

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Pitt vs Michigan State

Tuesday, December 28, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Michigan State Spartans

Jayden Reed

Press Conference



Q. When you look back at this point, at that Nebraska game, specifically the punt return, it looked like a launching point for this season. I know it's been a while but when you look back at that play can you describe it for us and also what your team took from that play in the finish of that game to apply the rest of the year?

JAYDEN REED: That's one of the biggest ones I've made in my career. I take pride in that play. And I couldn't have done it without my teammates that were out there with me. So I also appreciate my teammates for executing the play and everything like that for me to be able to make that happen.

Q. Couple questions about Kenneth, how could you describe the team-wide reaction to him not playing? What do you think his legacy is, leaving after one year what he did for you guys this season?

JAYDEN REED: No doubt. I mean, words can't describe how much we appreciate Ken for coming here this year and displaying that kind of talent out there. He's helped us tremendously.

So it's obviously been different. More than the player, but the person he is. We miss that aspect of having him around, with the good team spirit with that guy in the room. That's more of the issue, him not being around as a person more than a player, you know what I'm saying? He's a much better person than player he is. We definitely miss having him around.

Q. What about the guys you guys will be looking at to sort of replace him? How do they look for you this past month?

JAYDEN REED: They are attacking it. Our coaches hound us and coach us the right way. They always coach us that next man up you've got to be ready no matter what.

Q. Wanted to ask you about Payton Thorne and what you've seen from him -- obviously you practiced with him for years and all that stuff. I'm wondering from the beginning of this season until now, where have you seen growth and how is he a different quarterback than he was at the beginning of the year?

JAYDEN REED: I think it's pretty much been the same thing the entire time, his leadership. His leadership has been going up a level every game, every week. So he's been stepping up, being a much bigger and better leader. He's being more vocal as a team.

That applies to your game. That applies to the way you play. When leaders lead, they get good things out of it.

Q. Wanted to ask about Jalen's return. What do you think that will mean for your game having another speedy receiver and for the offense overall?

JAYDEN REED: With Speedy being back, you've got to pick your poison. We've got our guy back, and we haven't had him for a while, so teams haven't really scouted him as much as they could lately.

So that will be a huge contribution to come back with Speedy. No doubt it's going to be tough trying to manage two of the fastest receivers in the nation, in my opinion. It will be a good one.

Q. Wondering what you got from any takeaways from last night at the Hall of Fame. I know you guys did a lot of activities as a team. How special was it to visit the Hall of Fame?

JAYDEN REED: I thought it was pretty cool, just seeing guys from my generation that was able to make it. Guys I watched like DeVonta Smith. I looked up at him as a receiver and I seen him there. And it's just an honor to be able to go there and stuff like that. And Ken Mannie, one of our former strength coaches, I looked up to Coach Mannie. He's taught me so much. And to see guys I know and I'm familiar with, it was a cool experience, a really cool experience.



Q. How much does that motivate you to succeed not only in this bowl game but in the rest of your career?

JAYDEN REED: No doubt. I don't like to judge myself off of other people's success. So I just -- I stick to the course. I think everything happens for a reason. And I know I work my tail off. If I end up in there one day, it was because it was meant to be.

Q. Have you made a decision whether you're going to come back for another year or if this is going to be the last game?

JAYDEN REED: Don't expect me to answer it until after the game. That's all I can tell you, to be honest.

Q. Overall you guys as an offense, you guys have made strides this year from struggles in the past. Do you look at this as an opportunity to kind of leave on a good note and make this a season that defines some progress for you guys on that side of the ball?

JAYDEN REED: No doubt. We got bits and pieces back to the offense that we didn't have earlier in the season as we spoke about before. So hopefully we can continue to just build off of what we've been doing the entire season. So I'm looking forward to Thursday.

Q. We heard earlier today Jay Johnson sort of talk about how playing in a big, domed stadium sort of has to make an adjustment for players, especially on special teams. With you being a punt and kick returner is that something you've had to look into these past couple of days in the stadium?

JAYDEN REED: Yeah, I mean you've always got to make adjustments to different environments. So no question about that. The coaches harped on us about being able to hydrate and eating well, so no one is cramping up during the game. And adjustments had to be made.

I have to take care of these two days, stay healthy, drink water, eat right and everything, so I'll be ready to go on Thursday.

Q. Going back to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium stuff, you guys were obviously excited to come play at this stadium. What was it like for you when you walked in? Did it live up to your expectations of being out there on the practice field and just stuff like that?

JAYDEN REED: Yeah, it was a great experience just walking into that stadium. It's chill looking up and you can see that little thing. You know it's open and stuff like that.

It's one of the coolest stadiums I've ever been in.

That dome, I'm looking forward to it on Thursday seeing it filled up with Spartan fans. And I'm ready to go.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports