

# Pac-12 Football Championship Game: Oregon vs Washington

Friday, December 1, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Allegiant Stadium

## Oregon Ducks

## Coach Dan Lanning

### Postgame Press Conference



Washington 34, Oregon 31

DAN LANNING: All right. That one hurts. I thought our guys fought for the entire game, four-quarter fight. You can't start off slow against a really good team. We obviously started off slow.

They won a lot of critical situations as far as third down. We thought third down was a place we had to be good. They were effective running the ball. We didn't do a good job stopping the run. We weren't able to run the ball. You got to be able to run the ball in games like this.

So open it up.

**Q. Even though you lost, what's going through your mind knowing this is the last Pac-12 championship conference game?**

DAN LANNING: Really nothing necessarily. Just about this game. I know how hard our players worked. I hate to see them finish on that note. I know we're going to get a great opportunity for a great bowl game. Want to see those guys go out there and compete for that.

We have to give credit to Washington and Coach DeBoer. They did a great job. They had a good plan, executed well. But hurting for the guys in that locker room.

**Q. You had to credit your defense for giving the opportunity to stay in the game. What do you say about the way your defense played?**

DAN LANNING: Well, I mean, we were in the game. We didn't play well enough. We didn't play well enough on either side of the ball to be able to win against a good team.

We certainly had a chance all the way down to the very last minute. I appreciate our guys' fighting effort for that.

Starting off slow hurt us.

**Q. What was the problem tonight with the run defense?**

DAN LANNING: Yeah, have to go watch and film and see exactly what happened. We were putting an extra hat in the box there at the end. They were breaking for extra yards. They had some successful runs. We didn't have their number, they had ours.

**Q. How much of an impact with Jordan Burch hurt early, how did that impact the run?**

DAN LANNING: Jordan Burch is a great player. Certainly makes us better. That would be an excuse. Nobody playing healthy at this time of the season. They're banged up, too. We didn't finish.

**Q. What's your thoughts on Bo's performance, the way he was able to rally the guys and get you guys back in the game?**

DAN LANNING: Well, I think it just speaks to who Bo is. Obviously he brought us back there to be within one score there at the end. Explosive run. Showed his legs. I thought the guy ran extremely tough tonight. Opportunities he had to run, he put his head down and did everything he could to get the first or explosive plays.

Made some elite throws. That last throw in two minute was really special. So Bo did what I've seen him do all season: he competed till the very end. He handled some adversity. He responded to that. Walking away, I don't know, three touchdowns, a really long run, I'm impressed with our quarterback.

**Q. Obviously this is the last Pac-12 game, football. What are you going to miss the most about this conference?**

DAN LANNING: Wells, just the competition. This is a great year for this conference. I think you saw a lot of really good football in this conference this year. That's the piece you'll miss.



**Q. You talked about the lack of a run game. What didn't work for you guys?**

DAN LANNING: Yeah, I mean, they had a good plan. Hats in the box. There were times I thought we could have been running the ball, some positive looks. For whatever reason we weren't able to do that.

They played well. I think you have to give credit to them. I think I can probably dive into the film to be able to give you better answers.

**Q. It was the least accurate performance for Bo tonight. We're grading on a hard curve where 62% is low. What was it, where when he's used to 70, 75, 80 as of late, that this was a tougher night for him from an accuracy standpoint?**

DAN LANNING: The guy threw for three touchdowns. I thought Bo had a great performance. We started off slow early in this game. To have two 3 and outs to start the game off, that put us in a hole. We were playing catch-up a lot of the game. We talked about it at halftime, hey, we're going to go and score a touchdown here, defense is going to get a stop, we're going to get an opportunity to pull ahead. We did just that. We weren't able to maintain that lead.

Our quarterback gave us a chance tonight.

**Q. What was working in the middle of the game where you scored 21? Why weren't you able to continue that success?**

DAN LANNING: I thought we found some positive runs there to where we could get into a little bit more of a rhythm. We were off schedule a lot in the first half, where you're operating in second and 10, now it becomes third-and-long. That drive out of half to be able to convert two fourth downs I think was huge.

Once we got behind a little bit more, we had to be a little bit more aggressive in the passing game. You have to establish the run a little bit earlier to have that success.

**Q. Your only two losses are to this Washington team. What do you say to the committee, especially since obviously 'Bama is out there, what would you say why this Oregon team still deserves to be ranked in, let's say, the top six?**

DAN LANNING: At the end of the day, not really for me to decide. I think everybody saw our guys fight out there. Like I said, they never threw in the towel. They worked

their tails off this entire game. A game that we probably faced some adversity we haven't seen.

We've been down in some games this year by two scores. To be able to come back and respond... Again, I think this team has been playing really good ball throughout the season. To finish it off on that note, that's a sour taste in our mouth for sure.

But I'm excited to see what bowl game we get. I know we'll get a great one and have a great team to go compete against.

**Q. Bucky Irving was pretty bottled up tonight, and Jordan James had some really good plays. What was the thinking on the sideline offensively with when to go with one guy versus the other?**

DAN LANNING: Just trying to find a rhythm. Both those guys are really good players. Jordan certainly had some successful runs. They were certainly clued in when Bucky was in the game that he was going to be touching the ball.

I'll have to go back and look at the film to see what existed there. Have you two talented players. You want to figure out how to use them both.

**Q. When you were leaving the field, you 180ed, stopped, turned around and looked. What made you do that, and what was going through your head in that moment?**

DAN LANNING: Just thinking about our players. I just want to be around our players, let them know how proud I am of them. Grab a couple guys. There's disappointment in that locker room because of how hard these guys worked. I haven't been around a team that works this hard. I hurt for them because I wanted them to have this one.

Again, credit to Washington. They earned it, deserved it, played a four-quarter game. We probably played the last three quarters. We didn't start off very well in the first quarter.

**Q. What makes them so hard to defend?**

DAN LANNING: Yeah, you can't take away one guy because they have other guys. I thought they did a good job in protection tonight. We tried to be aggressive at times with pressure. They probably made us pay for that.

Didn't have the tight matches that we needed in the back end. They finished. We didn't. Right? There's times we're hitting them, getting close, but the ball is getting off just before. They made some big-time explosive plays.

We didn't have as many explosive plays offensively for us. So credit to those guys.

**Q. You said the standard here is very high. 11 wins has only happened three other times. How do you want this team to define its season?**

DAN LANNING: Yeah, we want the standard to be that expectation. We have a high expectation for ourselves. There's nobody outside of this room that wants us to do better than those guys in that locker room, these coaches. They know what we had this year. We have a special group this year.

But it's a building block, right? We're in year two. This is an opportunity to build on to this and set the expectation for what it should look like in the future.

And we've got an opportunity to go play in a really good bowl game, right, and cap this thing off the right way.

**Q. The three games you've played against this team in the last three years have been three of the best games in college football the last two seasons, decided by nine points. What is the difference between you guys and Washington in that they've been able to finish these out?**

DAN LANNING: Yeah, I'd say critical moments. Like I said, we were good on fourth down tonight, but we were three of 10 on third down. They were 10 of 15. You got to be better on third down. You got to be able to establish the run.

Last time we played these guys, we were able to run the ball. We didn't have that success tonight. But again, credit to them. They've been good in critical moments. We didn't finish.

**Q. How challenging was it to go up against that receiving corps with guys coming in and out?**

DAN LANNING: That's a cop-out for us. We have guys that practice really hard and prepare all week. You're banged up. It's that point in the season. They have talented players. We're going to challenge ourselves to be able to handle those players when they're running the ball with the success they are. You have to load the box. That's going to put guys outside on islands a little bit.

Our guys came in and competed, they just outplayed us tonight.

**Q. You mentioned the third downs. On the third and nine late, looked like a design run by Bo that got**

**stopped. What was the thinking on that third down call?**

DAN LANNING: They were in dime. They were in a light box. We didn't pick up the movement well. When you're playing dime in a light box, that's an opportunity to have a advantageous run. We emptied the box with a bolt motion. They had less hats in there than we did. We had enough in there to block 'em up. We didn't get it blocked properly and they made a great play.

Appreciate it.

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