

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Oregon vs Ohio State

Monday, December 30, 2024

Pasadena, California, USA

Oregon Ducks

Terrance Ferguson

Press Conference



**PLAYOFF
QUARTERFINAL**



Q. You're at the Rose Bowl, classic old Pac-12 - old Big Ten matchup. What does this mean to you?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: It means everything to us because it's a game that means a lot to us because the playoff game, one, but it's the next game for us. Just being able to stay on the West Coast kind of feels at home for us. I think that means it's a little more special for us.

Q. What have you learned about this team, going back to camp to where you are right now, that you didn't know that has, not surprised you, but impressed you?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: This team has impressed me just because it's so tough. We found ways to win games we probably shouldn't have won. There's times we didn't play our best football and we came out on top, whether that's the defense coming up big, the offense, or even special teams.

I think just the toughness and the resilience of this team and finding ways to win has been really impressive to me.

Q. Take us in the huddle. What's it like with Dillon Gabriel?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: Dillon Gabriel is a special person on and off the field. He's a great leader and someone you want on your team because he makes everyone around him feel special.

In the huddle, he's himself. He's funny, but he's also a competitive guy ready to attack.

Q. As far as the rematch, one-point game at your place, now a neutral site, when you watch Ohio State, what jumps out to you on film defensively?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: They're special across the

board. What makes them so good is they have elite athletes at every position. They attack the ball and play downhill. They're a physical team. They're an impressive group across the board. I'm looking forward to the challenge.

Q. This season for you specifically, what's going through your mind, what have you learned, how have you grown as a player as well as a man in order to help this offense?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: That's a great question. I appreciate it. I think growing as a player, I've just been able to step up in big plays and do what's best for the team. Sometimes as a tight end, you don't catch the ball. Sometimes you've got to block. That's not what everyone wants to do. But being able to do that for the team and just putting your ego aside.

I think growing as a man, I've grown in multiple ways. I think the biggest place I've grown is becoming a leader on this team, a better man of God, now a fiance. There's been a lot of transition for me this year.

I think the biggest is just being a leader, and I think that stems from being a man of God, reading the bible and taking a lot of that into football. I think that's very applicable to everything in life. That would be the biggest for me.

Q. Being a man of faith, how have you been able to balance, like you said, being a fiance, being on the No. 1 team in the country, your significant contributions? How have you been able to balance that and using your faith to navigate your way through that?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: I've said this before, I think the bible is just the road map to life. It's our playbook to life. Getting in the bible as much as possible for me, that teaches me to be a great man of God, to be the best fiance, future husband I can be, but also be a leader on this team and not really stem to the things of that world, be a good example for my teammates and everyone around me.



So it's just the playbook to life. The more you can spend your time in the playbook, you're going to be better at the plays. I think just getting your head in the bible.

Q. Who did you look up to growing up, as far as maybe not a tight end, but any player in the NFL that you looked up and said this is the kind of person I want to have some of their arsenal to put that in my arsenal, so to speak?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: Two guys that come into mind, not tight ends, Drew Brees. I was a big Saints fan growing up, so Drew Brees is my guy, and that's someone I look up to, my favorite player of all time.

As a faith thing, Tim Tebow. Tim was a Denver Bronco at one time, so right in my backyard. But he's a man of faith and just how he spoke about his faith is really inspirational.

Q. How are you feeling today? How's the excitement and enthusiasm looking coming up to Rose Bowl day?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: We're super excited, super energetic. Can't wait to be here. The weather is a little nicer than Eugene, so we're excited just to be out here. We're blessed, man. We're blessed.

Q. What will it take to come out victorious? You guys are No. 1 in the nation. Maintaining that, do you feel like that's a target on your back or what?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: I think, when you come to Oregon, it's a target on your back no matter what. Everyone wants to play their best football against us, and I think that's just emphasized when you have the No. 1 team.

We don't look at that. We play each next game, and every game matters because it's the next game. From here on out, it's 1-0 season. It's win or go home.

For us, we're just locked in. For us to win, we've got to play our brand of football -- physical in the trenches, run the ball, and just do what we do.

Q. What was the highlight of your season thus far?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: There's been a lot. I think just winning the Big Ten Championship would probably be the highlight so far. I came back from -- I had a chance to go to the NFL last year, and I decided to come back. That was the stuff worth winning. I think a Big Ten Championship falls in that category.

I've been to a couple Pac-12 championships, and I haven't

won one, so to finally come out on top and see the confetti fall for a Big Ten Championship was pretty special.

Q. As far as your faith, talk about do you have a favorite scripture that inspires you or motivates you?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: Yes, kind of a -- not corny one, but Philippines 4:13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. That speaks to playing football and being able to do anything through Christ.

I think the biggest part is through Christ. Everybody says I can do anything, but Jesus gives me that power and gives me the ability to do all the things I can do on the field. He's blessed me with amazing ability, an amazing life, and just all the resources I have around me.

Q. As far as your faith, who inspired or introduced you to your faith?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: My parents. I grew up in the church. Both my parents introduced me to faith. We were going to churches on Sunday, going on Wednesday night, youth group, whatever it was. So I grew up strong in the church. My mom and dad were both great role models in their faith. So I think they were definitely the biggest people.

Q. Yourself and kind of your fellow players up on the stages here received a lot of recognition this season for everything you've done and everything Oregon's done. Who on the team do you think hasn't received enough recognition?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: That's hard. I think there's a lot of guys on the team that actually don't receive the recognition they deserve. I think there's a lot of guys on this team that make this team go.

