

Big Ten Football Media Days

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Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Oregon Ducks

Coach Dan Lanning

Press Conference



DAN LANNING: Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be here with you guys today. I certainly wanted to let you guys know we appreciate the job you guys do here. I know sitting around in this room all day can be a challenge, especially in Vegas. You guys seem to be handling it well, though. I don't see too many closed eyes.

Really thrilled to be representing the University of Oregon. This is a dream come true for me. Going into my fourth season, to get that opportunity and wake up forever grateful for that chance. I want to continue to thank the leadership that we have at the University of Oregon in President Scholz, Rob Mullens. They do an unbelievable job in our program. And also thrilled with the leadership we have in the Big Ten in Tony Petitti and his staff, do an unbelievable job representing us.

Getting to do this in the conference we get to do it in against the caliber of teams we play against is a real thrill for our team, something we pride ourselves in and are thrilled we get that opportunity. Coming in a year ago, it was uncharted waters for us. It was like what is the Big Ten going to be like? It's super fulfilling, getting the opportunity to win the Big Ten in our first year, play some unbelievable teams has created a really special experience.

Along with me today, I have some unbelievable players. We could have brought several guys from our team. Really proud of where our team's at right now. Want to take some time to acknowledge the guys who came along with me. Kenyon Sadiq, our tight end, has had an unbelievable off-season. He's been an integral part to our team and done some special things. I think many of you realize he's a really special talent.

Beyond that, he got the opportunity this off-season to travel to Africa and build Courts for Kids. He's taken a real interest in real estate, which I'm excited about for him. On top of that, he runs 23 miles per hour and can vertical jump 41 inches, so that's pretty good too, especially when it comes to football.

Unbelievable player. Excited to see him jump into a leadership spot in our team. Several of you got to see what he did in the Big Ten Championship this year. Integral part of our team this year.

Also got to bring Matayo Uiaalelei. One thing I'm excited about with Matayo, he's been himself since the day he stepped on campus. He's unique. Our guys were joking with him about how he dressed on the airplane yesterday. He looked super comfortable, had his hair in this cool thing, had a neat backpack. I think he's wearing a coat that he got at a thrift store today, and he looks fantastic, but he's been uniquely him.

Beyond being uniquely him, he was a terror for quarterbacks this past season. He was a sack leader in our conference. He's done an unbelievable job and worked really hard this off-season, gained ten pounds of muscle, and his voice has grown this off-season as well. All the guys that you see that came with us today are not guys with many words. They like to show with action, and Matayo is certainly a guy who does that.

Also had the opportunity to bring Bryce Boettcher this year, had the opportunity to return as a linebacker for us. He also had an opportunity to win a Golden Glove in baseball at the University of Oregon. He's a two-sport athlete. He's the lifeblood of this program. He's the heartbeat in a lot of ways. He's a guy that's excited for practice. When he steps on the field, it means something to him. He's prideful to wear the Oregon O. He grew up wanting to be a part of this program.

He obviously had the opportunity after being drafted by the Astros to go play baseball but wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to play for us a little bit more. He's put on great weight in this off-season, and he's done an unbelievable job.

Since we're in Vegas, it seems like the right time to say it. Our theme for this team is double down. We have done an unbelievable job of building this team over time. You look at our success season to season, and as this team has grown, the process works. We're close. We've been able to accomplish a lot.



So that's really what's going to feed our program this off-season and what will feed us into fall camp, is believing in the process we have. We got great buy-in from our players. It is a new cast of characters. You're going to see new people on the field, which is exciting.

I'm very excited about this team. Going into the off-season, we had to take an opportunity to really develop leadership. We did that through a leadership retreat. We did that through focusing on our DNA traits that have always been a big piece of our program and continue to see our team grow in that area, whether it's connection, whether it's growth. When you see our team play, you're going to see a team that plays with toughness. A year ago we got asked the question, are we tough enough to be in the Big Ten? I think we were able to answer those questions on the field last year.

I do want to take the time to recognize the efforts of some of our support staff back in Oregon: our strength staff, Coach Love and his crew; our nutrition staff with Brenna; sports performance, Ben McKay; Chief, our trainer. These guys have done an unbelievable job this summer of putting our team in a position to be better.

Our players have worked really hard. They put on 1,300 pounds this off-season. Numbers have gone up 21 percent. The average gain for our freshmen is over 17 pounds. Those are some exciting things that you -- you look for wins in the off-season. Those are some great wins for our team.

Just as proud as I am of what we've done training in the off-season, I'm really proud of what we've been able to do off the field. Over 600 hours of community service the last six months. Again we partnered with Sleep in Heavenly Peace, built over 150 beds for the kids in the community that don't have beds. We're able to support 300 foster and at-risk youth this off-season as well as many other contributions to our community and outside.

For our players to develop that education off the field, our player personnel staff has done an unbelievable job, Osman Kamara, Karl Holmes, in creating opportunities, whether it's through our Discover You program as well as completing a four-week training session with Radical Health to really attack mental wellness, mental health. Did an unbelievable job there. Currently partnered with real estate opportunities with Bones Investment Group, has been a great opportunity for our guys to learn and look for opportunities to grow outside of football, not just after your playing career, but during your playing career. I'm really excited about those opportunities that have been created for our guys.

Heading into year four, I feel like we've got a really strong foundation. Kind of said that about our team. Our guys have embraced the work. The experience on our staff, I continue to be impressed with the staff that we have. Going into year three now with the same offensive and defensive coordinator. We've got several of our staff members back. Even though they've been given opportunities to be other places, they chose to be here, and that's credit to the success of our team, but that's also a piece of the success to our team is the continuity that we've been able to have.

