

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Alabama vs Michigan

Saturday, December 30, 2023
Pasadena, California, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide

Jalen Milroe

Press Conference

Q. What was your reaction when you turned the corner and saw that giant Rose Bowl Stadium?

JALEN MILROE: It's a lot of emotion that comes with seeing everything. Me as a football fan, I grew up watching football a lot, and one of the things I saw was the Rose Bowl and all the historic background that comes with it.

So now to be a part of the Rose Bowl is a true blessing. Then also the journey this team has been on to now be able to achieve such an outstanding task to be here is a great thing.

Q. Look at some of the other Alabama quarterbacks that have passed through the program, from Tua to Hurts to Mac, how would you define the way you play the game that's different from your predecessors?

JALEN MILROE: First of all, as quarterbacks, all we want to do is play to the standard, which is the 'Bama standard at Alabama. Coach Saban did a great job with each of those quarterbacks and developing and getting them to where they ultimately want to go.

For me, with those guys the best thing I can do is soak up as much information as possible because they did things the right way when they wore the A. For me, I just try to continuously be better at my craft and be the best version I can be for my team. Coach Saban has done a really good job with each of those quarterbacks and developing them and getting them to where they ultimately want to go.

Q. It seems like this offense really took off toward the tail end of the season. What started clicking for you guys?

JALEN MILROE: I think the number one thing we did as a team was look in the mirror. Look in the mirror and have singular focus. I think we have a really good brotherhood



within the locker room, and then we also have a really good coaching staff to uplift us and then push us in directions to be successful.

All I can do is applaud our offense because our staff did a really good job of putting us in a position to be successful.

Q. Michigan is not giving -- they're the only defense not giving up more than 10 points per game this season, top two in yardage. What do you see when you turn on the tape that makes them so potent as a defense?

JALEN MILROE: 100 percent. There's a reason why they're the No. 1 team in the country. Statistically they're ranked really high in all, whether it's interceptions or causing a lot of turnovers, negative plays. That is something we have to stay away from when we're playing this football team.

The first thing that speaks out when you look at the tape is how physical they play. They have a veteran core. Then they have a lot of stunts and twists and stuff like that. That's something we have to prepare really well for in this game because they're going to hit us with a lot of things in this game.

All we have to do is prepare the right way and be ready to play.

Q. When you went home, did you realized that people talked to you a little bit differently this year?

JALEN MILROE: Well, I limit access to people. So all I was around was family. I got off the plane and then went home. That was it. I didn't go nowhere. So I stayed with my family because that's who I really wanted to see when I went home. I try to limit access to people as much as possible.

Q. Can you take me back to week 3. You come off that loss to Texas. You find out you're not going to play the next week. How did you react? What was your feeling? What was your mindset at the time?



JALEN MILROE: Yeah, 100 percent. The biggest thing I could be is the best person I can be for my teammates because, at the end of the day, we share the A. No matter who's playing, we all wear the A.

I fall back to the FAMILY acronym -- Forget about me. I love you. At that time, it wasn't my time. It was more about shining the light on my brother and allow him to grow and allow them to display all the hard work they display through the off-season.

For me it's just all about being the best teammate I can be.

Q. How much do you think about you're one win away from possibly going for a national title.

JALEN MILROE: 100 percent, man. Like the biggest thing was in the off-season we set short term goals and long term goals. All of our short term goals that we had, we achieved them. It's something to take a lot of pride in, a lot of things to be proud of.

Now we're at that long term goal, which is to have an extended year after the regular season. So we accomplished a lot of good things.

We have a hard task in front of us right now, and to be able to accomplish more great things as a team, that would be great.

Q. What has the season been like for you? Can you describe the journey you've been on this season?

JALEN MILROE: Yeah, I think this season has been a learning experience for sure. Out of all the seasons that I've had, this has been one to remember for sure. Just to have my first year as a starter, to have such an uplifting background around me as far as my family, teammates, coaching staff. It's definitely been a great year.

We have a lot of unfinished business ahead, but all I can do is applaud our team because of how all the hard work that was in the off-season to get us to where we're at right now.

