

# Pac-12 Conference Football Media Day

Friday, July 21, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Washington Huskies

## Michael Penix Jr.

## Edefuan Ulofoshio

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Last year at this time you weren't the starting quarterback yet, you were still rehabbing. What has that experience been representing your school coming off an historic year with big-time expectations? Michael?

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Yeah, for me it's been an amazing experience. I'm just blessed to be in this position. Like you said, around this time, I wasn't named the starting quarterback yet. I was still grinding to be able to be in that position.

I just feel like it was a lot of hard work and dedication it took to be able to be up here on this stage with you.

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: Definitely a humbling experience for me, understanding that I was hurt last year. Just being able to have to watch from the sidelines for a majority of the season, but having my teammates always cheer me on and encouraging me to come back bigger and stronger. Truly a blessing to be able to represent my guys out here. I'm truly blessed and humbled.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Michael, I think one of the best passes in the entire college football season last year was against Oregon. You made the sideline pass. Do you think that's a throw that was a result of the confidence you built through your time at Washington?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: I wouldn't say it was the throw that built my confidence. It's a throw I make every day. It was just a coverage that they tried to mix it up on us. I actually saw the corner, he changed his technique from how he was playing earlier in the game. We ran that same play maybe two times earlier in the game, we hit the out route.

I knew Oregon, they have good coaches over there, they weren't going to give us the out route again on the

third-and-long. I made sure that I went through my reads, I found an open receiver and took the pass.

I wouldn't say it was a confidence booster. It was definitely a big play in that game, one of the big plays in that game to help us win that game. I actually needed to make up a play, too, because I threw a pick the draw before.

**Q. The season and how it ended up, how much do you feel is still left out there? When you think about the losses that prevented you from being in the Pac-12 title game, does that weigh on you more than the success of the season?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: It does. Like you said, man, we wanted to win the Pac-12. We had a lot more goals that we wanted to accomplish that we didn't accomplish. 11 wins was a big season, a great season. We won our bowl game, which was amazing.

Yeah, we definitely were shooting for more. At the beginning of the season we stated our goals for the team. We didn't make all our goals. That's one of the reasons why I came back, just another opportunity to be able to achieve those goals that we had.

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: Our motto last year was no limits. We didn't have basically a baseline for us last year. Obviously 11 games is amazing and fantastic, but at the end of the day we didn't win the Pac-12 championship, we didn't even get a chance to play in it.

Just means there's more work for us and more work to accomplish. That's one of the reasons I came back, get that job done and maximize our potential as a team.

**Q. Ede, you played down here at Bishop Gorman. It's 111 degrees right now. What was the hottest game you ever played down here?**

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: I was fortunate to play at night all the time. But I remember working out in the summers. It would be just absolutely terrible where all of us would have to put on sunscreen before practice. It would be, like, steaming. I'd lose five to ten pounds every practice

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

because I would be so dehydrated. Especially coming from a place like Alaska, the temperature change was absolutely insane. It definitely was a struggle out here.

**Q. Could you reflect over the past year your time away from the game. What moment or moments do you think will have the most impact this upcoming season?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: You said away from?

**Q. Your time away from the game. What life event is going to influence your play the most?**

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: Yeah, so when I was hurt, one of the first things that I remember coming out of surgery was that all the coaches texted and called me. The first night, the first weekend, Coach Inge came to my apartment. I definitely wasn't in the greatest mood at the time, but him being there supporting me meant a lot, especially understanding that I only met him for a couple months.

Just having people that love and support you outside of the game just made me want to come back bigger and better and stronger. Gives me a bigger thing to play for. The family is so huge at the University of Washington, there's so much to play for in terms of the family and the fans. It's an exhilarating experience when I come back and I play for them.

I guess to answer your question, I just feel like I have a lot more to play for.

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Yeah, same thing with me. For me, I'm big-time all football. Outside of football, I'm really not doing too much. A lot of the guys on the team, they know that I'm mainly football. Outside of football, I really don't do too much.

For me, the things that changed my mindset, obviously my injuries that I've been through. That just make me think, like, every play I make, I know that it could be my last play of the season because I been through it.

I just play every play to the fullest. I just go out there and have fun. I don't think about it anymore. There's times when I was still playing with that in the back of my head, knowing I could get hurt.

