



2021 BAHAMAS BOWL
Middle Tennessee Practice Quotes
Dec. 16, 2021



Defensive Coordinator/Safeties Coach Scott Shafer

On the team's defensive identity...

"We are a very young defense. We have a couple older kids at safety with Reed Blankenship and at linebacker with DQ Thomas, but most of them have three years left, some have four, and a handful with two years [of eligibility remaining], so just the way they learned the defense and play the game with the expectations we have. I thought our kids did a good job of getting after the ball. We forced a lot of turnovers and turned a lot of turnovers into touchdowns. They played really well, especially those last six or seven games. They weren't the young kids they were at the start of the season. I'm excited about watching them play in the bowl game, and I'm excited about watching them play the next few years, too."

On the need to force Toledo into turnovers...

"I try not to focus on the other team, other than their scheme. We don't talk a lot about who they are, but focus on what they are scheme-wise. And then we try to focus on ourselves. Trying to get the ball back has always been a big thing for us. But, it will be a hell of a challenge because Toledo does a great job of protecting the football."

On the challenges Toledo presents...

"Their running back [Bryant Koback] is a very good player and I think their coaches do a great job with their scheme. They know what they're doing, they do what they do, and they do it well. Their offensive line is well-coached. Their entire team is well-coached. I just have a ton of respect for those guys. A lot of those guys are from where I'm from, in Ohio. There are a bunch of us Ohio guys out there coaching all over the place. I have a lot of respect for Coach Candle, a lot of respect for the way they do things, and they have good players. They have good speed on the outside. The tailback [Koback] is a damn good player. And the quarterback [Dequan Finn] is going to be a very, very good player. He's still a young guy, but he doesn't play like a young guy, especially the second half of the season."

Redshirt Junior Defensive End Jordan Ferguson

On the practices in the Bahamas...

"It was great. We got to get out in the sun a little bit. We got to fly around. We came from where it was cold, so we got to get out and get used to the heat and humidity a little bit. It's a blessing to be here. Coach Stockstill got after us a little bit. I can't wait to play on Friday."

On his off-field adventures at Atlantis this week...

"I enjoyed the Beach Bash – with both teams out there, and having a little dinner. Looking forward to getting on jet skis. We got a chance to get out on the beach yesterday. I'm just blessed to be here. We're on an island for a bowl game and there's not too many places you'd get to do that."

On what he knows about the Toledo offense...

"Toledo's offensive line is really athletic – guys who can get out and run. They've got a good running quarterback we need to contain. They've got a really good running back. They've got a really good team. We have to respect them and be ready to go."