Q. What's the biggest positive lesson you've learned this season?

JALEN MILROE: The most positive lesson, Stay true to yourself. Never dim your light for someone's inability to see your worth.

Q. What have you learned about your game this year since the season started. Where have you gotten better, and what have you learned about yourself?

JALEN MILROE: I think the biggest thing was acknowledge I'm not a finished product. Constantly wanting to grow in every element of my game, I think that was very important to acknowledge that and embrace hard.

I think that's something that allows a quarterback to grow, allows a quarterback to be successful as an individual, one, is embrace hard. That was something I was challenged by the coaching staff, challenged by Coach Saban, and around me just to embrace hard and embrace the role of being a quarterback and being a leader of the team.

Q. What's the chemistry like with Coach Rees working with him for the first time?

JALEN MILROE: It's been great. I've really enjoyed being around Coach Rees, just being around him, such a good dude. Then he's easy to relate to with him being young.

And with him playing the position, I see football in the lenses of him.

Q. What kind of response have you got for the Bill O'Brien comments a couple of days ago?

JALEN MILROE: The biggest thing I want to do is focus on the game. All those things is a teaching moment, and all I want to do is focus on the game and be ready to play against Michigan.

Q. For all the ups and downs throughout the season, who has been your biggest supporter?

JALEN MILROE: My biggest supporter has been my mom, my dad, and my family.

Also, I've got to applaud Bhrett McCabe. That's someone who's been around me a lot and someone I've been able to talk to along the journey. I cherish our relationship, and I appreciate him.

Q. Do you have a favorite playoff game the past years?

JALEN MILROE: There's been a lot of good games. I'm biased towards it because I'm here with Alabama, I've got to say our last championship game. Our last championship game that we won in Miami. I'll choose that one.

Q. (No microphone)?

JALEN MILROE: I was blessed to be in a position to have the opportunity to play Division I. I can say that playing in



Katy, it catapults me to where I'm at right now. It's a hard place to play in because you have a lot of good competition, you have a lot of guys that are inspired to play at the next level.

I can say that being in Katy, it prepared me to be where I'm at. With my family, when we moved to Katy, it was the best thing for me. I'm definitely appreciative of it, and I've got to thank the city of Katy because it got me to where I'm at right now.

Q. Jalen, we're in Southern California, we're in L.A., Hollywood, the stars, the celebrities that are here. I want to know from some of the guys, if you were to make a movie about the Alabama football team this year, what actor would you want to play yourself?

JALEN MILROE: He got to be good looking (laughter).

Q. Is that the only thing you care about?

JALEN MILROE: That's the only one I care about, yeah. He got to be good looking. He got to be funny too. That's the other trait. You got to be funny, good looking. You got to have a personality.

Q. Do you have any examples?

JALEN MILROE: Who do you think? I think -- that's hard. Maybe Michael B. Jordan. He's a good actor. I like him. I choose Michael B. Jordan.

Q. After the Auburn game, who's the most famous person that you heard from?

JALEN MILROE: I ain't going to lie. Everybody was supporting it, reposting it, a lot of celebrities. I can't pick one that was like just stand out from others because it was so much attention towards that play. Yeah, I can't pick one.

Q. You said give me the Heisman after that play. The emotion that you felt and you showed, was there any other moment you felt that was like that?

JALEN MILROE: I take a lot of pride playing quarterback, especially here at Alabama. This is a special place to be at, especially now that I'm here and now just seeing everything as far as everything that's been along this process. I take a lot of pride wearing the A.

So every single time I get to take the field, my teammates, being around them, it's a special moment. It's something to be blessed about.

Q. What do you think about the Michigan defense and going up against them?

JALEN MILROE: They have a really good team. There's a reason why they're the No. 1 team in the country. There's a reason why they cause a lot of turnovers. There's a reason why they've had a great season.

It's a big task for us to really play 60 minutes, not 30 minutes, and really just focus on the task at hand and have singular focus throughout the whole game.

They're a really good team. It's a big challenge for us.

