

Pac-12 Conference Football Media Day

Friday, July 21, 2023
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Utah Utes

Cameron Rising

Cole Bishop

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: A couple captains here for the two-time defending Pac-12 champs.

Cam, a question everybody has, how are you doing? How is that knee feeling?

CAMERON RISING: Knee is doing great. I'm doing great. Excited to be out here. Been focused on my rehab. Everything is going the way it's supposed to be. Just excited, see what the future holds.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions from the media.

Q. Cam, Andy Ludwig is a fast-rising head coach candidate for next year. What does he mean to the offense for Utah? Do you remember the first time you were able to connect with him when you transferred over from Texas?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, Coach Ludwig means everything. He spends so many hours throughout the week to make sure that our game plan is as good as it can possibly be. Because he does that, that's why we go out there and have so much confidence and trust the process because he spent the time to make sure that every little part of that game plan is where we want it to be.

My first experience was when I first got to campus. His first day was my visit. Kind of just got to talk to him. He didn't even have, like, a game plan of what he wanted to talk to. We got to sit down, talk some ball. I knew he was a coach that I wanted to play for. I know one day he'll be a great head coach for sure.

Q. Cam, obviously being a Cali guy, you've had a chance to have a lot of success in Utah. COVID high school kids were getting left behind. How has it been for you going back to your hometown, reaching out to

kids saying Utah is a path for you?

CAMERON RISING: Yeah, absolutely. What comes to mind is Brady Smigiel from Newbury Park. A great football player. I'm always trying to make sure he's thinking of Utah, coming here, because it is such a great program. They know how to manage their players. Having a coach like Coach Whit, it makes a world of difference. Every time I'm back, I'm trying to make sure they know Utah is a great spot to be and that's where you should go play football.

Q. Cam, with the new rules coming up with the clock doesn't stop after a first down unless it's two minutes before the end of a half, you had a couple of close games against Washington State and Utah, and even though you get the timeouts the last two minutes of a half, how much does that affect you three minutes before the half if you're trying to run a two-minute drill?

CAMERON RISING: It definitely starts that two-minute process a little bit earlier. You have to have more urgency. It's like if you run out-of-bounds with two minutes and one second on the clock, that clock is still going to run. You still kind of got to go through that process. It's going to be pretty similar to that.

Q. Cole, Devin Lloyd, Clark Phillips, they've been the faces of this defense. What did you learn from them?

COLE BISHOP: Devin and Clark are both leaders. They lead differently. Devin was vocal, Clark was led by his work ethics and things like that.

Being able to learn from both of them and try to incorporate a little bit of both is what I've been trying to do. Be vocal, but also show your work ethic. Yeah, do that.

Q. How is he doing?

CAMERON RISING: Doing a great job. Being vocal, making sure guys are doing everything they can. Defense is always out there getting extra work. He's leading it. I think the defense is in good hands with Cole right here (smiling).



Q. The talent at quarterback in this conference. Cole, can you speak to what it's like to prepare for all the great quarterbacks in this conference? Cam, the appreciation you have playing that position, recognizing the talent.

COLE BISHOP: Yeah, obviously there's so many good quarterbacks in the league now. It's going to be pretty much an every-week thing you have to prepare for somebody. I feel like they all have pretty different skill sets. All can throw the ball really good, but some are more mobile than others.

Just being able to watch film on them, see what they're wanting to do, what they're tending to do, just prepare in that aspect of it.

CAMERON RISING: For me it makes preparing that much more easy because you have a great quarterback to watch each and every week. Sometimes when you have some guys playing bad ball, it makes it harder to watch and you can't take any pieces of knowledge, pieces of their game that they were out there using.

Having great quarterbacks to watch week in and week out is going to make it that much easier to go in there and watch, just see this is what they did on that play, we can try to do something similar with that, just take it from there and try to learn, take advantage of having such a good conference.

Q. Cam, you think Ja'Quinden Jackson is going to have a huge season this year. His story is remarkable. He changed positions, had a huge impact last year. Your perspective, how you know him, what he brings to this team.

CAMERON RISING: He's committed to this team. He puts his best foot forward each and every day to make sure he's giving everything he has.

