

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Oregon vs Ohio State

Monday, December 30, 2024
Pasadena, California, USA

Oregon Ducks Jeffrey Bassa Press Conference



**PLAYOFF
QUARTERFINAL**



Q. What time they make you guys wake up?

JEFFREY BASSA: What was that?

Q. What time they make I guys wake up?

JEFFREY BASSA: Shoot, like 7:30. Around there. Actually, no, 6:30. Yeah, my fault. A little early but all good.

Q. What's the best part about playing football, the coolest thing?

JEFFREY BASSA: About playing football?

Q. Yeah. Football or for Oregon.

JEFFREY BASSA: Shoot, I would have to say the resources we have. You know, just inside the facility and outside the facility. Elite coaches and as well as elite resources, like Phil Knight showing up to the game and being on the sideline when you're playing.

And then all the celebrities, alumni that show up as well. I think just the brotherhood that we have here as well. That's also really underrated.

Q. Is it different than other teams you've been on in the past? How do you measure that?

JEFFREY BASSA: I for sure have to say this is one of the best teams I've ever been a part of. Just guys hanging out with each other and being close with each other. That's a you a separating factor nowadays with the transfer portal. With a lot of new guys coming from all across the country you got to be able to bond with those guys.

Q. Is it crazy like seeing how talented freshmen are. See young guys come in. You're an older guy, so

compared to your class? Is it the same or is to getting better?

JEFFREY BASSA: I think it's getting better. Nowadays you're seeing a lot of freshman ready to play. I think that they've been developing. There is a lot of elite high school coaches that are coaching at an elite level right now. There is a lot of high school coaches that could be college coaches in recent years to come.

So I think just the development that the guys are getting in high school right now, having them is priming them to be college ready.

Q. You going go into coaching?

JEFFREY BASSA: We'll have to see. I'll have to double back on that. Yeah, no, that's for sure something that's in the back of my mind, you know coaching. Because loving this game of football, it's always going to be something that I want to be a part of.

Q. Do you think you'll be the kind of guy that retires? Are you always going to work?

JEFFREY BASSA: Shoot, I want to retire for sure, you know.

Q. Retire early, be young?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, for sure. Have to say one of my goals is to be in the Hall of Fame, right? So retiring in the Hall of Fame.

Q. Is there a sacrifice that most people wouldn't understand playing football and being an athlete?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, a lot of time. You got to sacrifice nice a lot of time for some of the things that you want to do, right? You might have some like student friends going out a lot, right, but you can't live that same lifestyle.

Just got to put in a lot of sacrificing time.



Q. Is that something you learned or were you just kind of like this is the way it is?

JEFFREY BASSA: Just really knowing that this is the way it is with our schedule. Coming in my freshman year it was like, wow, we're always busy all the time. Even on weekends when we don't have something it's always getting better, getting better, getting better, right? So you want to get better at your craft all the time.

You might have to do some stuff that might not be fun but what's required.

Q. Coach talks a lot about trying to make a team play left-handed. Is there a different advantage to that?

JEFFREY BASSA: I wouldn't say that. Just treating the task at hand the same. We know this is a championship level team and championship level game. We know we're going to give it our best shot and we're going to get their best shot.

Q. So when you think back to kind of how this season started, probably obviously for you in the Idaho game and getting banged up throughout the course the season, to get to this point and think about all the work that's gone into it, how do you describe all the ups and downs of it?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, it's been a lot of trials and tribulations. I think that like you said, getting banged up earlier in the season, you know that attacked my mindset, my resiliency of getting back from injury, keeping my spirits up with my teammates knowing that they look at me as a leader and as a guy on defense especially.

So I think that shows a lot about my resiliency, just keeping consistent, keeping the same mindset even when I start to get back in my groove again, feeling like myself again, right, feeling 100%, just showing them that nothing ever died down and nothing fell off the table.

I think that shows a lot about just my character as well.

Q. How do you describe yourself as a leader? What do you try to do as a leader this season?

JEFFREY BASSA: Oh, yeah, very vocal, especially on the field. You know, if you're attending one of our practices I'm always talking and communicating. You can see it in my game, as well, always talking and communicating and letting my teammates know what I see and the checks and calls, right?

Then as well as a connection type of guy. For sure have to

say a guy that can hang out with a lot of different position groups that you wouldn't expect me to hang out with. Just being close with everybody on the team, relating to them on a person level, right? Knowing how to talk to different teammates. Knowing what motivates them. Knowing their why, right?

I think that's something you need in the locker room and something you really want as a leader. You don't just want a leader that is enforcing the culture all the time. Also having a leader who understands his teammates and the standard of the program as well.

Q. Connection is one of those traits, right, that you guys talk about. I know it starts at the top. Coach Lanning talks about it. The way you and your teammates talk about it, felt it throughout the roster. How do you see that kind of help you guys throughout some of the tougher times?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, I think that just goes into leaning on your brothers in tough moments. There is multiple games this year that were tough, right? So sometimes you got to lean on your brothers, letting them know you have their back and they got your back. You've got to know that, right?

So going into these tough situations you already have all that trust and belief in your teammates. When it comes down to that, all the connection stuff, hanging out with each other, even though it might be lunch for five minutes, right, just have a good conversation with your teammates.

So because you never know when that belief and trust and connection will come down to.