Grateful for Rob and our support here to be able to make that happen.

Also really excited about some of the future stars we have on our team. There's guys that are unbelievable players, but they're also going to be unbelievable humans, and that's something that we're excited about. Several of our coaches are going to make outstanding head coaches in the future. I want to make sure that I always give the opportunity to say that because these guys do a great job. They make it work. They make my job easier and certainly makes it a lot of fun for us.

We do have a brand-new team and brand-new challenges. What happened last year has nothing to do with the future. Building that, starting from scratch, getting the opportunity to head back to the kitchen, figure out what we're going to be able to throw in for our recipe and create a great meal is something we're super excited about.

I have confidence in this group more than anything because I've seen the work. Not everybody always gets to see the work. We've been a little bit under the radar this off-season, but these guys have worked extremely hard. They put their best foot forward, and that's part of what makes this so much fun for me. Everybody says what's your favorite part of coaching? It's the new challenges we're going to see that we don't know about yet.

Obviously college football changes every day, but I don't think the game has ever been more exciting. I think the support of our sport is unbelievable. A lot of that is with the leadership. A lot of us can get frustrated with the rules, but sometimes we have to see if they work. So continue to be patient and see how things play out, but continue to tap on the same front.

We continue to grow as a team, but I think it's really important for our team that we remind them you've got to enjoy the journey. There's a journey ahead of us this season that we're excited to take. This season has some challenges, some fun road games, some great



opportunities at home in the best stadium experience in college football, something that I'm super excited to have.

I'm really excited about the retention we've had with our team. You look at the players we've been able to have. We've done well in recruiting. We've been able to use the portal to be a real success for us, but we've done an unbelievable job of keeping our players on our team and not losing them to home somewhere else.

On a personal note, really enjoyed the last couple of weeks getting to spend time with my family. I've said it before, there is no balance in this profession. You are all in, and we've been all in, but these last couple weeks have been all in on being a dad. It's been unbelievable. Caden is 15 now, Kniles is 14, Titan is 12. We've had football camp, a couple of summer camps, a couple of trips to the lake. They're getting harder to throw off the tube. But we've had an unbelievable experience. It's been fun hanging out with my wife and the boys this summer, but we're excited to get to work.

With that said, I'll open it up for questions.

Q. There's a school in this conference that's suing over player tampering. Do you think that's something that needs to be cracked down even more on in college football?

DAN LANNING: Yeah.

(Laughter.)

Q. Anything else?

DAN LANNING: No, it's play the game the way it's supposed to be played. There has to be consequences to actions. If there aren't consequences, then there's going to continue to be issues like that.

Q. I know you said last season obviously doesn't have a bearing on this season, but to what extent did the way last season ended motivate your team coming into this off-season and winter workouts and all that?

DAN LANNING: For me as a coach, I've always -- I think every coach probably feels this way, but we always remember the losses over the wins. I think there's a lot you can learn from that. It doesn't take away from what we were able to accomplish, but we lost a great team. Coach Day did an unbelievable job last year of having his team in position to have success there. There's some things I think I could have done better at the end.

I don't think we played our best football. That being said,

we did go undefeated in the conference and won the Big Ten Championship in our first year. That said, double down. Focus on our process. What do we have to continue to improve? There's always learning lessons, but it doesn't necessarily impact the future.

Q. You have Dante Moore at quarterback. What have you been most proud of as far as his progression since he's been there? Have you had a chance to kind of link him up and reach out with Bo Nix and Dillon to kind of -- your record with transfers has been pretty excellent. Has he had a chance to link up and talk to those guys?

DAN LANNING: Yeah, all of our quarterbacks have, Austin, Dante, Luke. We've been really fortunate the last few years. We've had a great mentor in that room. We have guys with unbelievable experience that these guys were able to watch and see.

I think probably what impressed me most with Dante is not wanting to be in a microwave society, not wanting to just get it fast because there's an opportunity in front of him, but to have the slow-cooked meal, to have the opportunity to sit back and mature and learn, learn from experiences that you don't necessarily have to be on the field to feel. The same goes for Austin. The same goes for Luke and the other guys in our program.

Those guys have learned from great quarterbacks that have done it at a really, really high level. For him to have that opportunity, show maturity, develop in his leadership, I think it's going to create great opportunities for our team.

Q. I wanted to ask you just your perspective as far as the chemistry being built between Dante and Kenyon Sadiq. How do you see Kenyon being able to shoulder some of that load this season?

DAN LANNING: I actually told Kenyon on the way down, yesterday was the first time I played it, but I played with my youngest son, Titan, we played the NCAA college football, and Sadiq went off, right? He balled out. I need to make sure I bring that up to our quarterbacks, throw it to Kenyon because he's been unbelievable this off-season. Like I said, if you just see him work, it's not a secret.

I feel like he would tell you those are some of the traits he learned from the guys that are ahead of him, whether it's Terrance Ferguson or Pat Herbert. Yeah, there is a chemistry being developed, and that's what fall camp is about, our quarterbacks getting on the same page, our tight ends, our wideouts, our backs, and just creating that rhythm.



Our guys have worked really hard this summer, but Kenyon is going to be hard for people to deal with. He's a special player and could be the best tight end in the nation. When you have a great rhythm with your quarterbacks being able to get the ball to them, that's going to be a special weapon for us.

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