Corum

Press Conference

Q. What does it feel like to be in the Rose Bowl, man?

BLAKE CORUM: It feels great. This is a legendary -- the best bowl game you could ever go to. Something you dream about as a kid, and we're here now. We're here playing a great Alabama team. It feels good.

Q. Would you say you like running more inside or outside? Do you want to be going in the A gap or B gap, or it's all sweet?

BLAKE CORUM: I like inside zone just because they can end up going outside. I like going downhill so I can see everything. The outside zone you can't necessarily see everything. I like seeing the whole field, so that's my favorite.

Q. Which lineman is your biggest one?

BLAKE CORUM: My biggest lineman that we have on the team is probably big miles hit ^ Check.

Q. How tall is he?

BLAKE CORUM: 6'7". He might be pushing 6'8", I don't know, 330. He is a big son of a gun.

Q. Think of how many yards you could have ran in high school if he was running the line.

BLAKE CORUM: I had some good offensive linemen in high school.

Q. Since you guys got out here, what's the vibe and tone of your practice?

BLAKE CORUM: The vibe and the tone has been at a high level. Our execution has been at a high level. We're



just out there having fun, enjoying the palm trees, just taking it all in, trying to remain calm. It's been great. You know, we're having a blast here in California at the Rose Bowl, so it's been wonderful.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

BLAKE CORUM: Monday we had a walk-through type practice, and then we had a good padded practice on Tuesday. Upper shells yesterday.

We're sticking to the game plan that Coach Harbaugh is putting forth, and it's been great. Our bodies feel good. We feel fresh, but we also have been putting in work.

I like the way we went about it this go-around, and I think we'll all be ready for Monday.

Q. Did you catch of the Ohio State game last night?

BLAKE CORUM: I did. I caught a little bit of it, but we had a comedy night, and the dude was hilarious. Nate Jackson was his name, I believe. He was funny.

I caught a little bit of the game. Not too much, though.

Q. What did you make of it?

BLAKE CORUM: It was a good game. It was a good game. I don't really have no comments to really say about it. I'm kind of just focused on my game. It was a good overall game, yeah.

Q. You're obviously coming down to the wire here with your career a little bit. Just three years in a row playoff, you're healthy and gearing up to go against Alabama. Have you had a chance to think about that yet?

BLAKE CORUM: I've thought about it a lot, and God works in mysterious ways. This time last year I was getting treatment in California where I got surgery in California as well. God works in mysterious ways. Now I'm back in L.A., but I'm healthy this time.



It feels great. Though my career is coming to an end, it's been the best four years with the best fan base. I'm blessed to go to such a wonderful university. It's wonderful. I'm definitely taking these last moments in. It's been a heck of a journey, heck of a ride.

Q. Coach Moore said yesterday he thought you packed more muscle on the last month. What have you been doing?

BLAKE CORUM: Just eating better than ever, working out. Just taking care of my body, drinking a lot of fluids. I feel great, man. I feel great.

I had to just try to up my game the most that I could to make sure we get over that hump this year, and I think we will. I think we're prepared. I think the game plan that we have in is really well. I'm excited for Monday.

Q. Historically Michigan football, when they have championship-level seasons, they're synonymous with the Rose Bowl. Did you ever think you would get here the way everything was kind of set up?

BLAKE CORUM: I never really thought about it until it actually happened. When I knew we were going to the College Football Playoffs, I wanted to play in the Rose Bowl. That's the game everyone dreams of.

The Rose Bowl itself is a great game, but the Rose Bowl and the College Football Playoffs, that's a whole other level. I'm really excited to play in the Rose Bowl, especially against a great team like Alabama coached by a great coach. It's something you dream of.

Q. Is it like the two-for-one special?

BLAKE CORUM: Two-for-one special, you can't beat it. You're in the College Football Playoffs, and you're in the granddaddy of them all. I'm just blessed to be here.

Q. How often do you get out here to Los Angeles? You probably haven't played too many. You talked about recovering out here, but you probably didn't play too many games out here.

