

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Oregon vs Ohio State

Monday, December 30, 2024
Pasadena, California, USA

Ohio State Buckeyes

Cody Simon

Press Conference

Q. What does it mean playing in the Rose Bowl? Obviously Big10 country, this used to be the end of the rainbow. It's only a quarterfinal game. What does it mean?

CODY SIMON: It's an incredible honor, especially for the team, and we know for the history of the game it's super important.

You know, we're just blessed to be here. We're going to -- we honor this game as well as it's supposed to be, and it's a big moment. Going to go out here and give it the best we can and hopefully be the best game we played all season.

Q. Obviously not asking for game plan, but how are you guys different now than you were when you played Oregon the first time around?

CODY SIMON: Yeah, no, we've learned a lot. There is definitely places that we fell short, especially defensively, that we could do a lot better. I mean, I would say just a lot of stuff is just handling all the different things they show. You know, they are a really complex offense. But for us to be prepared for everything they can possibly throw at us. We been planning a lot about that and we are going to be ready for it.

Q. Sonny moved down from safety to linebacker. What have you seen out of him this year in his progression as a player?

CODY SIMON: Yeah, he's grown incredibly. It's not easy to move into the box. You know, he's doing a really good job. He's gotten a lot better throughout the season. You know, I think he can really get a lot better. You know, his career is going to go really, really far because he's a great learner, great teammate, and he's a great player to be around.



**PLAYOFF
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Q. Competitors often remember their setbacks more than triumphs. What do you remember most personally about the last game?

CODY SIMON: Really, I felt like I didn't lead like I needed to lead. As a linebacker and captain, you got to be able to command the defense and really like assert yourself in the game.

Felt like I could have done better at that. We're extremely focused on this game and being present and being effective throughout the entire game.

Q. Their main running back, Jordan James, you guys didn't see Noah Whittington much. What makes Jordan James so difficult to bring back?

CODY SIMON: Good back. Great balance. He's explosive. So it's going to be our job to be able to tackle well. He's going to make it hard for us.

We're going to -- we do what we do, use our technique, and really just that's one of our main jobs, to be able to tackle well. It'll help the rest of the defense.

Q. Do you think people sleep too much on Jim Knowles?

CODY SIMON: Oh, 100%. I think he doesn't get nearly enough credit as he deserves. I mean, he's okay with that. He's kind of like the guy in the shadows a little bit.

He studies the game and knows so much. To get a little bit of knowledge from him is awesome. He's so confident in his work ethic and preparation and so are we. We're going to be prepared to go out there and play.

Q. (Regarding cups of coffee Knowles has had today.)

CODY SIMON: Probably it's north of the healthy amount. I would say that.

Q. Always caffeinated?

CODY SIMON: Probably. He's always working something



new. His brain works in ways that we don't really know. He makes plays and makes schemes up, so we're excited to have him.

Q. We talked to him and he's really chill. Is he really chill out there coaching? Can he get out there and get into you?

CODY SIMON: Oh, yeah, no, he does both. I think the biggest thing about him is he doesn't want you to make a mistake in the game, so if you make it in practice, he'll get on you because he wants to see you do well in the game.

So he wants us to be able to play free and relaxed, but knowing what we have to do it effectively to be successful in the game.

Q. How was the flight here?

CODY SIMON: It was good. I mean, I never really been on a plane that you can sit backwards in. That was pretty cool though.

Q. Reflect on your senior year. What are you most proud of?

CODY SIMON: I think I'm most proud of just the closeness of our team. I don't think I've been a part of a team where everyone has been as close as we are and as good of brothers as we've been. We've gone through so much together, and I think it's shown throughout this entire year.

Q. When you reflect on your career as a Buckeye, what do you think it really means to be a Buckeye here at Ohio State?

CODY SIMON: I've heard this question a bit. I always go back to the same thing because it really means the most when I think about it. It's fight. No matter what I do, no matter, every day I get up and I am thinking about being the best version of myself and fighting to be the best version of myself.

Our culture is fight. That's all I think about throughout the day and the entire year.

Q. What was the best advice you ever received here so far?

CODY SIMON: Best advice? You know, the time goes by fast so don't take this time for granted. Don't let it fly by without just being present in the moment and not just being away. Like be around your friends, teammates, because these times, you don't get this time back.

I really try to appreciate that. It goes by really fast. Five years for me has felt like a year, so...

Q. Do you have any family or friends coming out here?

CODY SIMON: Yeah, yeah. I have got my family coming from Jersey and then I got a couple family members from Cali here. Be a good family affair here.

Q. What did you guys learn from the first game against these guys?

CODY SIMON: I think especially defensively we learned that we have to be more prepared for all the different situations. I don't think we played to our standard and I don't think we prepared to our full standard, especially in our unit.

I just think we need to be -- and we definitely have learned that and got better at that, so our focus is going to be to be more prepared for all the little situations and to take advantage of those situations as well.

Q. The game was really hyped. There a lot of heat around that. Did you ever imagine after that game, how painful it was, that you might get another shot?

CODY SIMON: Yeah, I mean, our focus wasn't to get just a revenge shot at them. It was more about we know we're going to get back to a place we want to be. Whoever is in front of that spot, we're going to have to play them and play our best game.

Right now we know we need to play our best ball because they're a good team. You know, it's going to be a good game. We have to do our job and execute at a high level.

Q. Can there be advantages to playing a team twice? Happens in the NFL all the time; not that often in college.

CODY SIMON: It's really like the NFL playoffs. You get another shot at a team. We have to make sure we learn and make the corrections we need to make from that game. I think we have.

I like the trajectory of our team right now. We have to keep that going and keep our foot on the pedal.

Q. What kind of impression has Dillon Gabriel made on you guys?

CODY SIMON: He's a super smart player, really effective, knows how to maneuver around defenses, and I think we

need to make sure we can keep him contained and make sure he can't dictate the game like he did last game.

Going to be up to the defense to really step up, and we got to play a good game.

Q. Welcome to LA.

CODY SIMON: Appreciate it.

Q. You guys came in yesterday. How has it been so far?

CODY SIMON: Yeah, no, it's been pretty cool. This is like my -- I've been to Cali a bunch. I got family out here. Driving through the city it's always nice to see all the big buildings and everything. Coming from Columbus it's a little different.

It's been great out here.

Q. What has been the mindset coming into this game for the defense, but the team as a whole?

CODY SIMON: I think our biggest thing is we have to be able to play our best ball. We have to be on the rise, and I think we been doing that so far.

Our best game has to be this Rose Bowl and everything needs to come together. We need to play our complete game.

Q. Wanted to ask, one of the narratives surrounding your coach is his inability to win important, big games. Last week, big game, this is a big game. What do you think of that and how do you see him handle that? I know you don't want to let internal forces in, but we're all human.

CODY SIMON: Yeah, we do our best job we can to try to tune out all the noise. Obviously there is stuff like that around. Our biggest focus is on our execution. You know, no matter what, what's going to win and lose games is executing in the biggest moments and those vital situations of the game.

So if you're not able to get that done, you're not really going to win games. So I don't really pay attention to all the narrative side of it. I want to get into the football side of it and why didn't we succeed in certain areas.

I think that's what we looked at this entire season really. We need to learn how to win all these situations and be successful and do our job execute. That's really where I concern myself, are we doing our job? Are we getting

everything we need to get done? And are we preparing correctly, too.

Q. With that, your guys' leader, in my personal opinion he's been a (indiscernible.)

CODY SIMON: Yeah.

Q. But still, proven winner. Do you think that's -- just personally, you spend more time with him than anyone who's probably criticizing him.

CODY SIMON: 100%. I think he's a proven winner. You know, Coach Day has done so much for our team and so much for the organization that I don't think he gets enough credit for.

I stand by him no matter what. He is a great coach. Even better person. Great dad. Great husband. He does everything right.

I just hope he gets the credit publically that we know he deserves privately. I'm here for him at all times.

Q. How much would it mean to be able to get him this win against a team that you guys lost to before?

CODY SIMON: Yeah, no, I mean, in any circumstance, though, a Rose Bowl win is a Rose Bowl win. There is so much history around the game. To be able to get our team a win, especially Coach Day, it would mean everything.

Then it's really onto the next. You can't be too caught up on one thing. We know the importance of this game and how important it can be to win this game. That's going to be a big focus for us.

Q. When you got home on November 30th after that loss, you're alone, with teammates, what were you thinking and feeling and how do you cope with it because it's hard?

CODY SIMON: Yeah, you know, going through that, I mean, yeah, it's definitely tough. I mean, couldn't really eat, do anything. I mean, the pain from that is really what's fueling right now. I think that's the biggest thing for our team, is to be able to change that focus.

We went through a lot of tough conversations with a lot of tough days after that game, but our focus now is fully on Oregon and on the Rose Bowl. We're excited because we can use that energy that we've felt that pain from and transfer it to energy to win.

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