

San Diego County Credit Union Holiday Bowl: Oregon vs North Carolina

Wednesday, December 28, 2022

San Diego, California, USA

Petco Park

Oregon Ducks
Coach Dan Lanning
Bo Nix
Chase Costa
Bucky Irving
Mase Funa
Press Conference



BO NIX: Our defense did a great job of continuing to give us the ball back. And I think in a game like that, I mean, they had a really good offense, so they could have scored a little bit more. And our defense did a great job of stopping them and giving us the ball back several times.

Finally there at the end we got a few drives together, and we went down and scored, and I couldn't be more proud of Chase and everything that he has done for the team and just battling through injuries, being there for each and every one of us. It's only right that he caught that last one.

Q. You guys were trailing 24-14. You guys (inaudible). Talk about your opponent.

DAN LANNING: Yeah, all we needed was time on the clock. You can't worry about the past, and you really can't worry about the future. You have to be in the present.

I thought our team did a good job of being in the present. I thought our players made great adjustments. Some of those drives where we stalled out and didn't get a first down, our guys believed we're going to get a stop and have an opportunity to do it again. That's what it came down to.

You talk about phenomenal players making great plays down the stretch. That's what you saw. They took every fourth down. They took every yard, took every inch, took every ounce of effort that our guys had to finish the way they needed to finish.

Q. Chase, if you could just walk us through on fourth and two during the time-out, Drew makes the call --

DAN LANNING: Let's correct that real quick. When who makes the call? Who made that call?

BO NIX: (Inaudible.)

DAN LANNING: Bo did a good job calling what he wanted on that one. But we're all in agreement you believe in your quarterback, right?

Q. Bo, why you made the call you did, and Chase,

Oregon Ducks-28, North Carolina Tar Heels-27

DAN LANNING: What a fun group to share a stage with right now. I'm thrilled and excited for our team. North Carolina is a great team. They fought. That was a game that came down to the very last second, as we all know. We talked about it going into the game that we played 720 minutes of football this season, and we had to play 60 more, and we played all 60 of it.

So couldn't be more proud as a testament to our player's and how hard they work. In the coaching profession there's no one better than Mack Brown. You hope that you can just coach long enough to halfway resemble what he has done as a head coach, so I have ultimate respect for him and their program and what they've done.

Real proud of our players to be able to cap this season off. We talked about coming in tonight and really finishing the season with not a period, but an exclamation point, and I would say that was an exclamation point.

With that said, we can open it up for questions.

Q. That second half the offense was struggling to move the ball consistently. In the final 7 minutes you guys went down twice and scored. What clicked for you guys, and what was that feeling when you connected with Chase (inaudible)?



what you were thinking from your perspective?

BO NIX: That's one of our just go-to plays. We feel really good about that play. We've run it multiple times. It's hard to stop against guys and good situations. It puts Troy and T-fer and Chase and those guys in situations to do what they do best. Chase knows over and over that that's the three. If he gets housed, he is going to get a natural pick there going across the middle, and we thought he did a great job of picking up the protection, and we threw it over the middle and had a completion for a touchdown.

It just goes to practice and practice and practice. You know, you run that play over and over, and I think everybody on the sideline kind of wanted that play, and I was just happened to be the one that might have verbalized it. One of our favorite plays --

DAN LANNING: Credit to Bo and credit to Drew and the offensive staff and every single player on offense. They had belief in what we were going to run and how we were going to execute it, and when the suggestion was made, it was like, hell ya, let's run that.

CHASE COTA: Just what Bo said, if they were bringing house blitz, actually the whole (inaudible) against our defense, we never got that look once, but then we got it here on our practice site for the goal one time. Missed it and went over it, and sure enough in the game it was the same exact one. It was perfect. Bo saw it, (inaudible).

Q. Bucky, that touchdown run, can you walk me through it, and then just your performance as a whole?

BUCKY IRVING: I was going to go back to Coach Lanning came up to me and asked, do I want to be great? I said, of course. Do you really want to be great? I said, yes.

Then he told me to trust the guy in front of me. I just want to thank him for telling me what I can do. And also I want to thank the O-line for always being there (inaudible).

Q. Bo, just both touchdown drives, what did it take, and why is this offense capable of completing a game like this? There was no room for error. Fourth down and (inaudible) --

BO NIX: Well, it takes 11 guys to buy in and believe on that drive. And when you are down by I believe it was 10 points, you need to score there. So we knew what we had to do to go down and do that, and we did. Play after play we made sure we went down.

There in the second drive we executed and had some explosive plays. T. Ferg had that long one to set us up.

We get to the fourth and two, fourth and manageable, and it's just (inaudible).

We're going to compete until the final whistle. Just, again, you give credit to every single guy on that offense. You give credit each guy that played a part. Each guy that went out on the field tonight.

You can tell they were playing for more than just themselves. Just going back to Bucky's touchdown run, that was another Alex Forsyth check, so I have to give him a shout-out on that one. Alex has been incredible for us. It starts up front with those guys. Two drives at the end of the game. It starts up front with protection to get us going. Obviously, the skill guys do the rest.

Q. Mase, you guys got that stop or you held them to a field goal. They had 24 points instead of up by 14. You know, Casey makes that big play at the 2 yard line. What do you see on that play, and how did he come up big in that situation?

MASE FUNA: Just a defense you have (inaudible) doing their job to make that happen. It wasn't just on the play, on that drive. Focusing on just doing their job. (Inaudible).

Q. Dan, also Mase, can you speak to the defense in the second half, the guys that didn't play whether it was opt-outs or going pro and the lack of depth and new players playing? Can you speak to what they did today and just the quarterback they played against?

DAN LANNING: First off, Drake is as talented a quarterback as you are going to go against. The other is sitting right here. He is a hell of a competitor. He is a hell of a quarterback. You have to give a lot of credit to him. He had a good night.

I think the one thing that I have to give our players credit for is we were going to play with the guys that came on this trip. The guys that are here, that's who we are going to play with. If you are here, you are good enough because you've been working your tail off. There were guys on the field tonight that haven't played a snap for us or played limited snaps for us all season.

For me to see a guy like Micah Roth. Roth never made an impact on this team when his role has been limited all season, but when he gets in there, he does his job and executes at a high level and to do it with a level of belief that everybody on the field believed he would do his job. Those are moments that are exciting for me.

Every chance the ball got snapped and every chance we got a stop, you know, you saw every guy walk on the field

with belief in what's about to happen next. So that's exciting to see that happen.

Q. Bo, obviously a pretty crazy end to the first half with the interception and touchdown. That seemed to swing the game. What was your feeling going into halftime? What was the message at halftime? How do you think you were able to bounce back with such a crazy toned that first half?

BO NIX: I was ticked off. I was mad I put my team in that position. It wasn't a great play on my part (inaudible).

At the end of the day it goes back to the 11 guys. In this case the 22 guys who were out there playing. Playing for one another. If one of us falls down, they pick us up.

You get to the fourth quarter, and anything can happen in that close of a game. So I just give credit to our team. They didn't quit.

Could have easily kind of tanked at that moment. Bowl games sometimes happen that way. Guys start falling apart and start to not want to play, but that wasn't us tonight. We continued to battle and fight.

All it takes is one guy to start doing that. It kind of trickles away. Not a single one of us did that, and it just speaks to leadership of the team. Starts with Coach Lanning and goes down to each player. Just saw a bunch of guys out there battling and just competing (inaudible).

Q. Bo, can you talk about the winning touchdown (inaudible) Chase carried for the go ahead score?

BO NIX: Yeah, of course. One of those plays where we practiced a lot over and over and over. Coach Lanning is not going to it like if I say that, but we hit that play in practice a lot. It's an option route, and there's eye lot of different angles so it's hard to stop from a defensive point of view.

