

# Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Oregon vs Ohio State

Sunday, December 29, 2024

Pasadena, California, USA

## Oregon Ducks Kobe Savage Press Conference

**Q. Does it feel any more real being here now or anything?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Yeah, definitely. I mean, it is still a business trip but, yeah, it's a blessing to be out here in LA.

**Q. What's the mood of the team arriving? Is it sort of business-like, or how would you describe that?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Yeah, I feel like the overall mood is definitely business. Coach Lanning does a good job of reiterating that throughout the week, telling us it's not really a bowl game, it's a playoff game and it's do or die, definitely a different mindset going into this with a different mentality.

**Q. Do you have memories of the Rose Bowl growing up watching it on TV with family?**

KOBE SAVAGE: I remember watching a little bit of Ohio State and I want to say Utah, when Jackson Smith, I think went for three touchdowns, that's my most recent memory. I know it's a historic game, just excited to be here and be in it.

**Q. With that business mindset, do you take a second to smell the roses, pat yourself on the back, or is it laser focus on that business right now?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Definitely. Being at the airport and looking around, driving through here, getting to this hotel, it was crazy seeing LA. But like we said, we're really locked in for this game.

**Q. Have you guys been antsy to play? It's been a long layoff, probably a lot of rest, which is good, but have you guys been antsy to get this game started?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Yeah, just practicing all month of



**PLAYOFF  
QUARTERFINAL**



December and January, really excited to get back out there instead of going against each other, finally get to go out there against Ohio State and showcase what we've got.

**Q. Do you feel the bye week helped you guys? There was a lot of external debate of who that helps. How do you feel the bye week helped this team?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Yeah, I felt it got a lot of air under our wings, being able to get the recovery in, extra film in, being able to study both Tennessee and Ohio State. I feel mentally and physically it helped us a lot.

**Q. I feel we have seen several evolutions of the Ohio State offense since you played them in October. What have you seen in recent weeks, and how are you going to contain Will Howard?**

KOBE SAVAGE: I mean, a great explosive offense, with great receivers on the outside and two solid backs and a good quarterback in Will Howard.

I feel like the biggest thing is just honing in our keys, playing our game. I feel like we're one of the best teams, if not the best team in the country whenever we are just playing our game.

**Q. What changes in your approach this time around?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Really just honing into the details and preparation, knowing that this could be our last game, that it's do or die, like I said earlier; just finding the edge in the details, what will separate us in this game, and the little keys maybe recovery or extra film that will help us out.

**Q. Knowing Will Howard as you do, how much do you think that last game stuck in his craw the way it ended?**

KOBE SAVAGE: I'm sure it definitely stuck with him. He's a great competitor, a great guy, overall a good leader and just a great person that you would love to compete with out there on that field. It's going to be a great battle being able to go out there with him again.

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

**Q. You transferred here in the offseason. Just the vision that you were sold, seeing it actually come to life, how does that feel?**

KOBE SAVAGE: It's amazing. I knew it was going to come to fruition, just the guy Coach Lanning is and the staff that he has surrounding us and all the players we have at Oregon. It's not too much of a surprise, but it's definitely just a great feeling being out here.

**Q. Speaking of Coach Lanning, what's been his approach in your preparation the past few weeks knowing that Ohio State is going to be out for revenge and that whole narrative, how has he addressed that?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Like I was saying earlier, just that business trip mindset. We're not really taking this as a bowl game, we're just excited to come out here, showcase our abilities to the best we can, and just leaving no stone unturned. That's the biggest thing we've got.

**Q. What do you remember about the way that first game ended because it was like that, (snaps fingers), oh, the clock's out and we win? What do you remember about that?**

KOBE SAVAGE: That it was just really competitive, like it was just punch after punch. I remember there were several lead changes in that game. I try not to even pay attention to the score, but just different flows of momentum, offense, defense, even special teams, that was big for us. Just blow after blow, like a seventh-round fight.

**Q. What do you make of the mental strength of this team? Seems like a lot of the guys talked about the culture and the mentality as something that really shines.**

KOBE SAVAGE: Yeah, I feel like it's a big group of tough guys, a lot of tough guys, who just have the mental fortitude to go out there, do their job for their brother, lay it out on the line for each other. That's one of our DNA traits is connection and sacrifice, is that we're going to sacrifice our body and our mental for whatever we can for our brother next to us.

**Q. Have you thought about the JUCO waiver that was given out and your options and what that gives you?**

KOBE SAVAGE: Yeah, definitely. Coach Hamp talked to me a little bit about that. But, yeah, I had that on my mind a little bit during the Christmas break for the three days we got. But other than that, really my main focus is to beat Ohio State.