



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



Head Coach Jason Candle

Opening statement...

"On behalf of our university, our athletic department, and certainly the whole city of Toledo, we want to say we appreciate all the hospitality that's been given to us this week. It's been a tremendous opportunity for our young people to get out of the country and see a wonderful place. So many people put their hand in this thing to make it go and for it to be successful. I'll take a second to recognize Richard Giannini, Lea Miller, our title sponsors: Makers Wanted, Elk Grove Village, ESPN, Atlantis Resort – oh my gosh, what a place and how great they've been to us – our hosts, what great hospitality you've shown all week, second to none. It really made our team feel welcome. Our kids are feeling the love that this island provides, and we look forward to playing a great game this week against a tremendous opponent."

On the best part of the trip...

"For me, to watch our young people have the experience that the whole game provides. It's really cool to take your seniors some place. I think it's a really special thing to be able to do that out of the country. It's been fun to watch them embrace that. It's been fun to watch them use their platform to give more than they take and to be model citizens. I really appreciate that about our football team."

On what he's learned now in his fourth bowl game...

"I think you're always learning about who you are as a coach. I think you're always learning about your football team. I said this the other day: I think great coaches not only have the ability to pay attention and learn from their own mistakes and their own successes, but they also take the valuable lessons that good players can teach them. I have two great seniors right here to my left and a good group of guys who've worked really hard to play really well tomorrow, and [I want] to send these guys out with the right feeling, a feeling that they deserve. It's the last time they get a chance to wear the midnight blue and gold uniform that I know has been so special to them."

On what he wanted to get in on this final day of preparation...

"You're trying to get acclimated to the heat. We're a little bit of a different group in a sense that we walked through yesterday and we practiced today. We go about 35 plays and run and get used to the footing. We haven't played a game on grass since last year when we played down in Miami, so we get our guys out running around on the grass and get acclimated to that. Again, we want to continue to enjoy the time we have together because this crew is never going to be together again after tomorrow."

On what stands out about FIU...

"I think you're dealing with a team that's built primarily with guys from the state of Florida – South Florida. The stereotype has always been team speed, and that's very evident on video tape. When you watch the tape, they can run at every position. They're a physical group on defense. They tackle with their shoulder pads. They put their face on you and get guys on the ground. On the offensive side of the ball, they do a great job up front. They have a couple backs who can put their foot in the ground and go north and south. Then they can threaten you on the perimeter with their receivers. So it's a complete team. In a game like this you're always concerned about things that can happen or don't happen in the kicking game. They have a lot of our attention and a lot of our respect. Coach [Butch] Davis has been doing this a long time with a very storied career, and he's got a great staff that has their guys in a position to be successful."



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Senior Linebacker Richard Olekanma

On the best part of the trip...

"Being in a beautiful place like this, it's been an incredible experience, and we're all really excited and grateful to be here."

On what a win would mean to end the season...

"It would mean everything. We all worked really hard this season, and to come to a place like this, it's been remarkable. It will always be better if you win. If you lose, you'll have a sour taste in your mouth. If you win, it'll be the best trip of my life, and I'll remember it forever."

On Toledo's defensive keys to slow down FIU...

"They're a really fast, explosive offense. We have to do a good job of making them uncomfortable and shutting down the run. If we do that, we'll have a good chance."

Senior Wide Receiver Cody Thompson

On the best part of the trip...

"Aside from the weather, it's been some of the amazing food and taking it all in. It's the first time I had conch – I think that's how you say it – so I'm going to have to find a place up in Ohio where I can get some of that."

On how he can tell as a senior what team will show up on Friday...

"It's about knowing what worked and what didn't work last year or previous years. Coming down to a place like this – not a lot of guys have been here or experienced something like this – it's a cut off between work and play. When we step between those lines for practice or walk throughs, the guys are locked in and flying around and making plays. I think that's the biggest thing – how to transition that to the moment of the game on Friday. We've done a great job of handling that and being prepared all week."