



2018 MAKERS WANTED BAHAMAS BOWL
FIU Press Conference Quotes
Dec. 20, 2018



Head Coach Butch Davis

Opening statement...

"First of all, it's a great honor to be here. Our players are super excited. I think absolutely everybody associated with FIU, from President Mark Rosenberg, our athletic director Pete Garcia, and the student body is excited. Our band got off the plane today and was marching around the hotel. I think everybody is very excited to be in the Bahamas. The hospitality has been remarkable. Everything about it, you couldn't ask for a bowl game to be in a better location than Atlantis Resort, it's absolutely spectacular. Practices have been good, the weather is spectacular. Everybody in our program is super excited about being here."

On his favorite part of the week...

"For me, it's getting to see our players have a chance to experience this wonderful opportunity of going to a bowl game. Last year was our first bowl game in several years. This year, you could hardly beat it. When we made the announcement we were coming to the Bahamas, the room just exploded. Everybody was excited, guys were cheering, just really happy. Me seeing them get a chance to experience this culture, and the hospitality has been really good."

On FIU's quarterback situation...

"James Morgan will not play tomorrow. In our last game against Marshall, he suffered a small injury in the tricep. I think if the bowl game was maybe another week or 10 days away, I think he would have. He's very close, you could have said it's a game-time decision. To protect him and his future as a quarterback we didn't want to take the risk, so he's not going to play in the game tomorrow. Christian Alexander's going to start the game for us. We kind of went through a similar situation last year. Alex McGough was the starting quarterback who was drafted by the Seattle Seahawks. He got injured in the bowl game last year on play number two. We learned an unbelievably valuable lesson in the sense that we truly weren't as prepared as you would like to have been for your backup quarterback. One of our objectives during our entire season and especially in training camp was to make sure the backup quarterback was prepared to play and step in at any moment. You never know, it could be week one but much less, week 12. In the first half of the season Christian played in just about every single game. He was the starting quarterback for us during the entire spring, all 15 practices, because James had not transferred at that time, so he had the opportunity to be the number one quarterback. We alternated them pretty significantly during training camp during August, so we felt significantly better prepared for the backup quarterback to step in and play better in the game."

On the challenges presented by Toledo...

"One of the things that's very apparent is the fact that they're very talented in all three phases. Sometimes when you get prepared to play a game, you look at somebody and they're really good maybe on offense, but okay in one phase and good in the other. When you watch Toledo, they're fast and explosive on offense, they have big-play capability. That part is very obvious. Their front seven defensively, they've got very good defensive ends who put pressure on the quarterbacks. They have very good returners in the special teams and kicking game. Jason [Candle] and his staff have done a very good job of building that Toledo football team. You better be prepared to play well in all three phases."

To Craig Johnson, the mayor of Elk Grove Village which is the title sponsor for the Makers Wanted Bahamas Bowl...

"Craig, phenomenal job supporting this deal. Everything you've done to make this happen is spectacular. This is one of the greatest experiences that any college football team across the country would love to be here and be a part of this bowl game, so thank you very much Craig."



2018 MAKERS WANTED BAHAMAS BOWL
FIU Post-Practice Quotes
Dec. 19, 2018



Graduate Student Offensive Lineman Jordan Budwig

On his favorite part of the week...

"The opening night dinner and being able to experience all the different Bahamian dishes. As a big guy, that's one of my favorite things, good food, and it was definitely good."

On FIU quarterback Christian Alexander...

"Like coach said, Christian has been a part of this program and was the leader of our offense in the spring. As an offense, not much changes. He's ready to step into that role. He's been in that role multiple times throughout the season. When James went down in the Marshall game, he stepped in and led us on a touchdown drive. We're not worried about Christian, we're going to continue to do what we do and go out there and play well."

On playing on a grass field...

"We were able to practice on our grass field. We have grass and turf at our practice facility so we definitely got used to that during our bowl preparation. We played a few times this year on grass, as well."

On balancing work and fun in the Bahamas...

"That's something coach hit on a lot during our bowl preparation. Last year was our first bowl game in awhile, the Gasparilla Bowl, and we had a great time. We really wanted to focus on coming out and being prepared to win this game. Paradise is a lot of fun, but we're kind of used to being around the beach and the pool, it's not very new to us. We're focused on winning this game 100 percent."

Defensive Tackle Anthony Johnson

On his favorite part of the Bahamas...

"I guess I'd have to say just the experience of being over at Atlantis. The other day we got to experience swimming with the dolphins, that was probably my best experience."

On stopping a high-powered Toledo offense...

"The main thing that we're focused on is stopping the run, as always. They're great up front. They're all big, they're all physical. The main thing we have to focus on is stopping the run and pressuring the quarterback."