BLAKE CORUM: My first time to L.A. was actually coming here to get surgery. This is my third time back. I came to L.A. twice last year to check on some stuff. It's my third time back.

It's crazy, like I said, what I year can do. One year, it's like, man, it's done and over with. I was on the sidelines watching the guys. Now I'm back in the L.A., but I'm healthy and feeling good. Excited to go.

Q. With that said, what would it mean to you for your first game here in L.A. to be successful being that every other team you've come here related to an injury?

BLAKE CORUM: It would mean a lot. It would mean a lot not just because of the injury or anything like that. Just to win the game, a game that we played in the past two years, going on year three. Just to win, finally get over the hump, it would mean a lot.

It's not about just because I got surgery in L.A. and bad juju, but it would mean a lot just to win for Michigan and to do it in L.A. at the Rose Bowl. It doesn't get better than that.

Q. Because it's raining, I understand you're going to get to practice at SoFi Stadium. I feel like that's a special treat.

BLAKE CORUM: I'm excited to practice there. I heard it's a beautiful spot. I've only seen it on TV. I've never been there. I'm excited to see what the venue looks like.

Q. Last year you guys were one game away from actually playing at SoFi Stadium?

BLAKE CORUM: Yeah, one game away. Not that it matters. I'm just excited to see the venue, see what they're talking about.

Q. Do you think there's something to going through those struggles to get over that hump?

BLAKE CORUM: The way I look at it, you either learn from your losses or you don't, and I think we've learned through our struggles what went wrong, what we did wrong, how can we get better the past two years.

I think we fixed some things up, and now we have a little new recipe. You know, I think we learned from our mistakes. Going into this game, you can't make mistakes, and you also can't think about the past. You can only think about the present.

I think where we're at right now with this team, what we've been through this year, I think it's made us stronger mentally, physically. I think we'll be ready for Monday and to finally just say, you know, we got over the hump and we're going to the National Championship.

We can't even think about the National Championship right now. We just have to think about Alabama because they're a great team coached by a great coach. That's the only



thing we can think about.

Q. What are your thoughts on Jacy Davis being around him?

BLAKE CORUM: I already see in him how he is going to be a great leader. He is an go-to guy. He got in front of the team with the other early enrollees, and he just spoke really well.

As a quarterback, you need to be a leader on the team. You need to be the field general just like J.J. is, and I see that in Davis. I'm excited to see how he can grow over the offseason, spring ball.

Coming in early is a huge benefit, and so I'm excited to see his growth, see what he can do because he is going to be special.

Q. Do you ever wonder if Michigan can't get over the hump like happened the last two times, do you feel it as this is a different Michigan team and you should be judged on both or the same team and (indiscernible)?

BLAKE CORUM: We can look at it two ways. The way I look at it is the last two years I just say the better team won. I don't make no excuse. The better team won. They made less mistakes. Georgia was a great team. TCU was a great team. They beat us.

I say we learn from our mistakes. Going into this game, one thing we have to do -- well, two things. We have to start fast and execute at a high level with minimal mistakes. I think those are the two things that we've been working on and that we'll do come Monday. We just learn from our past.

We've already done things this camp, I call it, that we didn't do the last couple of years. I think it's benefited the team. I'm excited for Monday. We don't really think about the past. We stand where our feet are, so we'll be ready for Monday.

Q. Without being specific, generally what type of things have you done, generally?

BLAKE CORUM: I will say the last couple of years we've been hitting a lot. We hit a lot, and Coach Harbaugh realized some things. We still hit this camp, but we've also taken care of our bodies. We go shorts more. We just go upper shells, helmets and shoulder pads a little more without all the banging.

We've been banging all year. We don't need to bang too much. We'll bang Monday, but we've had a great

December camp, and we'll be ready come Monday.

Q. The championship or bust mentality, does that ever become a burden? You know if you don't win it three times, then how do you handle that?

BLAKE CORUM: I don't really care what people say, at the end of the day. For me I try to stand on what I say, and I'm pretty good at it. I did say before the season, you know, it's a championship or bust type of season, so I'm going to stand on that and do everything in my power to make sure this team is ready come Monday, we're fired up, and we're ready to take the field and play Alabama.