Q. (No microphone). What have you seen from them that's similar to an SEC team or anything better than what you faced this year? As far as the contain, gap discipline, what have you seen from that element?

JALEN MILROE: I have to say, playing in the SEC, there's a lot of tough opponents. There's a lot of complexity when it comes to what they offer in terms of trying to stop offenses and stuff like that. I can honestly say they have prepared me for big games like this.

Michigan definitely has a good team that's going to have something to try to affect our offense and try to stop us from having positive downs. So the biggest thing we have to do is just prepare as much as possible.

But we are aware they're going to have something for us in this game.

Q. What did you all learn from (No microphone)? Possible rematch?

JALEN MILROE: I think the biggest thing we learned was we're a team. We're a team, and we have a brotherhood that needed to come closer together because we could have easily dwelled on it, we could have easily lingered in past mistakes and lingered in tough times, but the biggest thing we did was embrace hard and really try to look in the mirror and figure out what are some things we need to do better as a football team.

Number one thing we need to do better is be a brotherhood.

Q. How was the Beef Bowl for you?

JALEN MILROE: It was great. It was my first time there. I enjoyed it. That was my first time there.

Q. How did you have your steak?

JALEN MILROE: I had it medium.

Q. How much did you weigh before the weigh in and after the meal?

JALEN MILROE: I ain't going to lie. This was like Thanksgiving. What I was before Thanksgiving and what I was after Thanksgiving was a lot different. That's exactly what it was yesterday.

Q. Hope you're not feeling it on the field during Rose Bowl day.

JALEN MILROE: I'll be good. I've been taking care of my body and hydrating.

Q. What's the key to victory?

JALEN MILROE: Key to victory -- have singular focus, embrace hard, gel with one another, and do our job.

Q. What are your words of inspiration that will motivate you to come out victorious?

JALEN MILROE: I think words of motivation to really just -- constantly just build on the next play and have single focus.

Q. Is it fair to say you're more confident in these type of settings than maybe earlier in the season?

JALEN MILROE: I think the biggest thing is to have confidence. So it's something you can't lack to really be successful at the position, but really to have a good supporting cast around me.

I take a lot of pride in that because I have a really good supporting cast around me, whether it's the medical staff, whether it's the academic staff, the coaching staff. I have a lot of nice pieces around me to really uplift me to get me to where I'm at right now. So that's something I take a lot of pride in.

Q. What did you see in yourself that maybe others didn't? What did they miss?

JALEN MILROE: The biggest thing I didn't do was dim my light for someone's inability to see my worth. I think that was very crucial to really understand that and really try to just acknowledge that I wasn't a finished product as much as possible and try to build as much as possible.

My dad does a really good job with me as far as the quarterback position and developing me throughout the whole year, and I got to compliment Quentin Milroe.

Q. You always got to compliment your dad. Who came up with let every naysayer know? Was that you? A bunch of guys?

JALEN MILROE: It was a collective group. It was the collective group. It was something we built in the off-season to get us to where we're at right now. When you talk about let all naysayers know, it was a group effort.

Q. What was the mindset of this team after weeks 2 and 3, and what was your mindset? And how did you guys get to this point?

JALEN MILROE: The job not done. The job not done. That was the biggest thing. With anything, we just acknowledged that it was going to be a hard task to finish the season, and we looked at the mirror, and we acknowledged that all of our short term goals were there, all of our long term goals were there.

We really fell back to our level of training from throughout the off-season. What we did was embrace hard, and that was something that got us to where we're at right now. I'm super proud of the team because that is something that we embrace, that is something that's going to get us along the road and that's going to get us to this game.

Q. Since you brought it up, how hard is it to be told you suck?

JALEN MILROE: It's definitely hard, but you've got to stay true to yourself.

Q. When did you really start working as a quarterback? When did you know that you have talent?

JALEN MILROE: I would say as a little kid, all I wanted to do was find a ball and play with it and throw it around and play basketball, this sport, this sport. I didn't really know what I wanted to do.

