

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Oregon vs Ohio State

Sunday, December 29, 2024

Pasadena, California, USA

Ohio State Buckeyes

Will Howard

Press Conference

Q. I've heard of quarterbacks buying gifts for their offensive line, and that was quite an endeavor. How many 55-inch TVs did that entail?

WILL HOWARD: I think it was about 130. So, yeah, I can't take responsibility for that. That was all Element Electronics and Logan Hittle and those guys setting that up and getting that done. I wanted to make sure that I got something for everybody. I think a 55-inch TV is not too bad.

Q. Those TVs are strictly for (indiscernible)?

WILL HOWARD: Exactly, HDMI cord. If they get the iPads, laptops hooked up to it, watch some film.

Q. When you fly out here and you're now here, walking up the steps with the roses, has it all hit you that you're getting set to play in your first Rose Bowl?

WILL HOWARD: It's still crazy. We're trying to look at this as a business trip. I've been on trips before. This one's probably the most high profile, the most at stake. But, like I said, we're trying to treat it like a business trip.

This isn't a normal bowl trip. We're not here necessarily to go sightseeing or checking out the city. We're here to win a football game. That's what we're here for. We're going to be hunkered down doing everything we can to get this win.

Q. As you talk about the motivation of getting over that October 12th game, I think you talked about earlier in the week you're trying to balancing that with not getting too high with emotion. How does that motivation show up for you on a day-to-day basis? Is there more preparation, more film? What do you do?

WILL HOWARD: It's more of an edge, I feel like, and



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carrying that kind of that pissed-off mentality. Obviously not letting it affect you in a negative way, but making it remind you, hey, I'm going to go the extra inch here. I'm going to see if I can find something extra on film late at night. Or I'm going to go over this sheet again with all the plays one more time. All these little things that we just can't let what happened last time happen again.

Q. Earlier this week (indiscernible) was talking about playing backyard football he pretended to play in the Rose Bowl. You grew up in Big Ten country. What does it mean to take part in this game? What did this game mean to you growing up?

WILL HOWARD: It means a ton. It's crazy that God has blessed me and put me in this position to be here and be the quarterback in the Rose Bowl, a game that I grew up watching every single year. Some unbelievable games I've watched in the Rose Bowl, some classics. And just to be a part of it is a blessing.

And I think we're all humbled to be here, and we're all understanding of how unbelievable this opportunity is and we're not taking it lightly because, again, it's a business trip. And the only thing that we're looking at is we win this game, we go on to play in the Cotton Bowl.

It's really exciting. It's crazy that we're here and that we're a part of this. But can't let it be too big and just gotta go out there play football at the end of the day.

Q. Was it fair to say that you beat yourself up the way that first game ended?

WILL HOWARD: I think so. You go back and watch the film, I just didn't -- I'm hypercritical of myself, and I think we all are here. But I just look at it and I'm like, man, I don't think anyone this year beat us. I think we beat ourselves every time.

And you watch and we had the turnover in our own 20-yard line. And then they got the kick. It's two possessions they stole in the first half. And obviously the way the game ended, like, and we're still one point away. And that's what hurts.

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And it was a hostile environment in their place. I'm just thankful that -- I said this the other day -- but I'm just thankful that we get another opportunity.

Q. Do you feel like, looking back to two weeks before Tennessee, do you feel like there's a confidence about this group that maybe wasn't there until you all showed it -- put it all together? What's your sense of the team from that aspect? Does it feel a little bit different?

WILL HOWARD: I think a game like that instills confidence in guys because it shows us what we're capable of. But you can't beat complacency. And it can never be comfortability. It has to be confidence and drive. And that's what it has to urge us to be like, man, we can do this.

And when we play at our best, I don't think there's anyone in the country that can hang with us. But we have to be on our game. And we have to make sure that we can't let anything affect that.

Q. I feel like we've seen the evolution of this offense since mid-October. What do you want to see from the offense on Wednesday?

WILL HOWARD: At the end of the day I want to keep the ball moving down the field. Getting in a rhythm, I think, is going to be big for us. I think we did a really good job of that in the Tennessee game. And weathering the storm early, there were a couple of early calls that bailed us out in that game and kept us going. But regardless we kept the drive going.

For me, keeping us on schedule, taking care of the football and making sure we convert on third down and we're situationally good. If we do all that stuff -- obviously for me I want to lead these guys and drive the machine, because when we're on our stuff, we're hard to stop.

We've just got to make sure we finish our preparation these last two days and put our best foot forward.

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