

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

Monday, December 30, 2024  
Pasadena, California, USA

## Oregon Ducks Tez Johnson Press Conference

### Q. What's the biggest difference between first time and now what you've seen?

TEZ JOHNSON: Their energy has changed. They are playing with way more chip on their shoulder right now. They are a very talented defense that you want to -- like for us we want to play an NFL defense. Everybody on that D-Line, linebacker core and that secondary, they are going to the NFL. We look forward to playing them. Looking forward to seeing them again because it's going to be a matchup that I don't think anybody has ever seen before.

### Q. What's the biggest difference with your team?

TEZ JOHNSON: Growth. The willingness to get better. Knowing the mistakes that we've had. We knew the exact place that we messed up on and now we know how to fix them. So we are going to execute on Wednesday.

### Q. The biggest difference between the Big Ten compared to the Pac 12, the entire season, was there a lot of difference between the two conferences?

TEZ JOHNSON: The big change or traditional -- oh, this guy is huge -- type of thing. Pac 12, you're going to see the most speed you can ever get. So speed going into the Big Ten, so that's when helps.

### Q. That helps?

TEZ JOHNSON: That helps a lot. I feel like Oregon over the years, forever, has been nothing but speed. I mean we not going to change for anybody. How fast -- if you can't catch a fast guy, you can't catch a fast person, you're not going to beat that team.

The game has changed a lot, whether that's NFL or college. Like you got guys out here that can actually move and know how to run from that, Ray Lewis type. It's been



PLAYOFF  
QUARTERFINAL



pretty remarkable how the game has changed over the years.

### Q. What's it mean to be part of a Bowl game, the Rose Bowl?

TEZ JOHNSON: The Rose Bowl, personally I never would have thought I would be in the Rose Bowl. But what more could you ask for? You're in the Rose Bowl. You're playing for Oregon. You're playing against one of the best teams in the entire country. Arguably going to be one of the greatest games that you've ever seen in college football ever. You can't ask for better than this.

### Q. Ohio State --

TEZ JOHNSON: It's perfectly fine. Nothing else to be said about that.

### Q. The first game against Ohio State, what made you so effective?

TEZ JOHNSON: I mean, I think just execution of the plays that were called. Just trusting that Coach, whatever he call, just go out and run it to the best of your ability, and when the ball is in there, go get it.

### Q. What's the key to winning the one-on-one matchups?

TEZ JOHNSON: Like I said, just sticking to your rules. When the ball is in the air, go get it and beating that same guy one-on-one, yes.

### Q. Is there anything additional --

TEZ JOHNSON: Confidence come from your preparation. So every Tuesday, we play this game already. So when we go out there on January 1st, we've just got to rehearse it for the fans. This game has been played a million times already. We have been out there. Let's go showcase for the fans and give them something to cheer about.

### Q. Every week is like spring camp for you guys. How is that manifesting now?



TEZ JOHNSON: We just know, like, the connection piece about this team, nobody can come in between us as far as connection-wise whether that's a receiver hanging out WR with the D-Line, and you don't normally see receivers hanging out with D-Line or quarterback hanging out with O-line. You don't really see stuff like that. That tells you how connected we are as a team. We trust each other. We are willing to go out with each on the field and die, literally. That's how we carry ourselves going into every game.

**Q. Inaudible.**

TEZ JOHNSON: All elite guys. Denzel, probably the smartest corner I've ever seen in college football. His IQ for football, knowing the game of football, you know he's a smart guy and you know how he's going to play his techniques. Caleb, he can get in the box like a Mike linebacker and go make a play. Jordan Hancock is really good in covering the slot that you have to get to your spot and beat him. He's a really good guy and I'm looking forward to that matchup.

Then you have No. 1 corner over there. He's a really good corner, ranging corner, comes from the SEC. But we know his weaknesses. So we definitely going to be on high alert for that.

**Q. How did that show up --**

TEZ JOHNSON: He's everywhere where he's supposed to be. If you think you're open, you're really not. He's one of those corners, he'll get interception on you quick if you're not careful. There's things like that that you don't come across as a corner.

**Q. Do you have any memories, specific memories, of the Rose Bowl game?**

TEZ JOHNSON: Yeah, Wisconsin. I think that's the one I remember. I have never seen somebody run so fast in my life as a kid when I seen that. I was like, whoa.

**Q. Is there any extra motivation that you guys are going to be the No. 1 team still?**

TEZ JOHNSON: It doesn't matter. Like I said, nobody believed us -- in us in the first place so why believe now? We don't care. Underdogs, No. 1. It doesn't matter. We go 1-0 each week.

**Q. When you first heard about Dillon, what were your first impressions --**

TEZ JOHNSON: I knew him when he was at UCF and I watched him a little bit because one of my coaches from Troy went to UCF, Coach Lindsey and Blackmon. So I followed him up a little bit. I kind of followed him up a little bit and did some little research.

And when I seen him coming to Oregon, I knew right then and there I need to get with him and get on that field. He got some stuffs to him that nobody has seen to him before.

When he was at Oklahoma playing against Texas in big games, like that guy can pull it off. You don't see too many quarterbacks in big games pull it off like that unless you're Patrick Mahomes or something like that, you know what I mean. Him coming here has been nothing but the best for him, his family, and his fiancée that he just got engaged.

So he's a quarterback you want on your team. His willingness to get better and be the best. He's the best quarterback in the entire nation. Like I don't know if anybody else agree but this team knows like he's the best quarterback that's in this playoffs, period. That's the highest quarterback right there. I don't see no other quarterback out here doing the things he do. He's, what, 5-2-something wet, walking through a ball like a missile. We love that guy, like his energy comes alive every day, the smile on his facing goofy.

He the oldest guy on the team but everyone treats me and him like the youngest. That's the craziest thing I've ever seen. He's a little brother and I'm little brother. I think it's because of height. I love him to death and can't wait to get outside on Wednesday and play him, as long as he do his little circle prayer, get locked in, let's do it.

**Q. How did that connection come about?**

TEZ JOHNSON: Me and Dillon was on the field throwing, and the stuff we been throwing, how frustrated we was in the off-season, because like I demand excellence from him, and you could tell he was demanding it from me. And us demanding for each other created something and it's like, okay, like, this guy got something.

And I think he knew like how, like, willingness I was to get better as a receiver and how I knew exactly what ball he can throw and he was hesitant sometimes in the off-season. I'm like, if you just throw it, trust me, you going to make the play.

And now I think he just took that and ran with it. You can build confidence with a person that you don't really -- that other people, they don't think that he can get it done and when you build that confidence with a person, it's everything from them. Just be a sponge with this guy. Get

connected as much as you can, too.

**Q. Who is the next guy that we're going to be talking about?**

TEZ JOHNSON: Justius Lowe, J-Mack. You've got Jack Ressler and in there. You've got a freshman that's coming in, Dakorien Moore. He's going to be good for the Oregon Ducks. Sneakily Jack Ressler is going to be a guy that's going to have --

**Q. Who is the first guy?**

TEZ JOHNSON: Justius.

**Q. Why did he come to mind first?**

TEZ JOHNSON: He's the smartest guy I've ever been around besides by little brother Caleb. He know everything. Guy is a 4.0 student. Fast as be, shifty and can get you right off the line and run right past you. Justius is, I mean, you can't say nothing else about Justius. Justius should win an award about how connected he is in the receiver room.

Like I learn from Justius so much this year. I give credit to Justius. I guess I'm religious but I couldn't do it if I didn't watch Justius, and I take that as I give Justius all the praise for some of the releases I do. You can learn from him so many ways by just the way he carry himself in the locker room.

**Q. What do you see from Dante Moore?**

TEZ JOHNSON: Heisman finalist next year, a hundred percent.

**Q. Why?**

TEZ JOHNSON: It's something you ain't seen yet. That guy can throw a ball like no other. I ain't never seen nothing like it. He's so ready. He's so ready to play. And you can just tell. Like we can put the twos in at practice, and they go out there and look just like the ones.

So you don't have a fall-off. The standard that the first group has for the entire team, it's a waterfall cycle. It goes from every -- from the ones to twos to threes, like it's a waterfall cycle. You don't see a single fall-off because you see the freshmen that comes in and you see some talent that you ain't never seen before. You're like, whoa, and some guys that they went and got out of that portal is crazy, and you don't even know where these people come from. They just popping up. Some freshmen came in and you're like, who you, you're 6-7, where you coming from?

Where you come from?

**Q. When all those guys come in -- everybody says Dante is a dude, gets along with everybody.**

TEZ JOHNSON: Like you say, he's a dude. Dillon and Dante, they work together every day. They hang out every day. They want to get better every day. Dante asks questions like he's a starter some meeting rooms. If he don't understand something, he can get up there and ask a question and be like, hey, how does this work. Then he can get up and teach it to the entire film room, and we sit back listening to him like he's the starter and he's going out there prepared to throw the ball.

I mean, when you got a guy like that as your backup, they don't need to get nervous if something happen, God for bit?

**Q. What's the craziest thing you see him do in practice?**

TEZ JOHNSON: A no-look 60-yard bomb.

**Q. When was that?**

TEZ JOHNSON: Recently. And he's trying to run like he's Steph Curry. He can find a window and throw it between the O-lineman head. You don't see stuff like that. You can go ask anybody about Dante more how he throws the football and watch what they say. The guy is talented.

**Q. How would you describe the way Coach Stein identifies matchups?**

TEZ JOHNSON: He's a quarterback guy. He dials up the play. We run the routes. He knows exactly the leverage. He always talk about all the time like how he beat Teddy and how he played with Teddy and so he knows exactly where the ball should go. We take his plays that he draws up, it's crazy. Like he is a guru when it comes to offenses. He knows exactly what ball is going to be open, like be right here and the ball hit you right here on the head. Things like that you don't take for granted in a coach.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...