But my dad was someone who put me in position to play the quarterback position. We picked up the ball when I was 4 years old, didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. I picked up a baseball. I played basketball. But when it came to football, that's something that me and my dad trained throughout the years.

As I got older, it was just more like this is something I could see myself doing, something that I could provide for my own family one day. So that is something that I'm passionate about, and I've got to applaud my dad for that.

Q. Jalen, I know you're in the midst of the season. Have you had the opportunity for yourself to just reflect back and enjoy the moment?

JALEN MILROE: Not at all. I've just been grinding. I've just been grinding, you know. The biggest thing I can't do is take my foot off the gas. I've got to keep going because there's unfinished business ahead.

Q. I saw you with guys back here. How much fun has this group been for you to just be around? It seems like you all just literally enjoy each other day in and day out. I asked Coach Saban about that. He literally talked about how much he enjoys you all. How fun has this group been?

JALEN MILROE: 100 percent. That is something that I truly see for a true brotherhood, and they give me motivation to play. They motivate me. They uplift me, and they put me in a position to be successful.

I take a lot of pride in wearing the A and what all it comes from. Right now you see the players, but we've got to applaud our medical staff, our academic staff, and our coaching staff because they put us in a position to be successful.

We have a lot of guys that graduated in three years, graduated in two years, we have a lot of guys that have their Masters. This upcoming game, you'll see guys with a graduate pouch. There's a lot of things to be proud of with wearing the A.

Q. Are there times where you felt mad at your dad because he was tough on you?

JALEN MILROE: 100 percent. My dad has a military background. He's really detail oriented and all about following the task at hand. The task at hand was listening to Daddy. That was important because it's funny because when you're younger, you don't see what exactly your parents meant by something or why they did something.

When you get older, you acknowledge it, and you understand what they meant when you get older. My dad did a really good job with raising me and also putting me in a position to be successful and play in Division I.

Q. Jalen, as a guy that has grown up with knowing the history of the Rose Bowl, what does it mean to be here in Pasadena playing in the Rose Bowl against a program like Michigan?

JALEN MILROE: It's a true blessing to be here because, as a football fan, you grew up watching a bunch of

historical games. Watched a bunch of football and stuff like that, waking up on Saturdays and ready to turn on college football.

To be here is a true blessing, and I've got to credit the guys for getting us here, and I've got to credit our coaching staff and all the players in the locker room because we have a really good group and that's the reason why we're here.

Q. I think one of the things I like about you the most is your willingness to stand up in front of the media. Things didn't go well in Texas. You took a lot of the blame. Things didn't go well, and you have a great smile after the game. How have you been able to develop your comfort here? You're sitting at the podium with a Super Bowl kind of feel. Without having the experience, how did you develop the comfort in doing what you do and representing the team?

JALEN MILROE: You've got to remain the same whether it's good or bad. You've got to remain the same. You can't be too high or too low.

The biggest thing, I've got to compliment my supporting cast because without them, I couldn't be where I am today. That's something I take a lot of pride in is who is around me. The biggest thing I've got to say about that is just to honestly just embrace hard and embrace the challenges that come with playing at the Division I level.

I take a lot of pride in this with who's all around me.

Q. Want to ask about the relationship between you and Coach Rees. You guys entered the season together. First time starter for you, first time offensive coordinator for Alabama. What's it like being with him, not only on the field, but just your personal relationship?

JALEN MILROE: He's been really good for me. To have him here as the offensive coordinator, it's been really good because we have a really good bond together. We're doing this together. We're not doing it separately. That is something that we have.

We have a team, and he's part of my team. I'm super happy to have him. He played the position at a very high level. So for me, all I can do is soak up that knowledge that he has and try to display that on the football field.

He put me in position to be successful, and he put our team to be successful and take us to where we're at right now.

Q. I'm sure you've visualized yourself playing already



on this field. When you see yourself having success, do you see yourself scoring a touchdown with the legs or throwing a deep ball for the touchdown?

JALEN MILROE: Coach Saban talked about being a point guard with the football. I'm going to do all that has to be in that game plan and all that has to be in that play.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports