

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Oregon vs Ohio State

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Oregon Ducks Dillon Gabriel Press Conference



**PLAYOFF
QUARTERFINAL**



Q. When you see Ohio State's defense, does it look a little different than you guys have played?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, they're extremely talented. Played this group before, and as time goes on, everyone involves and gets better. They've done that. You see that on tape. They continue to run around and play really well. Excited for the challenge and know that two great teams going at it is the fun about college football.

Q. It's so rare that two games are exactly the same. Do you feel like this will play out a little differently?

DILLON GABRIEL: I don't know. We will find out and see, but for the most part, like I said, it's two great college football programs that have been known for great football, and when that happens, it's a recipe for a great environment. Excited for that, and then to top it off, it's at the Rose Bowl.

Q. You guys have talked a lot about culture this season and about connection and everything. How is that showing up right now, and how important is that going to be?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, I think as you build it, a team's culture, but also just how you are as a group together. We truly enjoy going to work every day together and have fun doing that, and I think that allows you to be genuine and authentic in what you're building. I feel like that's shown through our work and through our production on the field.

For the most part, I think once you get to this point, you've got to have some of that to even get to this point, if that makes sense.

Q. What are some of the challenges with trying to beat a team twice?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, just playing each other once, I think once you have that environment together, then naturally there's proof of concept, I guess you could say, of being able to go back to it and look at to get better on. But I think there's pros and cons for both teams. I think that's just the situation we are in now.

You see it in the NFL. You see it in college football. It's two great teams that have a great season playing a championship or here in the playoffs. I think it's not far-fetched anymore to play a team twice, and it's just kind of the road that we were both put on. Now here we're.

We're excited for it, and like I said, it's at the Rose Bowl, so what better way to do it.

Q. What are some things that you feel like you can take into this game that you learned from the last game?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, I think just the way we've played thus far. Watching what we've done and how we can get better, like I said, that past two weeks of self-scout, we were able to just -- whether it's looking inwards and trying to improve in different areas, and then also when it comes to opponent prep, using all that to our advantage and trying to be as prepared as we can.

Q. What do you want the fans of the Ducks (indiscernible) and you specifically?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, I love the Oregon Duck fans. I think this has been the most genuine fan base I've been around and fun to play for, and I think that speaks volumes because as fans and even a fan myself of other sports, you catch yourself being a little wild with comments or what some type of product should look like. But what I love about Oregon fans or even just people within the community, when you see people, just the positive energy they bring and words of encouragement. They are so thoughtful of that, and I appreciate that.

I really don't think it's just because of success. I just think the people we're around and the way Eugene has been for a while, I'm blessed to be a part of it because the

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community is special, the fan base is special, but really just the people that make this whole thing go is a huge part of why it's been fun.

Q. You have a lot of people from Hawai'i supporting you. What does it mean to have your family here watching you?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, it means a lot. I love being from Hawai'i. I love being born and raised and the experience you have as a young kid is special. I think when you grow up, you start to realize that that upbringing is part of what makes you different in a great way. I just want to represent everyone to the best of my ability. I've had great role models myself on how to do it, and I just want to continue that because I was once that little kid, and I know there's kids behind me that want to do the same and have big dreams and goals and aspirations for their careers and what they want to do.

I want to represent in a way that is real, it's genuine, but also being able to have fun and know that what we do is fun and where we're from is special.

Q. I was able to talk to your mom and she said if everything goes right, your family would be able to spend the new year on the mainland. What does it mean to have your family here with you?

DILLON GABRIEL: I think it's fun. Family is very important, obviously, but not just because we're blood related but the choice to be around one another and the support, the love and the connection we have, it's special, and I think as you get older, you have to value that in order to keep it close, and we do that.

They spend time around me and what I do and support me, and just having them around keeps me super happy, and I think the pure joy of just having people that love you and support you for who you are, that's irreplaceable. I'm very grateful for them.

Q. Last time Oregon was in the playoff was when Marcus was quarterback. Do you remember what it was like watching him and did you envision yourself being that person one day?

DILLON GABRIEL: I do. I wouldn't say envision it myself. Now that I'm here, it's crazy. I'm still shocked. But I think at a certain point, there's flashes and memories of watching him do what he did and now being able to go do it for myself, you appreciate that journey.

I think now that I'm on the journey myself, I tend to look to him and his experiences and how he's been better from it,

what he would change. Just having that relationship is very special.

Like I said, a lot of people, they don't have to do any of this, but he's understanding of the role that he plays and the leader he was, the trailblazer he was and is for growing athletes. I appreciate that and don't take it lightly because he doesn't have to do it but he does it out of the kindness of his heart because he knows I'm just a guy chasing my dream, as well.

Q. How did you approach working with the Dante?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, I think college football is interesting now, and you're able to be in different environments, different QB rooms, different unit rooms, and you learn a lot about people and how to adapt and how to push one another, but more importantly, Dante has just been a great friend of mine, my roommate on away games and even our home game hotels. But just that relationship has continued to grow. You appreciate a guy who pushes you in practice and the throws he makes and the plays he makes on a day-to-day basis, it allows us to push one another, but also a guy who's played the game in real time and his knowledge and being able to sit back there and now taking a different perspective, you appreciate that.

Like I said, he's a guy that is special, and I'm happy that we get to have this time together.

Q. (On Dante's growth from last year to this year.)

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, I think more than anything, he believed in Coach Lanning and the program that he was building and the people that are already here and the track record of the people he brings in or brought in. I think Dante is right where he needs to be. He wanted to come here in the beginning and now he's able to get right back here.

I think it was an easy transition because he's been here a bunch, and everyone knows him really well. But like I said, Dante is my dude, and he's a special dude.

Q. How would you describe Jordan James?

DILLON GABRIEL: Well, Jordan James is one of a kind in terms of practice and being physical. He's not afraid to get physical or create contact, and I think it's different because in practice you think there is that sense of taking care of one another, and he does, but he's the type, he's just a player. When he gets on that field, he's going to be physical. He's going to create contact. That's just his style of play.

He don't change that for practice. It's fun to watch. He kind of sets the tone for everyone in how we play.

Q. Is he one of the more physical players you've been around?

DILLON GABRIEL: He's up there. He's up there. I've played around a bunch of players, but I think just his nature, I think the combination of a lot of things, not only his physical nature but how fast he is, just the way he runs with the football. There's a lot that makes him special, and don't want to just limit it to physicality.

Q. (On Jordan Burns) how does that change you guys' mentality, or does it?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, we're better when Jordan Burch is playing. He's a great player. He's a great dude, one of my really close friends. But he's also one of our leaders.

I think all in all, he's a guy you want on the field, and happy we have him on the field.

Q. (On motivational speakers speaking to the team.)

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, I think Tim was unbelievable. His ability to motivate, but it being so natural and not have to be somebody he's not but more importantly just speak on his experiences and what he's been around, and that's greatness. I think his ability to tell that story and give us real-world examples, I think everyone was able to take it in in a different way and how it can connect to them. Whenever we can get a guy like him in our building, please and thank you. Happy we were able to have him there.

Q. (Indiscernible) what has his presence been like for you, not only on the field but off the field?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, on the field, another weapon, a guy who's a great playmaker, but off the field and just in the locker room, he's very calming and just a mature individual for his age. Anytime you can have him on the field, it's a plus, but more importantly, the locker room, the confidence he brings and the depth he brings to that room that's already pretty deep. We appreciate him and just that whole group. They're really good at keeping everyone together, and that's kind of their nature. The tight ends are very selfless leaders.

Q. (Indiscernible) experienced players in college football this season. How much have you found that experience uplifting this year and also in this moment?

DILLON GABRIEL: Yeah, the more opportunities you can

put yourself in any situation, I think you get more comfortable with it. That's not just football, it's anywhere in life. You learn more about the game, you learn more about people, and you're just able to be better.

As years go on, there's progression. There's improvement. There's evolution. I feel like I've had that chance. Not a lot of people get that chance at an opportunity, just the way college football is now, but I think there's something to it. I think there's something to patience and believing in a person and allowing them to flourish and grow, and I think it's kind of getting lost, and I think it's just the day and age of college football.

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