

# Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Ole Miss vs Penn State

Tuesday, December 26, 2023

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

**Ole Miss Rebels**

**Dayton Wade**

Press Conference



**Q. I wanted to ask you -- obviously I saw you were an Atlanta native. Have you seen any family since you've been here? And what does it mean to come home and play?**

DAYTON WADE: As soon as we got some free time when we landed, I went straight home. I didn't waste no time. It's Christmas day. I've got younger siblings at home, so I wanted to celebrate that with them.

My sister got her a dog. Me and her didn't have no dog, but she got her a dog. It was really nice to see them. I've still got to go check up on my grandma.

This game really definitely means a lot to me, especially since I started off my career when I was in Kentucky, so family wasn't really traveling to Kentucky and whatnot. Now I'm in Mississippi, so finally to get to play at home, like really, really at home, I'm looking forward to that.

**Q. Dayton, you went kind of viral not long ago when you talked about the city of Oxford and Ole Miss and the football program as a whole. Now that you're in your final game, what do you reflect back on, and what are your thoughts about the city and university as you prepare for your last game?**

DAYTON WADE: Now that I'm at the end of this Ole Miss road, like this journey, like thinking back, I'm just glad the Oxford community, they just welcomed me the way they did. The way they welcomed me with open arms, brought me in. They're the reason I'm really here right now, you know what I'm saying?

All the little tiny -- they probably think it's nothing, but I've seen what they've been saying on Twitter and whatnot, all the encouragement and support and whatnot. The Ole Miss community is just really great. I'm thankful to be in this position, like really.

**Q. Curious when you watch film of the Penn State defense secondary that potentially could see a lot of young guys playing in this game, just how you evaluate them.**

DAYTON WADE: As I do with any other player. If he out there on the field, he out there on the field for a reason. Everybody got something good about them. Everybody got something bad about them.

Just because they may not have their guys out there, I'm still going to approach it like their guys out there. The game is still the game.

**Q. Dayton, you kind of touched on it earlier about how this is your last collegiate game. Can you just take us through your decision when you announced that you'd be moving on to the NFL.**

DAYTON WADE: I kind of -- not kind of. When I transferred here, walk-on and all, that was my goal. It was to come in, go to the SEC where the best players play, and show them like, hey, I'm playing. I'm here. You know what I'm saying? I'm a force to be reckoned with.

And then get up out of here and continue to chase my dreams as being one of the best to ever do it.

For me, I didn't really put that much thought into it. With different people, everybody's like NIL, getting ahead and whatnot. For me, that's not even what it's about. I'm just trying to play ball. I want to be great. So this is the next step in me being great.

**Q. You talked about starting on as a walk-on at Ole Miss. Can you just take us through your journey from start to finish at Ole Miss.**

DAYTON WADE: At the start, I ain't going to lie, it was a little rocky. It wasn't peaches and cream. I was nervous to even eat there. I had a walk-on, so I didn't have no meal plan or anything like that. I wasn't swiping in. I was missing meals and whatnot. I was living off like homemade sandwiches and scrambled eggs and whatnot for a good

little minute.

But that's what you work for. I eventually worked my way up the ladder, and things became -- I wouldn't say easier, but like it wasn't as difficult as it was when I first got here. But outside of everything, they still was looking out for me, knowing the situation that I came from and the circumstances.

It was just up to me to prove who I am. I never ever had any doubt of what I could do and who I am as a player and as a person. So it was rocky, yeah, but like I didn't see it as like, oh, man, this is one of the hardest things in the world. I seen it as, all right, this is something I want to do, so I'm going to get it done.

**Q. Obviously you revealed that Lane's son gave you -- broke the news to you that you were a scholarship player. Just when exactly was that? When did you know you would be a scholarship player?**

DAYTON WADE: This was like spring. I think spring ball is from March to April. So I would say it's like the third week of spring, around that time period.

It took a good little minute, you know what I'm saying? I honestly thought it was going to happen a little bit faster considering what I was making happen, what's going on. But there's a lot that goes into it. You can't just pull a scholarship out of thin air.

I just waited my turn. That's what took so long, I guess.

**Q. Dayton, I have one more question, and this is not football related, but more so coming home related. I wanted to ask you does sugar go in grits?**

DAYTON WADE: Does sugar go in grits? My grandma ain't putting no sugar in grits. We put cheese in there, though. We got some cheese in there. You all won't see the video of me saying you know I put sugar in my grits, but from my understanding, I don't be tasting no sugar in the grits.

THE MODERATOR: I'm glad we got that figured out.

(Laughter)

**Q. He mentioned his grandma earlier, so I was like I've got to ask.**

DAYTON WADE: I ain't got to have grandma's cooking in a minute. So I'm a little fuzzy, but we're going to see.

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