

# Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Texas vs Arizona State

Saturday, December 28, 2024

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

## Arizona State Sun Devils

## Xavier Guillory

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Senior wide receiver Xavier Guillory is joining us now.

**Q. Just moments ago, Coach Arroyo was talking about how following the Territorial Cup in Tucson, the wide receiver room as a whole following Jordyn's injury needed to pick up the flag or necessarily have to pick up the mantle maybe left behind him and step up in a bigger role. How have you kind of seen, as one of the veterans in this room, how have you seen everybody collectively, McClain and Stovall and Jake Smith and others who have necessarily had to fill in more important roles, how have you just seen this whole room including yourself kind of just step up in his absence? What does that necessarily speak to the challenge that you guys are going to have facing you guys against a really good Texas secondary?**

XAVIER GUILLORY: We are talented. We're here for a reason. I guarantee you every guy in the receiver room can stand up for themselves and all that. They're good players, and they can play too when given the opportunity.

Obviously you never want to see your brother go down with injury, but this is football. Like Coach Arroyo said, somebody had to pick up the flag. All of us collectively answered the call. None of us hesitated or flinched at all to that calling.

Malik McClain comes in and hasn't played since week 4 and comes in and makes a great downfield play. I believe on a third down and long, he comes down and makes a play. And then Melquan Stovall comes in and has almost a 100-yard game and a big fourth down catch.

We've got guys that just come in and make plays. It's just being ready and staying ready so you don't have to get ready. Old saying and stuff. We've got guys here who can play, and when given the opportunity, they want to go out



**PLAYOFF  
QUARTERFINAL**



and show that on Saturdays. Well, Wednesday now in this upcoming game. We're excited for the opportunity. We ain't going to flinch. We're all ready for that opportunity when our names are called.

**Q. As a quick follow-up to that, you had a lot of one-on-one matchups, it seems, in the Big 12 Championship, and a lot of those matchups led to obviously those two touchdowns you had in that third quarter almost in a three-minute span. What have you just kind of seen on film from Texas' standpoint in those one-on-one matchups, and what have you seen from their DBs including guys like Jahdae Barron and Michael Taaffe and those guys who are not only All-Americans, but are some of the best players in the country in those positions?**

XAVIER GUILLORY: They're great players. They play a lot of zone, Cover 1, Cover 2, Cover 3, Cover 4, a lot of zone coverage. At that point, it's us doing our job as receivers, getting our depth, holding our lines, making contested catches.

They're savvy players. No. 7, Barron, savvy veteran, he's able to trick QBs to throwing his way and getting picks that way.

We're going to go out there and run our stuff, make plays. As receivers, we've got to go out there and obviously block, but when our number is called, make plays in those settings. Going down to Atlanta and playing in the Falcons stadium, I believe, Mercedes Benz, you can't get no better than that, playing in the college football playoffs.

Something we're all excited for. We're not going to flinch. Something we dreamed of as kids. We're going to go out there with the dog mentality and go out there and play and we want it. I've been waiting for this moment for a long time. It's good to finally get that chance. I'm going to go out there 110 percent and give it everything I've got. Go put out some good tape and go out there and help my team win as much as possible.

**Q. A lot of talk this week has been about the Texas**

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

**defense and how good they are. You guys have gone up against a great defense in practice, a lot of great players. Obviously Brian Ward, a great defensive mind. How has that helped you prepare for such a big matchup this week?**

XAVIER GUILLORY: We've just got a lot of athletes on our defense spring ball, fall camp, summer training, a lot of 7-on-7s. Come game time, I feel like we already played a harder team coming in from practice the whole year. Our defense is super tough, and a lot of Big 12 teams can testify to that.

When we go out there on game day, practices felt harder than in games, and that's how it should be when you're going up against good talent and a great defensive coordinator in Coach Ward and a lot of great players back there in the secondary and the front eight.

Getting that type of work every single day just forces you to either answer the call or any kind of get lost in the players that do step up. It's just been great work all year round.

Coming into the postseason now, you're starting to see it when we do go against other defenses we're ready because we've seen a lot of looks and different types of athletes. Our defense does a great job getting our offense ready for game days.

**Q. As one of the guys that was here through all the tough times last year, at what point did you sense that this season was different, that this team was a special team?**

XAVIER GUILLORY: That's a great question. It started really back in January, guys coming in, it was player led, not coach fed. A lot of the players like Xavion Alford, Leif Fautanu, Cam Skattebo, even Sam Leavitt kind of came into that vocal leadership role.

Then those summer practices and summer conditioning sessions were straight player led and players getting on each other. That's when I kind of saw it was different from last year when other players were holding each other accountable. When players would want to cheat reps or cut the line short, they were getting called out for that.

We were holding each other accountable as receivers. If a player is dogging it on blocking or not giving full effort, we're going to call you out on it. This is really the best players are the leaders on this team, and that's how it should be with good teams, when the best players are stepping up and calling people out and holding people accountable and stuff.

So that's when I really noticed that this team was different than any other team I've been on.

**Q. You guys picked last in the Big 12 and just shock everybody and win the conference championship. What would it mean to college football if Arizona State won this whole dang thing?**

XAVIER GUILLORY: Man, what? It would be awesome just for all of college football. I know everybody calling us Cinderella story, but it's a new year. That's why we play the games.

All the preseason polls, all that social media and stuff, that's why I feel a lot of players should stay off social media until the season comes around because it's just a bunch of garbage that gets fed to you, and it's really for the fans and stuff.

For the players, we listened to what Coach Dillingham had set up for us at the beginning of winter training all the way until now. We're ready for the opportunity. We're not just content. That's one thing about this crew. We're not just we won the Big 12 Championship, let's just coast, whatever happens here, cool. We want the whole thing. We want to go all the way to the mountaintop. So we didn't come this far just to come this far.

We've got a lot of competitors, and we're looking out to the next thing. We're still hungry. We still remember being on the bottom where they had us. All the disrespect, it's still coming. They've got us ranked as the worst college football team of all time. They're calling us the Arizona State Wildcats, putting the Wildcats logo on ESPN. Desmond Howard always saying something about Arizona State.

It's just the constant disrespect we always get. We're used to it now. We actually welcome it. That's where we want to be. Yeah, we win this whole thing, man, it's going to be awesome.

**Q. Kind of hard for me to imagine Cam Skattebo as a Cinderella, but very good point, though. Thank you.**

**Q. When a lot of us think of the name Hines Ward, we're in awe at his career. When he came to coach you guys, did you guys, you personally and your fellow wide receivers, how did you feel when you knew that Hines Ward was coming to coach you, number one? Number two, what has he taught you about facing the big moments like you're going to this Wednesday?**

XAVIER GUILLORY: I feel like, when Coach Ward first



came here, Coach Dillingham let us know that he was going to be our coach. It was just kind of one of those things. I knew the Lord had it all predestined for us to cross paths with him. It's been such a big blessing to have him here.

You guys don't understand, as players, getting coached by a receiver that all of us wish to have -- not just the receivers, all the players on the team wish to have the career he had. It's been a blessing to have the opportunity to pick his brain every single day in the receiving room. It's been cool to get to know him on a personal level, meet his family, get to know his background a little bit, beyond just Hines Ward the football player, but as a coach

He's been a big help to me, and I guarantee every other receiver in the receiving room can say the same thing. You see the development he made for Jordyn Tyson in just one year -- not even one year, one off-season -- and all the other guys he's going to be able to develop.

It's just he's been there, he's done that, and now he's just giving back. That's how it should be when he had the career he had and all the success he had, he's doing it the right way. It's been a blessing for us, and I'm sure it's been a blessing for him too.

**Q. What's been the most important thing he's taught you when preparing for the big moments like this Wednesday?**

XAVIER GUILLORY: Just knowing that you put in the work. If you do the right things, you do your due diligence every single day, studying extra film, taking care of your body, doing the right work, that those things will pay off. The Lord sees all the work that you put in.

It's about just being patient, waiting for your time, and when the time comes, you just make that play. Whether you're in the backyard or on the practice field throwing to Sam Leavitt or in Mercedes Benz Stadium, it shouldn't be no difference how you go about your operation, how you go about your steps, getting your depth, all that kind of stuff.

He's just teaching us how to be in that moment. What he did, he tells us what he did to get ready for those moments, that helps a lot. Rather than just saying it, he gives us the step by step of how he prepared. He was a two time Super Bowl champ, MVP, all that stuff. He knows what he's talking about. When he speaks, we listen.

It's been great to have him, and that's just one example of how he's helped us this year.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