When you have a guy like that in the running back room, even when he was a quarterback, I always did tell him he should be Taysom Hill, just go out there and play everything since he's such a freak of nature.

He's a great football player. I know he's going to have a phenomenal year. I'm excited to just hand him the ball and watch him go.

Q. You saw the media poll. How did that go over as the two-time defending champs, not picked, not getting a vote, to win this thing?

CAMERON RISING: It is what it is. They can think whatever they want. Just find out come this season.

Q. Last year was the same thing. Everybody was talking about USC and Oregon. All of a sudden at the end of the year who was holding that trophy. Do you like being in that spot?

COLE BISHOP: I think it's a good spot to be in. Won the past two years, still not getting those votes. It just shows we have to keep working to keep building Utah up so people respect we can go in there and do it every year.

Q. You were committed to Oklahoma, then Texas, now at Utah. You're from Georgia. What have you noticed about this Utah brand nationally, how people talk about this program now?

CAMERON RISING: I think naturally people are starting to recognize that we play a good brand of football, we come to play each and every week. When you have a coach like Coach Whit, it makes it easy to do that. I think we're starting to get a little bit more of that respect, but we got to get over that hump, then we'll really start to get it.

COLE BISHOP: Especially in the south, too, we have way more guys from Florida than Utah probably ever has. A few guys from Georgia. Just being able to expand, get guys not just from the West Coast but from the East Coast, across the country. We have guys from everywhere. Helps out bringing everyone together.

Q. Is there any matchups this season that you're most looking forward to? Challenges you're excited about this season?

COLE BISHOP: The game I'm most excited for is Florida because the aspect that the defense didn't have a great game last year. We had a lot of missed tackles. We're looking to go and play better this year and be able to do our thing, come out with a win.

Q. Cam, you're a goldfish with what's happened in the past. That Florida game from last year, are you glad you get another shot at them?

CAMERON RISING: I'm looking forward to it. Can't wait to play on that Thursday. Going to be a great game. Looking forward to getting that ball in play, getting revenge.

Q. Big USC fan for a half century. You broke my heart last year. Cam, when the game was going, SC is up a couple scores, when Caleb gets hurt, is that when you felt the positive momentum shift to your side or did you think you were going to win despite that?



CAMERON RISING: No, we just trusted the process. A lot of times you don't really worry about what's going on on the other side, you have to focus on what you guys have going on.

We just kind of felt that it started to shift before that. We kind of just felt that the ball was going our way. Then we started to get that momentum. Kind of took it. That just kind of was a part of it.

Q. Cam, you've dealt with injuries before. It's one thing to be cleared, then another clear in your head. How are you mentally attacking this thing?

CAMERON RISING: Doing everything I can. Doing every single movement there is, every type of throw. Trying to be ready to make sure because come game time you never know what movements you're going to make. Making sure whatever situation I'm put in, my body will be ready to go.

Q. A big storyline when you decided to come back. Cole, how did you guys find out that news? Was there a team meeting, a text chain?

COLE BISHOP: I kind of was hoping he was coming back. That was obviously what I wanted to happen. I guess, I don't know, I saw him in the meeting on Monday (smiling).

Q. What was the decision point for you? Did you have in your mind that was going to be a decision point until the end of the season?

CAMERON RISING: It was a long process after the Pac-12 championship. Kind of just took that process throughout the Rose Bowl prep. Kind of decided a few weeks before that I was going to come back. Excited to be back and just looking forward to this year.

Q. Offensively, the weapons you lost. The guys that are catching the ball, how are they doing?

CAMERON RISING: They're doing good. They're coming ready to work. I'm excited for this group. I think the whole entire receiver room has picked up their play. They're playing at a really high level. Everybody has a lot of confidence. We'll be getting them the ball.

But you can't forget about the tight ends because Brant and those guys, Thomas, they know how to play. You got to get them the ball and just watch them go. Excited to have so many weapons out there. I know it's going to be fun for Cole during fall camp.

Q. Cole, I'm supposed to ask about your golf game.

COLE BISHOP: It's on the come-up. Played a little bit in high school. Been taking it a lot more seriously. Shot a career-high 91 the other day.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time. Happy to have you back. Great to see you.

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