Like I said, I don't get into what media is saying and things like that. Everyone is able to have their own opinions, but for me what I said before the season, I still stand on it. It is championship or bust.

Q. What's your big take-away on Alabama on their defense?

BLAKE CORUM: My big take-away is they're a great defense. They're athletic as heck. They fly around. They try to beat each other to the ball.

Dallas Turner, dog. One of my teammates, Chris Braswell, dog. Two great corners, Kool-Aid. And it's just a great team coached by great coaches. I know they're going to come to play. We're coming to play.

I expect a great Rose Bowl game. I expect the fans to be loud and it to be a great experiences for everyone viewing. It's just going to be a great day.

Overall, great defense that Alabama has. I'm excited to play against them.

Q. You said Chris. What's your relationship?

BLAKE CORUM: High school teammate, yeah.

Q. Do you have any memories of playing together?

BLAKE CORUM: Chris was a beast. He still is. Everyone that goes to St. Francis is a dog at the end of the day, you know what I'm saying? Chris is a beast. I'm excited to see him on the field. I haven't seen him in a while, but he's a beast.

Q. Did you get recruited by any SEC schools?

BLAKE CORUM: Georgia. I've got to go back and look. I can't really remember, but yeah.

Q. Why did you decide to go to Michigan?

BLAKE CORUM: It was just the right fit for me. Best decision I ever made in terms of football, in terms of my degree. We have the biggest living alumni base in the world, and Michigan fans, Michigan alum, they show that. They love their players. They love their university. They're always trying to help any way they can.

Coming to Michigan, it really wasn't even about football. It was about setting myself up, my future family up for the next 40 years, and I've done that. I tell a lot of people, say I didn't go to the NFL next year. And I'm not even thinking about it. I'm thinking about now, but say I didn't. I already won. I already won because I have a Michigan degree. I won at life.

That Michigan degree goes a long way. The Michigan connections go a long way, and I'm going to be good for life.

Q. What did you major in?

BLAKE CORUM: Sports management, yeah.

Q. What have you learned about yourself this year?

BLAKE CORUM: I've grown. I've grown as a man. I've grown spiritually. I've learned a lot just throughout the journey, through all the trials and the tribulations, you can call it.

What I've learned is I'm a happy guy. I'm always trying to make someone else smile. If someone is down, I'm always picking them up. Just trying to see the best in the world because every time I wake up, it's a blessing. Every time I get to wake up and breathe and smell and stand, I just thank God for everything.

What I realized along my journey was I didn't practice what I preached. When I did get surgery, I fell into a little hole, a little hole where I started doubting myself. Maybe I even started doubting God at that point. That's not me.

When everybody else is down, I'm, You got this, You're going to be good, You have to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I wasn't doing that, and that's what I learned about myself. That's when I became more spiritual. I connected with God more.

It's been good. I tell everyone, I'm blessed. I don't want to say I'm glad I got injured, but it helped me become a better man, and I appreciate it.

Q. We'll see what happens with Donovan coming back

next year. How do you feel about this running back room that you leave behind?

BLAKE CORUM: When I leave, whether Donovan comes back or not, they're going to be ready. Kalel Mullings, we've seen what he can do throughout the year. Ben Hall and Cole Cabana, he is looking pretty good. He's gotten a lot better along his freshman year.

It's a great running back room, and if Donovan comes back, the running back room is stacked. The thing about the room and what Coach Hart does a great job at is making sure we all have good connections, good vibes. We all love each other and push each other, and no one cares who gets the ball.

No one cares who scores the touchdown. We just want to see each other succeed. That's what's special about this running back room. I know it could be a conflict in other rooms, but it's not in ours.

Q. Is there a guy that reminds you of you?

BLAKE CORUM: A guy that reminds me of myself? I wouldn't say there's a guy that reminds me of myself. I try to take a little bit from running backs that I like, whether that be Barry Sanders, I try to take a little from him and add it to my game. Marshawn Lynch, just beast mode, the mindset, I try to add that to my game. A little Alvin Kamara.