Now I got to the point where I have so much support around me, family and friends always being there for me, lifting me up, keeping me levelheaded, it allowed me to go out there and have fun. Now I'm going to play every play like my last because I understand it could be. That perspective definitely changed my mindset.

**Q. Michael, a lot of attention come your way this off-season from people you haven't met yet. How are you managing that in between your own ears?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Yeah, for me, I always keep the main thing the main thing. I always make sure that I'm putting my team first, I'm doing whatever I can to help my team win football games.

All the outside noise, if it's good or bad, I never get too high or too low in moments like that. I always stay levelheaded. I feel like my faith keep me humble and keep me grounded as well. I just got to go out there and have fun. I know God -- no matter what other people say, I know God has my back and He's always going to be there for me.

**Q. This side of the ball for you, where is the headspace regarding this defense, knowing all the quarterbacks you have to face?**

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: One of our key values on defense is creating havoc and causing turnovers. You just said it right there, we have a lot of talent with ZTF, Bralen. We have a very fast DB group with Dom Hampton, Mish Powell. We talked about it earlier, Jackson, I think he's going to be a stud, too.

The major thing is when a new scheme comes, new team comes, it takes time to learn defense. It takes time to really mesh and gel. I think we did a fantastic job for a first-year defense in terms of creating turnovers, getting the ball back to Mike and letting him do his thing.

Another year of us learning, developing, this year is all about understanding, we're only going to be a lot better. I'm super excited about what we're about to showcase in the next couple of weeks, so...

**Q. I don't want to jump too far ahead. Week three you go to East Lansing. When you look at the schedule, that game in particular, put you on the map last year when you beat Michigan State. What will you tell your guys about playing there?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: That's actually a grass field. We don't play on grass fields too much. I know a lot of guys, they like that. I know they're going to love that part.

We're excited for every game. Definitely last year winning that game early on, it was definitely something that was big for our team. It just showed our team that we could compete with anybody. We knew that, but to be able to go out there and put on the show that we did week three last year, it was definitely a special moment.

This year we know that going into their place, they're going to want to get that win back. So we just got to make sure we do everything that we can to make sure that we're properly prepared and execute at a high level.

I feel like the guys, they're very locked in and they're very bought into everything that these coaches are installing into us. It's going to be an exciting season.

**Q. It's hard to keep secrets. How on earth did you keep the secret that you were going to come back, record a video, have it played at the year-end banquet? How many people knew?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: No, only Kasey Byers, one of the guys in our media. He was the only guy I talked to, because I knew he was part of creative team, to be able to put that together. He was the only guy I called. I actually called him 8:00 at night, 8:30 at nighttime. He was probably like, Why is he calling me at this time?

I appreciate him for picking up and being able to do that for me. I believe it was the day before I called him, so for him to be able to do that, being able to squeeze me into our banquet, it was definitely a special moment to be able to do that in front of everybody.

**Q. Michael, how much have you grown as a leader from last season till now?**

MICHAEL PENIX JR.: Yeah, I would say I know one of my biggest emphasis last year was becoming a more vocal leader. I feel like I definitely took a huge step in that. This year it was holding people accountable, not letting little things slip, things that we may not see as being something that's bad or a big change.

I feel like just make sure we held each other accountable. I feel like across the board, our whole team, we've been doing that to the extreme all off-season. I feel like that's definitely matured our team a lot. We have a lot of leaders on our team that are young, as well.

It's not just the older guys, me and Ede. We have sophomores being able to speak up, knowing they can speak up. Coach let us know that leadership is influence. If you're influencing somebody, you're going into championship habit. If you're not creating championship habits, you see your teammates not doing something in a championship way, we have guys that are able to call out somebody, not be afraid to call out. Not just calling out, but people accepting that call out and not taking it as something bad, but accepting the challenge, going out there and changing and being a better person and player

as well.

**Q. Ede, you grew up in Alaska. Here you are as a former preferred walk-on. The legend goes 5 a.m. you're in the facility before coaches. Where did that come from for you?**

EDEFUAN ULFOFOSHIO: I would say it came, honestly, from my parents and my grandmother. My grandmother was a person that would wake up early, 4:00 in the morning, walk miles to go to the market to be able to provide for my dad, aunts and uncles.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports