

Pac-12 Football Championship Game: Oregon vs Washington

Friday, December 1, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Allegiant Stadium

Oregon Ducks

Jeffrey Bassa

Postgame Press Conference

Washington 34, Oregon 31

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Jeff, you have been a top 10 run defense. What was about them tonight that gave you guys a lot of trouble?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, overall I think it just comes down to execution. We didn't execute. We weren't in the right fits from what it seems like on the field. I still have to go look at the film, see what particularly went wrong.

It just came down to execution. That was really it. I don't think Coach called any bad calls or nothing like that. We're a good defense, like you said. I think it just came down to execution.

Q. How disheartening was it after the Traeshon Holden touchdown, your defense has a chance to stop them and they didn't?

JEFFREY BASSA: When Traeshon scored that touchdown, it gave the whole team a lot of confidence. (Indiscernible) was going up and down and stuff like that. It's up to us on the defense to go out there and get a stop. We failed to execute.

I think that's what the moral of the game was, really just execution. It wasn't that we were letting dudes run free down the field and stuff like that. It just came down to little details.

Q. In the second half, you were seen up on the bench yelling at your guys, getting them going. What were you saying to your defense? What did you see from the fight?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, so right after Nikko Reed made that amazing play on the corner blitz, I kind of just went



over to the team, I got everybody up, I just told everybody don't let our highs get too high and our lows get too low. We still have a full game to play. One play isn't going to save the game.

Telling guys to keep their poise. Not letting our highs get too high and our lows get too low.

Q. You guys are so close to going to this goal that you had, going to the CFP. How does it feel to have it ripped away so close?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, it feels great. I'm so blessed to be in this position, to even be here right now with Coach Lanning, year two under his system, just the team, the little improvements we've made since last year.

Obviously we didn't get the result we wanted tonight, but I'm so blessed and grateful to be in this position to even be playing for that College Football Playoff national trophy, so...

Q. What do you think it says about the depth of this defense that you guys were able to hang in this game despite missing so many key guys?

JEFFREY BASSA: We have guys in the secondary and guys obviously up front with Jordan Burch getting hurt early. We have young guys that are ready to step up. We feel like they've been showing it in practice.

I think it goes down to our preparation with throwing young dudes in the fire, for them being ready in those big moments, like today was a big moment. I seen Cole Martin out there making huge plays, other guys like Teitum Tuioti and Amare Winston going out there and doing their job.

It comes down to trusting and believing in the system, trusting and believing in each other.

Q. Early in the game it looked like you were sending a lot of pressures at Michael Penix that weren't getting home. Can you talk about the play that Washington's offense had in those sequences, how you adjusted?



JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, we were trying to send some pressures up the middle very early. What they did was they kind of used max protection. They kept the tight end and the running back in protection.

Sending pressure right up the gut is not good against a full man slide. That was one thing they did a good job of that, their coaches. Penix did a good job from him, seeing it early, getting the full slide.

We came into halftime and adjusted. We went from there. But overall I don't think that it was -- I don't think it was just a certain play called that was bad. It was just they had a good counter fit for it.

Q. I know Brandon nearly had the strip sack late there. In the box score it's going to read he had no tackles. That hardly ever happens. People don't scheme him out of games. What do you think they did to be able to take one of your best players, make him not contribute in the box score tonight?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, I think just with how much of a force Brandon Dorlus is. Obviously a top dude in the nation, defensive line. Teams are going to look at his film and scout him up. He's been causing havoc since his freshman year, since he started playing this game.

I'm not surprised that they probably started to double-team him and stuff like that, little things like that. I mean, I think their coaches did a great job with Burch going down. But obviously we need guys to step up. That's what we did.

I think their coaches did a great job. I have to look at the film to see if they did double him, but just getting to him, so...

Q. Tonight was the last game of a Pac-12 meeting between you two schools. Not only that, you won't be able to play USC, UCLA. What does it mean to you as a player to have the opportunity to play in the Pac-12?

JEFFREY BASSA: I'm so blessed and grateful to play in this conference. This conference is full of amazing players. I feel like we're a very slept-on conference. We play some great football here on the West Coast.

The amount of quarterbacks that I seen this year from week to week was insane. The great teams, the history behind all these games with all these rivalries being shut down and stuff with all these schools moving to different conferences.

I'm so blessed and grateful to be a part of this history.

Q. As one of the leaders of this team, what is your message to the other guys in the locker room?

JEFFREY BASSA: The message was simple: we can't bow our heads down. We can't bow our heads down. We've got to keep going. We made so much improvements from the team last year. That was something we brought up in the locker room.

We've made so many improvements from a defensive standpoint, me speaking defensively. Being a top-10 rated defense. A better tackling defense, better at attacking the ball, little things like that.

There's been so much growth, there's so much more to go. The sky's the limit for us. I fully believe this program is going to be amazing in the next coming years.

Q. Obviously not the result you wanted. How do you rally yourself and your teammates for what should be a pretty big bowl game?

JEFFREY BASSA: Yeah, just getting them together. Obviously there's going to be guys that are going to make decisions to leave, go into the NFL. There's going to be guys that are going to leave and head into the portal.

This team might look different. But we got to rally up the guys that want to be here, want to be in this program. We got to get them ready to go.

I know we're going to play in a great bowl game. I know Coach is fired up, and I know some of the players -- a lot of the players are fired up, actually.

The guys that are going to be here and stay, they're fired up and ready to go to work. Some of the guys already in the locker room are talking about, I want to see who we play.

I know the mindset on this team and the guys on the offensive and defensive side of the ball is amazing. I'm so blessed to be around a team like this.

Thank you, guys.

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