I think there's a lot of young guys like Kenyon Sadiq just came up. He does a lot of special teams as well as playing some offense for us. I think guys like Jabbar don't get the credit they deserve. Those guys are lockdown corners. I think Jeff Bassa for me. I can name a lot of guys. Those guys deserve a lot more recognition than they get now.

I think a lot of people don't talk about everyone on this team because I think everyone on this team is a high level football player.

Q. Terrance, we're here right before the Rose Bowl. It feels like a National Championship type game, it feels like a heavy weight fight from our side. What does it feel like on the inside?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: For us it's the same way. I've said this before, it's a 1-0 season from here on out. It's win or go home. So every game is kind of like that.

We have a great opponent across from us, and we're a great team as well. I like the heavyweight matchup look to it. There's a lot of good players on the field, a lot of elite talent, a lot of good coaches, two historic programs, and I definitely feel that way as well.

Q. We've obviously, coming from the outside again, gotten a kick out of some of the ways you guys have talked about your opponents and what's going to be important in these games coming up. Did you get to a point in the season where you're kind of excited to see what Coach Lanning is going to bring up for the next game and the next opportunity?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: Yeah, Coach Lanning does a great job of making us play with a chip on our shoulder, even when we probably shouldn't be. He does a great job of doing that.

Each week we have a theme of the week, and I look forward to it. It gets me fired up to go play the game.

Q. Can you tell me what the theme is this week?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: It's up in smoke this week. Up in smoke is kind of like the catch words for this week.

Q. So when you have an opponent that you guys are familiar with that you played in the season, how much do you take from that matchup, and how much is it what they've done since then?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: I think obviously you have the film against that team, so it's really good to use. But also they've changed as a team and we've changed as a team. I think both teams have gotten better throughout the season.

I think for us it's just worrying about what we can do. We know what they do on defense. Just taking care of our business and really focusing on ourselves is the biggest thing. They're a great defense, so you've got to make plays against them. Their offense is good, and they're a great team.

Q. Terrance, you talk a lot about offensive weapons on that side. Obviously you guys have no shortage there. How do you view your impact and Kenyon's impact in the tight end room and bringing this team together?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: I think our impact goes under

the radar because we block as well. Our group takes a lot of pride in blocking. You turn on the tape, and there's a lot of times we're blocking our butt off, trying to spring plays for the guy next to us.

Along with that, Kenyon in the passing game, me and all bring something in the passing game that's a mismatch. I think we have an elite group. I'm really proud of the guys in my room and everything they've done this year.

Q. It does speak to the different types of ways that Dillon Gabriel can get the ball downfield. For someone who transferred in this time last year, because of how well it flows and how well it works. How did you guys build that chemistry, and what makes him so special?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: I think that just speaks to Dillon as a person. He came in and earned his stripes right off the bat. He worked hard in the off-season. I think another thing is he cares about everybody on this team. He's a special leader. He makes everyone around him feel special. He makes sure that it doesn't matter if you're the third string, the starter, or the kicker. He's going to talk to you and make sure he has a special relationship with those people.

I think when you have a quarterback that you feel comfortable with and a guy of his stature, and just being one of the guys. He does that himself, and it really speaks to Dillon.

Q. Why do you feel like this Oregon Ducks team is built for moments like this?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: I think you just go throughout the season, we found ways to win. When the offense doesn't play great, the defense doesn't play great, the other side of the ball gets it. Even special teams. We've won games in every phase of the game. That just speaks to our toughness and our resilience.

Winners find a way to win, and I think that's what we've done this year.

Q. You guys have talked a lot about culture this season and your connection and everything. I'm wondering how that's manifesting right now for you guys, like given the stage, given how important these games are. What does that look like right now?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: We call them our DNA traits, and that's something we've built this program on. I think Coach Lanning has done a great job of instilling that culture into us. For us, it's the base of our team, being connected, growing, sacrifice, and those are the ones that



show up on the field.

I think you watch our film, you see how connected we are. You see the toughness our team brings to the field. Now more than ever, we lean on those. Whether that's having a meal with the guys or sacrificing stuff that you want to do but you can't do because we're in a big game, you're looking after your body or spending time doing something different. I think those are just the base of this team, and we lean on those.

Q. These road trips in particular, you guys took a lot of them this year and traveled long distances. How did the culture and the connection show up on those trips, like what did that look like for you?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: I think the biggest thing is just everybody who goes on those trips is a professional. We treat them as business trips. You don't really got to worry about anybody. That's a first for a team I've been a part of. Like I'm not worried about anybody messing around or goofing off or anything like that.

Everyone is the same, it's a business trip. We're here to handle business. I think everyone has bought into that and done a great job throughout the season doing that.

Q. What are some of the memories that stand out for you personally in terms of like the connection and fellowship and spending time with your team?

TERRANCE FERGUSON: There's a lot of memories honestly. In this short amount of time, you pull guys from everywhere across the country, and you've got transfers, you only have a couple really some months together. We've done a great job of building that connection.

I think some of the ones that stick out to me is Dillon put on a retreat, and we went down in his minivan to Grant's Pass, threw the ball around, got on a boat down the river, and just spent some time with the guys. That was really fun.

There's been some times -- I went to Hawaii with Dillon. That was really fun, seeing where he's from, seeing how he's built, with our fiancées. I spent a lot of time with Dillon especially, but the tight ends, we've gone and had meals together.

Another one that sticks out to me not too many weeks ago, we went up to Pat's house and shot shotguns, shot some clay pigeons. That was fun seeing the guys doing that. Everyone was safe, and everything went out good. It was just fun.

We have a lot of guys in the room and really on this team

that are connected outside of football, and I think that's the biggest thing for us.

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