

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

Wednesday, December 27, 2023

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

**Penn State Nittany Lions**

**Ty Howle**

**Ja'Juan Seider**

**Drew Allar**

**Nicholas Singleton**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning again, everybody. We're proud to welcome the Penn State offensive group with us. We've got here to my left co-offensive coordinator Ty Howle, co-offensive coordinator, Ja'Juan Seider, quarterback Drew Allar, and running back, Nicholas Singleton.

Coaches, if you would, just comment on getting to Atlanta, settling into bowl week, and how preparations have been going so far.

TY HOWLE: We've had a great week of prep so far. Guys are working hard, really carrying down the things that we were doing up in State College.

It's been awesome down here in Atlanta. The bowl has been first class, taking care of us, having some great events and time with the team and fellowship with each other.

So we really appreciate and have been happy to be down here in Atlanta.

JA'JUAN SEIDER: I echo that sentiment. The hospitality has been awesome. Being from the South, being able to come back to the South again has been awesome, seeing family and friends.

For the players, we try to get down here for the whole week so they have a normal routine throughout the week so it's not different for them because we're all creatures of habit. So it's good to let the guys be normal.



THE MODERATOR: For Drew and Nicholas, talk about the bowl week experience so far and the events you've gotten to do and maybe what's your favorite event so far.

DREW ALLAR: Yeah, it's been a really fun week already. This is my first time down here in Atlanta, so it's a completely different environment to what I grew up in in the north.

Favorite event so far, probably the go-karting from last night. That was super fun. Just being able to spend time with the teammates away from the field has been just really cool, getting to bond with everybody no matter the position. So that's been the best part so far.

NICHOLAS SINGLETON: It's been good so far coming to Atlanta for a bowl game. It's been amazing. Probably my favorite part is the arcade games, laser tag. Me and my teammates have fun with that. The whole experience has been good so far.

**Q. We talked to James about this yesterday, but playing in the Peach Bowl can kind of give you momentum heading into next season. We saw that with the Rose Bowl, specifically you and Nick, we talked about that.**

When you look at the opportunity in front of you, some younger guys could step up. I know for both the tight ends and the running backs, there's a lot of players who can make some contributions here. What do you take away from a bowl game that can kind of propel you into 2024?

DREW ALLAR: The biggest thing for us is just sending these seniors out the right way because they've provided us so much from being like the younger guys the past two years and provided us with just great examples how to live as a Penn State football player on and off the field and how to carry ourselves.

So first thing and the most important thing is sending these guys out the right way and just giving them high notes to end their Penn State career on, and obviously just go out as an offense and execute the game plan the coaches have been putting together the past like month or so or



whenever we found out who the game was against and then just go out and execute to the best of our abilities and let that catapult us into next year.

JA'JUAN SEIDER: At the end of the day, it's about finishing the job, and our job is not finished. We get one more opportunity to go play, to be around this great group of young men, watch them finish their careers, some of the seniors that's not going to be back.

For us, it's exciting to finish what we started, but also to springboard us into next year and find out the foundation for who we're going to be going forward and try to reach our goals next year.

**Q. Ty, Tyler made his announcement a couple days ago that he was going to come back next year. For you as his position coach, what was it like going through that process with him? And what does it mean to you to have him back for 2024?**

TY HOWLE: Obviously excited to have him back, not just because of his talent and all those things, but from a leadership standpoint, a guy that's played a lot of football for us.

As far as going through the process, just trying to help guide him and help him make the best decision for himself because, at the end of the day, it's his decision. You want him to be happy whichever way it went.

So that was the big key for me in helping him. Look, man, here's the pros, here's the cons, all the different scenarios. Obviously super happy that he's back, not just from a football standpoint, but from getting to be around him for another year and coach him.

He's a pleasure to coach and great kid and works his tail off. Obviously excited to have him back.

**Q. Ty and Ja'Juan, how has having these offensive coordinator roles sort of compared to how you thought it was going to be when you got that opportunity? And with this being sort of your last game in that role, is there a temptation to call that play in the back of the book that you always wanted to see run, and now you've got one last chance to do it?**

JA'JUAN SEIDER: For the most part, me and Ty have always been working hand in hand since we've been here. A lot of it is not new, but now we're on the front end doing calls and plays. Any time we do something new, we both approve it. It's not like, hey, I like this, but he doesn't like it. So we mutually agree on what we like.

And not just what we like, what these guys like. At the end of the day, it's giving them a chance of being successful and giving them an opportunity to attack defense the way we want to, vertical, horizontal, and then get the ball in these guys' hands and let them play in between the tackles.

TY HOWLE: I echo everything Ja'Juan said. Obviously moving into that role, there's some duties that you didn't previously have to do, but it's been great obviously with us both kind of seeing things through the same set of eyes. It's made the transition easy.

Hopefully we left all of our bad plays at home and got our good plays on the sheet. There's really no temptation to call something that's been said in there. Biggest thing, trying to go out and win this bowl game and send our seniors out right.

**Q. Ty and Ja'Juan, obviously a lot of change over the last couple of days, but have you had time to sit down and iron out your offensive philosophies, a couple of principles you want to instill with the team?**

TY HOWLE: I think that's something that we really thought about when this transition happened, what we wanted it to look like. The first thing we thought about was players, not plays. Who are the guys that are going to help us win? And being able to take advantage of things that they do well and put them in the positions to do those things.

I think with offensive philosophy, that's where you've got to start because not every team looks the same every year. A team doesn't look the same at the beginning of the year as it does at the end of the year. So starting with players and not plays has kind of been our philosophy, and then allowing those guys to go play fast and execute has been the big keys for us.

JA'JUAN SEIDER: I'll echo what Ty said. Our motto since we took over is simplicity equals speed. What that means is we don't want these guys thinking. We want them to go play.

We recruited well. We've got great talent. The worst thing they can do is go into a game thinking of I could, I should, I would be doing instead of just reacting to what the defense do and taking advantage of our skill.

And allow Drew to operate and run the ball and take advantage of our tight ends and try to get the ball on the perimeter to our wide receivers. Like Ty said, it's not plays, it's players. At the end of the day, you win games by the kids you've got on the field and not what you think as a play caller.

**Q. Obviously, you watched Sean prepare for the Rose Bowl last year and what was his swan song. What did you learn from watching him, and how have you tried to work on that yourself from watching Peach Bowl?**

DREW ALLAR: I learned a lot from Cliff last year. He is definitely a great mentor to me last year in the quarterback room and the whole offensive unit too. The biggest thing with bowl prep is getting your body right from the end of the season just because you know it's a long physical season and you endure a lot. Everybody has bumps and bruises by the end of it, so getting your body back right and to 100 percent is the most important thing.

Then just being able to sit down and maybe break down your performance throughout the season, but then also get ahead on whoever you're playing in this bowl game. We've been preparing as an offense for this game for probably like at least four weeks already. So I think we've laid a good foundation from when we were back in State College, and then we've continued to build off that this week.

So just taking it day by day, never looking too far into the future is probably the biggest thing I learned from him last year.

**Q. Simplicity equals speed, you guys have said that a lot. I'm sure it was an emphasis for you guys mid-November. What does that mean for you guys, and how have Coach Howle and Coach Seider kept things simple for you guys?**

NICHOLAS SINGLETON: Coach Seider and Coach Howle has been doing a good job ever since they got the job as OC, as Co-OCs. They've been saying it the whole week, simplicity equals speed, just playing fast, not think too much. Ever since then, we've been playing fast and just not thinking and playing the game. So we've been doing good.

DREW ALLAR: I echo what Nick said. I think Coach Seider and Coach Howle have done a great job of giving us simple rules to follow, not giving us too many looks or too many rules. For receivers, thinking about on a certain leverage, they could do this, but they should do that. It's just you're running the route this way. That allows those guys to play fast.

Same with the tight ends in that aspect of route running, and that makes my job a lot easier just because I think the timing and communication got on like a different level because I was able to anticipate more what everybody was doing out on the perimeter.

I think that's where the simplicity equals speed from that standpoint. And then for the running backs, Nick and Kaytron, I think we -- like the O-line just playing fast has given Nick and Kaytron just easy reads, and they're able to just get their foot on the ground, cut upfield, and make guys miss in the hole and just let their talent take over. So I think that's where simplicity equals speed comes in for us.

**Q. Drew and Nick both. Drew, for you, this will be your first time in a starring role in a bowl game. How do you approach that? How cool, how special is that for you?**

DREW ALLAR: Obviously this is a great opportunity, not only for me, but for the whole team. We've been talking about it the whole bowl prep. If we win this game, we're the first team ever in college history to win all six New Year's bowl games, and we don't take that lightly.

Again, we want to send the seniors out the right way because of how much they've given to this program and how much they've sacrificed throughout their career to get the program to this point. For me, it's just another game. I'm not taking it any differently. I'm taking it very seriously and just have another opportunity to go out and play the game that I love to play.

**Q. Nick, for you, you were in a starring role in the Rose Bowl last year. You had some big runs. Has that experience helped you moving forward into this game?**

NICHOLAS SINGLETON: Yeah, I feel like it does. I always take every game as just another game. I don't look at other teams, like how big they are.

But Ole Miss is a good team. We're excited to play. Like Drew said, we have a chance to make history, be the first team to win six New Year's Six bowl wins, so we're trying to do that.

**Q. This goes for all of you, and I'd appreciate if anyone could answer it. Harrison Wallace was back on the practice field, we saw yesterday. Just wondering what it has looked like with Harrison involved again with you guys, and if he is able to compete, what does he do for this offense with his addition, re-addition, I should say?**

DREW ALLAR: Having Trey back is something the offense needs. I think he brings a lot of positivity to that room. He's a very consistent receiver. Obviously, as we all know, he's a very explosive receiver vertically.

I think he just brings a great work ethic to that room again, now that he's back healthy. But as far as a playing

standpoint, that's a Coach Franklin thing, and I'm not going to -- that's a Coach Franklin and Trey decision, so I don't have any input on that.

THE MODERATOR: Coaches, you want to weigh in?

TY HOWLE: I think Drew said it perfectly.

**Q. For Ty and Ja'Juan, James has emphasized not having a lot of opt-outs. It seems like you guys are pretty intact going into this. For you two, in terms of putting together a game plan and trying to fit these pieces together, does that make it easier? What's that process like knowing that you have kind of a full deck at this point in the year?**

TY HOWLE: I think any time there's continuity, it helps the offense as a whole and not just the coordinators. So that's obviously been big for us in allowing us to keep building on the things that we were doing there at the end of the season.

Obviously the one thing that's a little different in a bowl game is you have a lot more time to prepare. So being able to give these guys multiple, different looks on the things that you're going to run and those things, that continuity of having your guys there, they've seen a lot of that. So from that standpoint, it's been great to have all those guys playing.

JA'JUAN SEIDER: I just echo Ty. We do a good job all year developing guys. We have a motto, next man up. So we sub a lot. We've got a lot of guys with experience.

It's good to have our nucleus back so it really doesn't change our thought process of how we game plan. At the end of the day, it starts with what these guys do best and what our guys up front can block best. That's how we divide up the game plan, and then we go and try to attack defense.

**Q. For Coach Howle and Seider, you guys have had Coach K now in the rooms for a couple of weeks now. How much have you bounced ideas in preparation for your Bowl game off him? I know his job is to sit in the background and kind of learn, but he is another offensive mind in your meeting rooms. How much have you used him?**

TY HOWLE: He's obviously in every meeting and all that with us when we're watching film. So we'll watch a play. Hey, Coach, what do you think about this? Because obviously he's getting to know our players and getting to know our staff.

But having the ability -- obviously he was very creative on offense at Kansas and Buffalo, and there's some things that maybe he did that we're doing that he has a really good coaching point on it. So we're able to pick his brain. He's able to ask us questions about things we're doing because obviously come January we're seeing what this thing looks like and all that with him taking over.

It's been a really good back and forth process throughout this bowl prep with Coach K, and him observing, but also, hey, Coach, what do you think about this? Or, hey, do you have a better way to maybe state something or teach something? Because at the end of the day, we're all teachers. So you're always looking for the best way for it to connect with our kids. So it's been awesome having him in there.

**Q. For Ty and Ja'Juan, throughout your film study the last couple of weeks, how does a peak golden defense go about challenging offenses that you've seen?**

JA'JUAN SEIDER: They're multiple, especially with their fronts. You're going to see some odd. You're going to see some four down, a lot of twist, a lot of movement. Trying to decipher if they're going to be a core team, they're going to be a man team because they played a little bit more man that last game.

I think they're still trying to figure themselves out a little bit. You just watch them, when you take that mini transfer even this late in the season, trying to do what's best for the players, and I think those guys are trying to find their feet.

**Q. This question is for Drew and Nick. Playing Ole Miss and coming from the Big Ten like you guys are, is there kind of -- is there more juice going into it knowing you're playing the SEC school and kind of their reputation? How do you guys go about that as far as motivation?**

NICHOLAS SINGLETON: We're excited about it. Ole Miss is a good team, really good defense, really good offense. Both sides of the ball are really good. But we're excited we're in SEC territory. Coach Franklin always preaches about that.

But we're ready. We're taking it one day at a time. Always have that 1 percent mentality. You get better every day. We're excited. We've just got to get ready to play.

DREW ALLAR: I'd echo that. Obviously Ole Miss is a really good team, and they're from a really good conference as well. That doesn't change the fact that they're a good team. It doesn't matter what conference they come from. They're a very solid team on both sides of

the ball.

So we've got to do our best and go out and execute the game plan that coaches have put together the past couple of weeks. If we do that, I think we have a good shot.

**Q. For Drew and Nick, what did you -- beyond coming down here and winning a game, in terms of your development personally, what did you guys want to get out of these extra practices, having this opportunity to get more time on the practice field? How are you guys approaching that from more of a big picture perspective in your development?**

DREW ALLAR: For me, it's all about reps. That's how I've always been. I want to get as many reps as I can. So it doesn't matter the play. It doesn't matter if it's a run and pass. I want to try to be perfect in everything I do. The more reps I get in that is the better for me.

I just try to take every rep as serious as I can, like game reps, like Coach Franklin always preaches, even if it's a walk through, making sure I'm going through my proper footwork, proper reads, getting a good mesh point with the running backs on different run plays from different positions on the -- like around the quarterback, whether it's under center, in the gun, or anything like that.

So I just try to treat everything like it's a game and try to be perfect in every rep. So that's what I've been really focusing on these last couple weeks of bowl prep.

NICHOLAS SINGLETON: I'll echo Drew. Like Drew said, taking the reps, like the game reps. I'm just looking at different fronts, how they shift on the safeties. Just having that mentality. Even if you're not practicing right now, just watching all the running backs, how they play, just trying to copy them.

**Q. I got to ask all four of you the important question, Wawa or Sheetz?**

TY HOWLE: Sheetz.

JA'JUAN SEIDER: I'm kind of split. In college, Sheetz came around, so I was a big Sheetz guy. Then they started growing in Florida, and I love the club sandwich at Wawa.

DREW ALLAR: Sheetz.

NICHOLAS SINGLETON: Wawa.

THE MODERATOR: We're split right down the middle. We may have to continue this one tomorrow.