

Rose Bowl Game presented by Prudential: Oregon vs Ohio State

Wednesday, January 1, 2025
Pasadena, California, USA

Oregon Ducks

Coach Dan Lanning

Gabriel Dillon

Jeffrey Bassa

Postgame Press Conference

Ohio State - 41, Oregon - 21

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Oregon.

DAN LANNING: Before we get into the game, first off, just want to recognize the people in New Orleans, how we're thinking of them, praying for them. There's no place for that in the world for that. And the loss of life is always something that you don't want to take for granted. And so I'm hoping for some solutions there.

But getting to the game, they clicked tonight and we didn't. And I didn't get our team prepared. And that's a great team. When you play a great team like Ohio State, you can't not be clicking on all cylinders. And they were. They were clicking on all cylinders.

We really didn't have the ability to stop them, and we didn't have the ability to get something going for us on offense. And we haven't faced a lot of moments like this all year. It's an unbelievable team. Coach Day and his staff have done an unbelievable job there.

I don't want to discredit what our players have been able to accomplish this year. We had a great team. We just ran into a great team tonight and we didn't play our best. Credit to those guys.

I'll say this about our team: There wasn't a second we stepped on the field where I felt our guys were disheartened, where they didn't want to give the effort to go out there and play.

I just don't think we had a good enough plan as coaches tonight, and we have to find ways to prepare ourselves for



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these moments better as a coaching staff.

But I love that team. I love that team in there. I love what those guys were able to accomplish, and it was tough when you play great teams at the end of the season somebody's not going to come out on top. Those guys came out on top tonight. Obviously that's a team I think that has the ability to go win it all.

So proud of our guys. Certainly proud of this season and disappointed tonight. If you're a competitor, there's no way you're not going to be disappointed in the result tonight.

Q. Your thoughts on just how the long layoff between games, between now and the Big Ten championship game, impacted the guys in terms of how the game started?

DAN LANNING: I think that's an excuse. I thought our guys prepared well going in. Obviously they had a better plan than us. But that's an excuse.

That's an opportunity that we had to recharge. I thought our guys did practice well. I'd tell you if that wasn't the case. I thought they had a great focus. I just don't think our plan was good enough. I think they had a great plan to attack us. So credit to those guys.

Q. You've obviously talked about the growth mindset a lot, talked about this game and maybe some of the things that didn't go right. What do you learn from this and maybe things that you need to adjust going forward?

DAN LANNING: We've got to be able to adjust a little bit faster. There were some things we were able to get going at points throughout the game. We didn't adjust fast enough.

And it's tough when you play a team that doesn't have a lot of weaknesses. They've got strengths. Their wideouts were creating a lot of success down the field. And then their ability to run the ball makes them a dangerous team. They didn't make mistakes on special teams. You need some of those things to bounce your way.

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And offensively we struggled to get a first down early on and I thought Dillon did an unbelievable job there at the end of the half creating a spark for our team, but a lot of those weren't natural plays. It wasn't like the first read was there. It was this guy busting his tail, and guys like Traeshon and the O line fighting like crazy to extend plays and create those moments. We just didn't have enough of those moments tonight.

Q. Dillon, what were you hoping to do game plan-wise that they took away from you guys?

DILLON GABRIEL: You plan to create explosives, be really good on situational football and move the chains that way. We just didn't do that on third down. They had a great plan, like Coach said. But if you don't go get the third you can't move forward.

Q. Coach, how was Ohio State able to execute differently offensively tonight versus when you played them the first time?

DAN LANNING: I think they were able to find some shot opportunities. Caught us in a couple of coverages that gave them the chance to have success. And you could decide, okay, we're going to try to pressure, and that's still going to leave some one-on-ones. But they got us in some situational checks, some stuff that was successful.

And they have great players. They have some guys out there that made plays. And you have to give those guys credit.

Q. A lot of teams fall down 34-0 they roll over. You guys didn't. You kept fighting. You scored the next two possessions. What's that say about your team and the mentality that they have?

DAN LANNING: Just that. If you give them a great plan, they're going to have the chance to go out and execute at a high level. They've got a lot of fight. Like I said, I thought our guys fought all night.

There's probably even more opportunities where I could have given them a chance to fight, and I didn't do a great job of that. But those guys went out and battled every second tonight.

Q. What makes Jeremiah Smith so tough to stop? What didn't work in the game plan against him?

DAN LANNING: He's strong, attacks the ball in the air as well as any receiver I've seen. The guy is NFL-ready. He's that talented and that special. And Will Howard did a great

job getting him the ball. And he's tough and he's physical. He's got all the tools. A really talented player.

Q. How do you use this game as fuel for motivation but at the same time know this team went 13-0 prior to tonight?

DAN LANNING: Probably not there yet. There's disappointment. But I talked to the team about life in that locker room and how grateful I am for the opportunity to coach this team. I love these guys. And they put it all out on the field for us -- blood, sweat and tears.

Adversity happens in life. And we're going to get an opportunity in life to continue to attack and move forward. And I know there's a lot of winners in that room, and there's guys that are going to have a chance to go on in life and be great fathers and husbands. I hope they saw those examples on our team. They're going to be great business leaders and NFL players. And they gave their heart and soul to us.

To me it's not about getting knocked down. It's about getting back up and what you do next.

Q. Evan was such a weapon for you guys in the first match-up against Ohio State. Sounded like something happened pregame. Could you elaborate a little bit on what happened with him and what did you miss most about not having him?

DAN LANNING: He's a dynamic player. He's been great for us all year. Kind of got tweaked in pregame, and had been able to practice but was somewhat limited. We thought he was going to be a potential go. Leaned on the side of protecting the player.

I think in that situation, you asked Evan, he wanted to be out on the field. But you don't want to put him in a situation that's not safe for him.

He's certainly been a dynamic piece for us all year, and would have loved to have him out there for us. But grateful for what he's been able to do for us this season.

Q. Why do you think Ohio State struggled the way they did against Michigan? And do you see any significant adjustments they've made since then to get things turned around the way they have?

DAN LANNING: Sometimes it's not your day. I think that was us today. It wasn't our day today. It wasn't their day against Michigan.

But what's unique about college football right now in this

dynamic is that you've got to be playing your best ball at the end. I think anybody watching Ohio State recognizes they're playing really good football.

Q. Jeffrey, what were you seeing out of the Ohio State offense that was really just causing you guys some issues in the first half?

JEFFREY BASSA: Overall, I think that they did a good job taking shots early on. Like Coach said previously, they caught us in some coverages where receivers were able to get open downfield.

As well as their offensive line, I think their offensive line, with the injuries that they had in their room and a lot of moving parts and pieces, I think they did a good job just up front as well.

And, of course, the quarterback, I think he did a good job just getting the ball to the receivers, commanding his offense.

They were just firing on all cylinders, and credit to them.

Q. Obviously you won a Big Ten title and you had to face Ohio State in the first round. There's been a lot of talk about CFP format and that potentially changing going forward. What did you think about the thought of the path your team had compared to other teams?

DAN LANNING: We had an opportunity. We didn't take advantage of the opportunity. I'm not going to make excuses for our opportunity.

And ultimately you have to be great teams to beat teams at the end of the year we didn't do that. This is the road we had to travel. And they did it better than us tonight.

No complaints for us for having that opportunity. They just took advantage of it and we didn't.

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