

Pac-12 Football Championship Game: Oregon vs Washington

Friday, December 1, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Allegiant Stadium

Washington Huskies Edefuan Ulofoshio Dillon Johnson Postgame Press Conference



Washington 34, Oregon 31

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. As leaders of this team, heading into the College Football Playoff, where do you expect to put most of your emphasis on?

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: Man, it's kind of funny because in the training room, me and D.J., we actually kind of talked about the schedule, the things we have to do. We were absolutely confident we were going to be able to win all these games. I'm dead serious, we really thought we were going to be able to win all these games, have the opportunity to be in this position.

It's just so special. It's such a blessing to be able to do the work, for it to come to fruition.

Q. Coming into this game as an undefeated team, with a win already over Oregon but being a big underdog, was there an element to feeling disrespected, and then coming into this game and proving you do belong as one of the top teams in the country?

DILLON JOHNSON: Absolutely. I think it was 10-point underdog, which is absolutely insane. We definitely took that personal and we knew coming into the game that we were going to win this game. We've been preaching that all this week. We came out and got the W.

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: It was just kind of crazy just seeing it because, like, who do we play after Oregon? We played one of the best teams in Arizona, we played Utah. All these teams gave us their best punch. The rest of their schedule, they were playing basically everybody else's second punch. I thought it was super disrespectful just to see how hard we work.

We could have lost those games. Yeah, I mean, we do want to win those games by 50, but a win is a win. They're all hard to get. This is the best conference in the United States for a reason. You shouldn't knock us because the opponents are good, too. You know what I mean?

It was huge. A huge disrespect, for sure.

Q. When Oregon went ahead with the touchdown, what was going through your mind?

DILLON JOHNSON: Man, it's a game of momentum. They got the momentum. We just had to go and get it back. We knew our defense was going to get a stop for us. They've been playing great all year. We knew what we were going to do when we got on offense, and that was score.

Q. You guys have been good against the run and the pass all year long. What makes you special?

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: We go against the best offenses in the United States. We have Rome. We have D.J. You don't know how much of a pain it is to go against this guy in practice. When it comes in the game, it's simple (smiling).

We really just play up to our training every single day. We have the fricking Heisman at quarterback throwing impossible passes. The margin for error at practice, you know how it is, there's a ton of bragging rights. Dillon talks the most brag in practice, too (smiling). By the end of the day, iron sharpens iron. We're trying to be the best team we can be, and the results showed, for sure.

Q. Pac-12 Media Day you talked about the bitter feeling you had, everything was left on the table. You went back and all the losses you had last year you made up for it. How does it feel to do that? Is that feeling better now compared to last year? D.J., the game you had, cramping up the last drive, what did you say to each other before the big run? What were you thinking going up against that defense?

DILLON JOHNSON: Man, get the first down. Double up,



get the first down. That's the only thing that was going through my mind.

We knew that coming in it was going to be a tough game, and it was. It was going to come down to whoever had the ball last, whoever was the most physical team. We were the most physical team tonight, and we got the win.

Q. Coach DeBoer talked about the deep belief you have that you're going to win. Can you speak to that idea, going into a game with that sort of expectation for an entire season.

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: One of the things that Coach DeBoer brought, the phrase that he brought, was winners win because that's what winners do. You kind of think it's corny until you really see it come to fruition.

The way that these guys prepare, the amount of attention to detail to every single thing, the meals, the meetings, even the practice groups. They're so detailed. These guys don't sleep. They're nocturnal. If you go at any time, there's a coach working, trying to improve this team.

When it happens in the games, when it's up in the air, it could go either way, there's this full belief that we can win because we put the work in. Every single scenario that can happen in a football game we've seen by the time the game starts.

It's a culture thing. That's the best way to explain it. We win because we're winners. That's what it is, you know (smiling).

Q. You always prep hard, but it seemed like this was different tonight. Was there a bigger commitment, more than before, going into this one?

DILLON JOHNSON: I think so, absolutely. I mean, being a 10-point underdog, the No. 3 team in the country, like he said, it's outrageous. We had a chip on our shoulders coming into the game. We were blessed to have this opportunity, man, to be out there with a whole bunch of fans and do what we did. It was a special moment. We tried to take it all in.

Q. You made a tackle in the fourth quarter while you were prone on the ground. Did you see the ball carrier? How did you make that play?

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: I mean, obviously Bucky is one of the best running backs in open space. When he caught the ball, clearly I saw him. At the end of the day, I slipped, but my mindset was like get him down by any means. There's no excuses.

I just felt I knew he was cutting in. Even though I slipped, I kind of mentally kind of just processed it. I kind of just like extended my arms and grabbed for dear life and wrapped him, got him down as quick as possible.

Q. That is an example of the effort it takes to go 13-0 and win a championship like you just did?

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: I mean, it's not easy. You got to understand that this guy came from literally halfway across the country to get us better. Frick, Mike has how many surgeries? To be able to persevere and get to this moment. Winning isn't easy.

Even this year wasn't guaranteed. There's a whole lot of work. We were 12-0, still a 10-point underdog. You have to fight for every single thing you get. You can say what you want, but we earned it every single game.

Q. What does this performance feel like and how did you achieve what no other team achieved against that run defense?

DILLON JOHNSON: Man, I don't even know what to say to that (smiling).

It's unreal. I'm blessed to be in this position, man, to have this opportunity to go out there and just do what I do, man. I got the trust from the guys, the coaching staff. Everyone believes in me.

They knew I was banged up, but I told them I could have lost a leg, an arm, a forehead, my foot, whatever, and I was still going to be out there giving them everything I had.

I'm just blessed to be here and blessed to be a part of this culture.

Q. Three wins in a row against Oregon. Beating Oregon is different. Beat them last year. Underdogs going into today. Was this different preparation? Where does this rank?

EDEFUAN ULOFOSHIO: I mean, shoot, to be honest with you, I slept at the stadium for three straight days because I was trying to get ready for this game, man.

I knew how big it was. The moment was huge. I just knew that we beat 'em twice, but this one would be a lot sweeter if we get this one. I'm not going to lie (laughter). Just to beat them in a neutral field, everybody was saying...

You can't say nothing. You can't say anything. That's three in a row. That's when it all matters, too. They beat

us. They didn't go to the Playoff. You can't say that Washington isn't back. I mean, put respect on our name.

Thank you. God bless you guys.

DILLON JOHNSON: Thank you.

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