



## Ohio State Arrival Quotes

Saturday, December 23, 2017  
Eules Trinity High School, Eules, Texas



### QUESTIONS FOR HEAD COACH URBAN MEYER, WR JOHNNIE DIXON AND DT TRACY SPRINKLE

**CHARLIE FISS:** Welcome to the 82nd Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic. You really hit the ground running, Coach. You just got here. How was the trip in?

**COACH MEYER:** Well, first of all, thanks to the Cotton Bowl folks for having us. I was here in 1987, I believe, and then, once again, a couple years ago. And it turned out pretty good both times. So anxious to be here. Love the city of Dallas. I can't imagine two better tradition-rich programs facing each other. It will be great for college football. I imagine the fans will really enjoy watching this. And we're going to do our best to put on a great event for Ohio State and USC, two great conferences, the Big Ten and the Pac-12.

*Q. You just landed. You are going to go right to practice. What are you looking for today? How hard will you push them?*

**COACH MEYER:** I will not push them hard today at all. They have been off for three days. Today is going to be just shorts and helmets. The real reason we are practicing today is so we have a great day tomorrow. But our guys have got to get out and move around a little bit and knock the rust off and get ready to go tomorrow.

*Q. Is everybody here who is supposed to be here?*

**COACH MEYER:** I just landed. We had -- Texas people drove in, obviously, and then you had California. So my understanding is everybody is here.

*Q. Trevon Grimes, I'm not sure if he's going to transfer to Florida. Do you have any comment on that?*

**COACH MEYER:** No. He's got a situation that he wants to be closer to home, a health -- you know, his mom's dealing with some health issues. They're great people, so we're not going to stand in the way of that.

*Q. You've had a chance now to look at USC. What do you think when you look at them, especially with their offense?*

**COACH MEYER:** Yeah, dynamic team. Their running back is ridiculous; I finally had a chance to really watch him. And very good receivers. And the quarterback is

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obviously going to be a top two or three draft pick in the NFL. So that's the biggest issue we're dealing with.

*Q. You mentioned 2014. Most of your guys on your team are too young to remember that. Is the coaching staff familiar? Any of that help you? What does that mean this week?*

**COACH MEYER:** Just great memories as the plane touched down in Dallas. I'm sure there will be great memories when we walk in that beautiful stadium. Other than that, it's just, like you said, great memories.

*Q. It's unusual too. Usually, you're spending Christmas at home and then going to a bowl game.*

**COACH MEYER:** Yeah.

*Q. What are you guys doing for the players as far as Christmas?*

**COACH MEYER:** There's part of me, you know, I don't like to have them away from their families at Christmas, which is the way this -- you know, this is such a prestigious bowl. When we got the nod to go play, everybody was excited.

It will be the first time I can remember in a long, long time that we've done this. So we're going to try to do the best we can. And we have incredible guys. We're going to do some cool things for our players. One of the great things we're going to do on Christmas is practice and have a really good practice that day.

*Q. J.K. [Dobbins] was a sophomore last time you played here in 2014. You've talked about him quite a bit in terms of his maturity. Did you ever really imagine that he would have done what he's done this year?*

**COACH MEYER:** I don't want to short -- cut him short. We didn't know. If I'd known he was an explosive, dynamic player... But to think that he would have broke the freshman rushing record at Ohio State and been a freshman All-American, you know, I don't think many people anticipate that. But I'm glad he's a Buckeye.

*Q. You talked about his maturity, likening him to Raekwon [McMillan]. Where do you think that comes from?*



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**COACH MEYER:** Well, first of all, his Creator. And, second of all, I think his family is over the top. That's the first people that I always thank when I get a guy like that. A Raekwon McMillan, a J.K. Dobbins, a Sam Hubbard, those guys are just grown men from the day I met them.

*Q. When you look back at J.T. Barrett's career and everything he has done for you and to finish his career back here in his home state, what do you hope for him this week?*

**COACH MEYER:** Win the game. I think that's going to be very important for his legacy and play very well. And he's healthy. And I love J.K.-- J.T. And he's done so much for me and so much for our program, I just want to see him go out. Only one way to go out: Play really well.

*Q. In term of this team's legacy, how important is winning this game?*

**COACH MEYER:** It's very important. I think it's their 12th win. It's going to be, certainly, a top-five, top-four, top-three team, a great team and a great season.

*Q. We saw a picture of you on social media with Santa Claus the other day, some of the players and Santa.*

**COACH MEYER:** Oh, yeah.

*Q. The big question: What did you ask for, for Christmas?*

**COACH MEYER:** We'll find out on the 29th of December what I asked for. I hope we get it.

*Q. As you are well aware, this is the last game for the last segment of the '13 recruiting class, which has been an extraordinary class. When you and your staff went out recruiting that year for this group, was there something you looked for beyond high-level talent and something that made this such a great group?*

**COACH MEYER:** A lot of them have been developed. A lot of them -- that's what I love. The class we just signed, you're going to have your elite, the Taron Vincent, some of those five-star guys. But there's only so many of them, and a lot of times -- you know, not a lot of times -- every once in a while, they don't work out.

What I always get intrigued by is that guy, the unheralded player that comes out and has a monster year and becomes a great leader for us. Those usually make up great teams.



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*Q. Is there someone in that class you can point to that fits that definition?*

**COACH MEYER:** 2013?

*Q. Yes.*

**COACH MEYER:** Would that be our seniors now, our fifth-year seniors. Chris Worley would be one. Our quarterback would be another one. He was a guy that I didn't know much about at all. Tyquan Lewis would be another one. Those guys are all under-the-radar guys that ended up being as good a player and as good a leader as I've ever had.

*Q. You're a guy that always gauges where your club is, their feelings, their attitudes. Where is this team right now?*

**COACH MEYER:** Excellent when we left. I got on a plane and landed, and we're going to find out. They're going to be the same they've always been all year, and that's resilient, tough, care about each other, and they're going to play really hard.

*Q. I'm sure you've been asked about this, but what did you feel about Dabo Swinney saying you're on the back end of your career?*

**COACH MEYER:** I don't speak of other coaches, and so I don't -- don't worry about it. Thanks, guys.

*Q. Obviously, both of you were hurt last year. What does it mean to you to be playing here in a bowl game?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** Well, what I'll say is it's just a blessing to be out there traveling with the guys last year, trying to help motivate them but you knew you couldn't play. It was kind of tough. Now, for us to be here back here and finishing the season strong and going out there and actually playing again in a bowl game, it's a true blessing.

**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** Similar to what Tracy said, it's really a blessing. You know? This actually is my first time being able to complete a whole season and being able to play in a bowl game. I mean, I remember times sitting in that locker room that it just didn't feel right. So, I mean, it's exciting to be able to play this year.

*Q. With that in mind, I know this is not the playoff that you wanted to be in, but what's the level of excitement for playing in this game?*

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**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** It's still very exciting because there's some guys that are not going to back next year, going to play in the NFL. So being able to play with them one last time is a blessing. You're never going to have that again; you're never going to have that brotherhood. It won't be the same without some of those guys.

*Q. This is the last game for the last group of the recruiting class you were in, an extraordinary group. Obviously, you all are talented. You have to be to play at this level. What else makes that class such an outstanding class?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** I think it is the bond we created coming in, in 2013. Highly recruited class, but we had a whole bunch of blue-collar guys that just wanted to go to work. We built a bond throughout those years, and now this is our fifth year. There's about seven or eight of us left. And we know for sure we want to go out with a bang. So we will try to get a win.

*Q. Is this something, like, for the rest of your life, 50 years from now, this class will still be tight?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** Yes, sir, I think so. And it's happened over a lot of classes. Also, the 2014 with Johnnie and those guys. Everybody is just aligning to really be brothers. I think we will always be brothers 50 years from now.

*Q. Johnnie, you talked about seniors who are like Tracy. This is definitely the last game. You had the option after this game of turning pro. What are your thoughts about that given that you've had a lot of issues to overcome? What's your thought about that?*

**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** I mean, I've thought about it a little bit with my mom and things like that. But it's not really a big focus for me right now. I'm just ready to go out here and compete, do what I have to do to help this team win this game.

*Q. How would you characterize yourself? You don't have a ton of catches, but they have been big ones. What do you think about that?*

**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** I don't know. I've just been in the right place at the right time. So all the catches have been just perfect and just being able to execute the plays and making it happen. That's the biggest part.

*Q. You get a lot of yards after a catch. A lot of receivers can't do that. Do you switch into -- are you immediately a running back as soon as you get the ball?*





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**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** I don't know, I'm from Florida. I mean, when we touch the ball, we just try to make a play with it. That's just something I've been doing my whole life. It was just, finally, I got a chance to do it; I just had to make the best of it.

*Q. I'm from Florida, I couldn't do it. (Laughter).*

*Q. Is it ironic that you guys are practicing here at Trinity High School. Their nickname is the Trojans. Were you guys aware of that? And your take on it?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** No, this is my first time here. I think me and Coach Meyer will have to have a talk after this. (Laughter).

It's pretty cool. It's a beautiful high school. We want to go out there and just see what the field is like practicing out here. So it will be fun.

*Q. They were practicing the crowd noise. They're playing that Trojan song. You know how that goes, right, that song they play?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** No, not really.

*Q. What's the attitude of this team? I mean, I know you guys wanted to play. For you older guys, this is it. What's the bounce-back been like? I know you guys are resilient. But now that you're here and now that you know you're playing USC and pride is on the line, you want to go out on top in your last game, don't you?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** I would say, like Johnnie said, we have a lot of seniors in this class that's kind of embedded our lives to this program. And I know the only way we want to go out is with a win for the university and for the class, for us to be remembered.

And we went out there to win a Big Ten championship. And, obviously, things didn't go our way. So we know that we have a big team, USC, waiting on the other side who really don't care about that. So we know we got to be prepared and go out there and give it our all in order to bring this University another win.

*Q. Do you feel like you guys have a chip on your shoulder a little bit, Johnnie?*

**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** I feel like we have a chip every game. We don't take no other game different but, you know, the team up north. I just think it's the same thing. We prepare the same way, maybe a little harder. We just know what we have to do at the end of the day.

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*Q. You guys play in a great stadium, obviously. What are you looking forward to about playing in this venue, which some people would argue is the most impressive venue in the country?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** It's huge. I remember coming here in 2014 in the national championship run. I wasn't fortunate enough to play back then, but I just remember walking in there and seeing that huge screen and just taking it all in. Now that we're both starters coming up -- coming back this year to be able to play in it, it's going to be huge.

*Q. How important is this game to cementing this team's legacy? If you win this, you win a Big Ten championship, beat Michigan, and win a bowl game. If you lose, three losses for the first time in Meyer's career here. How important is this?*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** Like Johnnie said, I think every game is important because we don't come here to lose. So we take that chip every week that we know we got to win. For us, this to just be a bowl game and a huge bowl game against USC, which is tradition-rich just like Ohio State, we know it's going to be huge to go out there and get a win. And also for us because all the players, we put a lot into the program so we want to go out and get a win.

*Q. What does J.T. [Barrett] bring to your offense?*

**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** J.T. is just such a powerful leader. He's a guy that talks to us every game, pregame. He just brings it every game. You know he's going to come to do his job. So, I mean, it's something you look for in a leader, and he gives us everything we need.

*Q. Are you on the same wavelength with him at this stage in your career?*

**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** Yes, finally. (Laughter).

*Q. This is a little unusual. Usually, you guys are home for Christmas and then you go to the bowl game. Coach Meyer can't remember the last time he says this happened for him. Just your thoughts on that and, I guess, your holiday wishes to Buckeye Nation.*

**DT TRACY SPRINKLE:** I will say, obviously, it's unfortunate but for us to be able to go home a couple days ago to be able to spend time with family because that's all Christmastime is about. We had a couple days to be able to do that. I know, my family, we had it a little early so I wouldn't miss the whole Christmas. This will be the first one I miss.

But we all got a job to do. We all came here. We all signed those papers to come and do work. And this comes with it, so we want to go out there and we are going to practice on

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Christmas day. We're going to do whatever it takes. We're just trying to go out there and get that win. We can celebrate that later.

*Q. You saw Santa was over at practice. What did you wish for this year? What did you ask for, I guess.*

**WR JOHNNIE DIXON:** Just my family to stay healthy, me, the teammates, coaches, my girlfriend. And I just told them, you know, appreciate the blessings that we received this year. Being able to breathe is such a blessing to me. Sometimes we take life for granted. I just wish that my family stay healthy, you know?

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