As much as we hit that, that's where my mind went at fourth and 2 from the 4 yard line. That's what I want to call because we had the most reps at it, and I know exactly where each guy is going to be.

Chase did a good job of getting over across the field in man coverage and looking the ball in and catching it, and getting in the end zone. Extremely proud of Chase. He deserved that.

Q. Bo, congrats on the win. You mentioned Alex Forsyth earlier. I know you may not know it (inaudible). He won that award for unselfish

commitment to your team. Can you tell me a little bit about your connection with him and how it he is (inaudible)?

BO NIX: Alex Forsyth is probably the most incredible guy that I have ever been around on a sports team. He carries around a football all the time. Like, all he worries about is the football.

Then he has a water jug. So he is going to be the most hydrated guy on the team. He is going to be the most prepared when it comes to football. He is unreal because every day, every snap, good snaps, good snaps. He has so many things to worry about, and he is worried about the number one fundamental (inaudible) the quarterback exchange.

He prepares unlike anybody I have ever seen. He is the best at that. There's absolutely nobody more deserving for an unselfish award like that than Alex, and he starts everything up front. Everything goes through him. I can't tell you how many times he has got us in a good place or kind of talked to the team if we're down.

There's no doubt we don't have the success we have this year without a guy like Alex Forsyth and extremely honored to be a part of this team and especially being behind a guy like Alex. You feel so comfortable when he is out there with you.

Unfortunately, it killed him to not be out there at the end of the game. You know, it hurts when you see a guy like that put everything he has into a program for six years and, unfortunately, just can't finish the game. You know, he set us up, and he it put us out in a great situation and came out and just kind of -- it's guys like that that you play for at the end of the day. You put everything you have out there for, and that's just the kind of team we have.

Q. Coach Lanning, I saw you nodding your head. Can you tell me about the mark Alex made for you?

DAN LANNING: The what?

Q. What kind of mark he made on you?

DAN LANNING: Just like Bo said. He is a professional in every sense of the word. He did does a phenomenal job of preparing.

I think as a young player you look to old players for leadership. When it looks like they do things the right way.

Alex, I mean, he will be the guy that will ride the plane ride back, and he is sending a text message out saying make



sure you clean up the locker room and turn in your gear. He is like having another coach on the team.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach, appreciate it.

He is a special guy. He has given everything he has to this program. He is one that certainly sticks out.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

Q. The big picture before the season, you were asked about what your line was. You went on to say many things (inaudible) raising players to not just be competitors, but to be real men, championship husbands and championship fathers. This foursome kind of typifies that in a lot of ways (inaudible). You have a player (inaudible) father played here and one whose father was a coach and one who (inaudible) what do these four players resemble (inaudible) on what this team it the 2022 team, your first team as a head coach, means to you?

DAN LANNING: I can't thank the guys in this locker room. It's really easy when there's change and transition. Especially for some of these guys change they didn't pick. Some change they did. It's really easy to buckle up. Especially when you talk about the adversity we saw early in the season when it didn't go our way.

But this group has never stopped and never wavered. You know, (inaudible) knows what it's like to be a championship father because he sees it and he does it himself. He operates the way that's necessary. Chase has a certain level of pride in the way that he attacks the field because he knows what it means to wear the O because he grew up wearing it.

Bo being a husband. Bucky being a teammate, the son, the player. Every piece that he is for this team. I can't speak enough on as a coach, you know, I coach for the relationships. I love to win, but we have relationships on this team. Everybody says blood is thicker than water. I sure love these guys.

Maybe not true blood, but I share blood with these guys. These guys are my family. They'll forever be my family and they'll forever be part of my first team here as a head coach, and for that I'm forever grateful.

Q. Mase, you certainly have posted a few things over the past month to indicate that this is it. You do have another year. This was a terrific performance. Was this your swan song in the end or will there be a 2023?

MASE FUNA: I'm coming back.

DAN LANNING: Let's go!

(Applause).