There are lots of running backs that I just watch and say I'm going to add that to my toolbox, I'm going to add that to my toolbox. I wouldn't say there's a running back I try to be like. I try to be myself, but I try to use all the greats and what they did and put it in my own toolbox.

Q. How do you prepare mentally for this big game?

BLAKE CORUM: How am I preparing mentally for this big game is just how I prepare for a game playing Ohio State or Penn State. I'm giving it my all.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

BLAKE CORUM: It's not that type of vibe because you have to look at each team the same, whether you are playing Bowling Green or Alabama. Obviously Bama is a great team.

Q. What team does that for you personally?

BLAKE CORUM: What team what?

Q. (Indiscernible)?



BLAKE CORUM: Playing against Alabama, it's going to be a great game. I'm excited because it's Alabama. It's Nick Saban. But we're Michigan, and we've got Jim Harbaugh.

Like I said, every game I get fired up for, but obviously we're in the Rose Bowl. We're playing against Alabama. It's two great legendary universities just going at it.

Yeah, this game does get me fired up, but I wouldn't say it changes any type of dynamics. It's just a great game. I've been studying the defense. They have a great defense coached by great coaches. Like I say, you have to treat it just like it's a game. You know it's more, but you can't do more just because you know it's the Rose Bowl or just because it's Alabama. You have to stick to the plan because when you start doing more, that's when you start messing up and start over-thinking and stuff like that.

I'm treating it as Alabama is a great team. I've been studying really hard, and I'm going to treat it as such, as a big game. Nothing that gets me like all -- yeah, yeah.

Q. Does it make it easier or harder, do you think, to prepare with Christmas time off? You have more time to develop skills, or do you have to wait?

BLAKE CORUM: It's pros and cons I guess that come with it. You watch the same plays over and over again when you are watching film. Then it's like, damn, when is the game going to be here? I'm sick of hitting my teammates and sick of going against my teammates. I want to go against a different color.

There's pros and cons to it. You get to study so much. When you get to the game, you literally might know exactly what they're going to do, but no team is going to let you know. They're going to change some things. They're going to bring different blitzes that we've studied, but there's pros and cons that come with it.

Monday is right around the corner now. I'm good it's right around there. It's almost there.

Q. You have so much happening off the field this season. How did this team keep it together and keep going and stay as steady as they did?

BLAKE CORUM: We just came together. A team that I thought couldn't get any closer because we have a tight team, tight-knit team. We did. We didn't let the outside sources, outside people bother us. We didn't let anyone change our thoughts or what we thought about ourselves or about this team. We just kept pushing, man.

When adversity hits, you can do two things. You can crumble, or you can keep going. We just kept going. We knew there was going to be a light at the end of the tunnel, and he with didn't let anyone bother us. We knew our mission, and we knew we had to complete the mission.

The mission is not complete. We're still going forward, but that's how we kind of attacked the season with everything that's happened.

Q. Do you credit that to the coaches or team captains? Who is responsible for that?

BLAKE CORUM: I think it's everyone. It's not one person. That's what makes a great team. A team together, everyone accomplishes more. That's what made us great. It's not one coach. It's not one captain. It's not one player. It's all of us coming together that we all bought into, all right, this is our mindset, this is how we're going to attack each and every day, this is how we're going to stick together and just fight for other brothers.

I wouldn't credit to it anyone, but more so just the team.

Q. Taking time to reflect on your personal journey, (indiscernible)?

BLAKE CORUM: It's been a heck of a journey, man. Just coming from a small town. You know, now you call it the Big Leagues, but it's been a journey, things I've done and things I've had to go through, the driving to high school two hours there, two hours back every day. And now here at Michigan on our third College Football Playoffs. Who would have thought, but God is good.

I do reflect on it, especially just because I was here getting surgery last year. This is my third time back to L.A., but this time I'm healthy, feeling good. Yeah, I do reflect on my journey because it's been a good journey, man.

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