Q. It feels from the outside to us that this feels like a national championship caliber matchup, really heavyweight fight. Does it feel that way to you guys?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, for sure, especially playing them the first time. We got their best shot last time. I know they're even fired up to -- even more fired up to play in this game, especially in the Rose Bowl. We know it's a one-game season. We're going to get everybody's best. With seeing these guys again, it's a blessing to see them again.

Q. And then what excites you about what you guys could do better in this matchup based off what you saw and have talked about?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, defensively, I think there was just some mess-ups we had from last game. We were able to correct it on the sideline during the time and that may be

from just little things, right? Having our eyes in the right place or coverage adjustments.

Looking back to the self-scout we know we attacked it heavily throughout the bye week and the work week I should say, as well as having this break before this game as well. So attacking that at a high level and knowing we got to take the ball away more.

So, yeah, that was something we looked at heavily.

Q. Good morning. How you feeling first of all?

JEFFREY BASSA: Great, man, great.

Q. How is the enthusiasm? You step out onto the field come Rose Bowl day, January 1, what will it feel like, the enthusiasm stepping out onto the field?

JEFFREY BASSA: I think it'll be through the roof. I can't even -- man, I'm getting fired up right now just thinking about it, right? I think just it will be through the roof, just taking it all in pre-game realize how blessed we are to be in this moment and see this team again.

So I think it's something that I can't even describe into words, right? Something that you just got to be there and feel it, right? Just taking everything in.

Q. Personally, what is your motivation? What is your inspiration? What's within your DNA that makes a winner?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, for sure have to say my family and then my desire and perfectionism to be the greatest, to be the best.

I think that I have a large ambition and I'm very hard on myself. I'm a guy that wants everything to be perfect. If it's not, if I don't feel like it's up to my standard, I'm hard on myself. Yeah, I think that just that I'm a dog player. Just knowing that going out there with the mentality every day that I'm the best every time I step on the field.

I think that's it.

Q. What inspired you as you were growing up? What player or athlete was an inspiration to you growing up?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, I have a couple right now. Patrick Willis and then Sean Taylor, two players I was really inspired by. And Luke Kuechly as well when it comes to his smartness, leadership, just his -- being able to be an enforcer on the field, right?

Those are a couple guys that stand out to me right now.

Q. What would you say to all your friends, family, and fans?

JEFFREY BASSA: Shoot, appreciate you guys, man, for believing in me, trusting in me. I know that you guys have been there for me ever since day one, right? Thank you for taking me under your wing, Oregon fans.

And then my family, I love you guys. Appreciate ya'll.

Q. Congratulations.

JEFFREY BASSA: Appreciate it.

Q. How you doing today?

JEFFREY BASSA: Good. How you doing?

Q. I'm doing all right. Thank you. Yourself and your fellow players up here on the stage have gotten a lot of recognition this year for what you've done, Oregon has done. Are there players on the team that you think haven't got enough recognition? If so, who?

JEFFREY BASSA: Guys like Kingston Lopa who showed up in the Big10 Championship game. I think he's a young guy that's going to be really great for this program, a guy who's role wasn't as large at the beginning of the season, but heading into just like I said the championship game, he had huge role on third down for us.

As well as guys like Noah Whittington. I feel like Noah Whittington hasn't really got a lot of shine. Man, he's a dog at the running back position. A guy who can block. He can catch a ball; passes out the backfield.

Those are two people that show up in the forefront of my mind right now. Sorry, as well, Jamaree Caldwell. Big boy on my defensive line. I think he's a guy who always doing his job. Always taking on double teams. Always in the right place at the right time.

But he is not going to get a lot of shine on the stat sheet. But a guy who's an enforcer.

Q. Rematch: Ohio State-Oregon. Here we go again. What feels different besides being a college football playoff game. What feels different about this one?

JEFFREY BASSA: Just knowing that we played these guys once and just having the blessing and the opportunity to play them again, right?

All the emotion and all the fire leading up to the previous game. We know it's a one-game season now. It's even more amped up this time.

Q. There was a down time. Age old discussion, rest, versus rust. Your head coach, he's different. No doubt about it when to comes to Dan Lanning. How do you make sure there was no rust that came in?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, just attacking everything every day. Knowing we had to go back and look at the self-scout on what we did throughout the season. Then after finding out we were going to play them over Tennessee, just going back and looking at what we did bad and also what we did good in the previous game and how we can be even better in these moments.

But also going into the work weeks, like you said, like having a lot of time leading up to this game, just looking at going back to the fundamentals and the details so we can play to the best of our ability.

Q. When you look at Will Howard, that two headed monster at running back. I think they spawn in a lab. Jeremiah Smith. What jumps out to you when you watch Ohio State offense?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, an offense that can fire on all cylinders. Can run the ball and can also pass the ball as well.

Q. When it comes to stopping that rushing attack, obviously every coach will tell you and you're going to tell me the same thing, got to stop the run first. How do you do that is that?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, you just do the to knock-back tackle. Those are two powerful running backs that can keep running their feet. Starts with the point of attack, knowing you got to have more strength at the point of attack. That starts with tackling low and driving your feet, right?

So starts with the fundamentals of football. You got to have them knocked back at the point of attack, especially with two great running backs like that, that's going to be critical.

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