

Pac-12 Conference Football Media Day

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

Oregon Ducks

Bo Nix

Jeffrey Bassa

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Fellas, looking sharp. Bo, last year there was a lot of firsts, first time being in Eugene, first time you were married, first time you suited up for this team. Now you decided to come back. You kind of know the drill. What has it been like for you heading into this season?

BO NIX: Now I'm excited. I know there's great opportunity. With great opportunity there comes a lot of not necessarily pressure, but stuff that you got to really do and do extra.

So I'm really excited to be that guy that people lean on and look up to. Like you said with the firsts, now I can just go out there and play. I know where to go out to for warm-ups, I know where to go for certain things. There's not as much thinking. Now I can just go out there and play.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Bo, Coach Lanning talked about how you're the family baby-sitter. Describe the synergy you have. What advice did you give Cam when he found out he got that ninth year of eligibility?

BO NIX: Yeah, Izzy and I have had the privilege of hanging out with Coach Lanning's boys. I've got to take them to basketball practice. We've hung out a few times. We've kept them over at the house when Coach Lanning and Miss Sauphia are out of town. That's part of the connection we talk about. Coach Lanning really puts an emphasis on that. We want to be the most connected team possible.

What's better than baby-sitting his kids and making sure they're good. At the end of the day they're part of the family. If they're good, then Coach Lanning is good, he can make us good.

Your next question was the ninth year of eligibility. Wow (smiling). That's a long time in college. But Cam deserves

it. He went through a lot of trouble, a lot of heartache, a lot of ups and downs. That's rewarding for him.

Q. Bo, how has leadership changed for you from when you were a true freshman to now?

BO NIX: Well, I think the most important thing is understanding how each individual is capable of being led. My first year, even first two years, I played with a lot of older guys. They were mostly the leaders, so I did a lot of the following, just led when somebody needed to lead.

Now, as long as I've been in college, as long as I've played, the guys kind of look to me for certain things. I have that pressure to be the leader. Sometimes I don't do a great job, and sometimes I have to tell them I apologize, I'll do it better next time. I try to meet them where they are and go exactly where they need to be, help them with whatever they're going through. Probably I've been through it the same thing.

Q. Bo, you worked with Alex a lot last year. He's gone now. A couple guys candidates to take over. What are your relationships?

BO NIX: Yeah, he was a great player. He was a great leader himself. He was an unbelievable player for the program. He did a lot for the program. Now he's on to bigger and better things in the league. He's going to do a great job with whatever he does in life.

Now somebody else has got to fill a void. I'm excited to see who that person is going to be. Obviously we have who we think it's going to be, but you never know. At the end of the day somebody is going to do it, somebody is going to do it really well. I'm just excited to be on a team with so many great players.

Q. Always talk about the defense at Oregon being the stepchild. Let's talk about the defense next year.

JEFFREY BASSA: Just a little bit about the defense next year, this coming-up season, I think the defense has tremendously improved from what I seen in spring. I think from the big boys up front to the guys in the ILB room, the

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guys on the back end, as well.

I think the guys did a tremendous job this off-season putting weight on their bodies, but also coming in with the right mindset every day, coming in ready to work. We all got one goal on our mind, and that's just to be the best every day. I think the guys are taking one day at a time. We're focusing on heading into camp healthy and ready to grind in camp.

Q. In comparison to your last season, what have you worked on to get better? From a team aspect, what do you see from the team that you're most excited about?

BO NIX: We've been working hard on discipline and consistency. Ultimately as a team we were so close last year, we want to go from good to great this year. We've talked about it a lot this off-season. We've had a lot of meetings about it, a lot of time where we can connect. Fellowship, talk about what that is exactly going to look like.

It's going to take each individual being disciplined, being consistent, showing up, doing the extra stuff, doing what they're supposed to do, being able to be counted on and being accountable in important situations. At the end of the day that's what it's ultimately going to come down to. We have each individual out there that has a job to do. If they do it, we feel strong about our success.

Q. Whose idea was it to out-flank the competition in the Pac-12 with the uniform you guys are wearing today? Secondly, who decides what uniform and what combination you wear on Saturdays?

JEFFREY BASSA: I'll go ahead and take that first one while Bo takes the second one.

For today, I mean, it was kind of something that we were talking about throughout the week before, that we knew we were both coming. I mean, just wanted to dress to impress in a way.

Yeah, I mean, Bo did end up getting his suit first, then I kind of bounced back off his idea.

BO NIX: So we have Kenny Farr, our EQ guy, is incredible. He's great at what he does. One of the best in the business. He selects a few people before the season to get together and collab with what we want to wear. We know our options. We put things together, and then each week -- well, actually, he sends it off from there so they can have it before so the fans and everybody knows what color to wear on the weekends.

We get it finalized, get it passed, then each week somebody has a chance to put it on. They're chosen by probably Coach Lanning or somebody in the department. They're chosen to go flash it around, put it on, have the outfit of the week or whatever and show it off.

It's special if you get picked. I got picked actually with my favorite last year, so it worked out great. It was the eggshell. Did you like it? Good, I liked it, too (smiling).

Q. A year now into marriage, is Izzy part of this?

BO NIX: I told Izzy as long as I'm capable, I will pick out my clothes. She does a great job. She helps me with certain things. Hey, do you think this looks nice, whatever.

But I've always really enjoyed dressing myself. I used to have to wake up and dress myself. My mom didn't put out my clothes or anything. But, yeah, I'm a year in, I still get to make my dressing decisions, so that's a good thing.

Q. Jeffrey, you have moved from safety down to linebacker. You have a bunch of experience. What has that brought to this defensive front seven that also has added some new faces?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, no doubt. I think it adds a lot of versatility to the defense. With me coming in from the linebacker room, I think I can do a lot of things that not your traditional linebacker can do.

Also, guys like Jamal Hill coming down into the room now, coming from safety as well, Matayo, a guy that can do a lot of things, also drop back into coverage and do a good job rushing the passer.

I think a lot of versatility. I think Tosh and Lanning have done a good job in the off-season program with getting guys to fit the right narrative and the right set for what they want to do with the defense, call a whole lot of different things.

Q. You were asked to read the book "Good to Great." What have you taken to both sides of the ball from that?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, I think just from the meetings we've had, player-led meetings, coach-led meetings, I think what we've taken from that book on the defensive side of the ball, last year we had a good defense, but it wasn't the greatest defense. Obviously we want to always improve, to strive to be better every day.

That's something that we've attacked in this off-season. A lot of the transfer guys that have come in have seen what

we did in the past year with the defense. They realize, whether they've come from Iowa or Arizona State, transfers like Connor and Jestin, they've come from historic programs, they want us to elevate from good to great.

BO NIX: For me, I think one thing that stuck out the most is just being vulnerable, being able to take criticism when it's passed along to you. Anybody can be good at something. It takes skill to be good. It takes work to be good. It's hard to be great at it. Not many people are great at it.

At the end of the day, these people are telling you what you should work on. Even yourself, you can be self-critical of yourself, look in the mirror, I got to get better at this. I got to get better at going straight back in my drop. It's making my eyes look bad. I got to do this, got to do that.

Being critical of yourself. Those are the little things that will take you from reading a safety, not only staying in the middle, but knowing exactly where he was in the middle. 15 yards deep, I still had that pass.

Little things that you can go from good to great, they're so minute, but if you find them, they make the biggest difference in the world.

Q. Talking to Kenny Dillingham, he was so genuinely happy for you. He said it's not just that he is playing well and we're winning, but for him to be able to come here and have a rebirth of his career. You guys have a tight relationship. What was that conversation when you found out he was going to be leaving? Have you been able to talk to him?

BO NIX: Yeah, first of all, he was one of the biggest reasons I came to Oregon to begin with. He taught me so much throughout the season, about life, about football, coverages, offense, scheme.

But as soon as the job was open, I knew he was going to get the job, what kind of person he is, what kind of coach he is. I knew his determination. He was going to go out and get it because that's his dream. We always go after our dreams or goals.

I was thrilled when he told me. I couldn't have been happier. Probably the same excitement he had for me. I can't wait to beat his tail in November, though (smiling). I'm excited about that. Great relationship we'll have for the rest of our lives.

Q. Did you see him over there?

BO NIX: Yes. Spying on us (smiling).