

Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl: Boston College vs Nebraska

Friday, December 27, 2024

Bronx, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

Boston College Eagles

Bill O'Brien

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Before we take questions, please tell us a little bit about the experience today on the floor of the Stock Exchange and ringing the bell.

BILL O'BRIEN: What a memorable experience that was for our players. Joe Marinaro, Kam Arnold and Kye Robichaux, myself, Blake James, our athletic director. Just a great experience.

A lot of BC connections at the New York Stock Exchange. Chris Taylor was awesome. He's a BC parent, and so many people there that are so supportive of BC football, and just to be there and witness what that's all about and then get a chance to ring the bell, that's a life memory, no doubt about it.

Q. Coach, I'm curious, have you guys had to deal with any opt-outs or players not playing in the bowl, and can we expect to see Donovan with his future outlook in the pros? Is he a full go, full workload for you on Saturday?

BILL O'BRIEN: No, no. I would say that Donovan and Ozzy Trapilo will not play in the bowl. Those guys were great captains for us, did a great job this year. They're getting ready for the NFL Draft. They'll be here at the game but they won't play in the bowl.

Relative to the rest of the guys, you'll just have to wait and see who we get out there, but those guys, they did an incredible job for us at Boston College. They were captains. Ozzy comes from a great BC family. Donovan broke the single season sack record. We wish them the best. Like I said, they'll be here to support us tomorrow, but they won't be playing in the game.

Q. What were those conversations like? Was it pretty easy decisions for them or did you have to sway them



one way or the other?

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, I don't want to spend the whole Zoom on that, but I'll just tell you they were great players for us. Couldn't ask more of what they did for us this year, both as captains and players, and hopefully we get a few more questions about the game and not about the opt-outs. What about the guys playing in the game?

Q. I know you've spoken a lot before about how big difference between going 7-5 and 6-6 and now Boston College has the opportunity to get to eight wins for the first time in 15 years. How big a win would this be not only for the team but for the program?

BILL O'BRIEN: You know, it's a great opportunity for us to come in here and play Nebraska, a Big Ten opponent, with the great history. It's a chance for a lot of guys to really go out on this Yankee Stadium field and play well. Certainly we're going to do everything we can to win the game. We realize that there's a big challenge in front of us with Nebraska.

But these guys have practiced very well. I'm excited about this team. This is I think in some ways a preview of the 2025 team in some ways. There are some guys that will be playing their last game for Boston College, like a Joe Marinaro, like a Kye Robichaux and other guys, but for the most part, what you'll see out there is a 2025 preview, and I'm excited to watch these guys play.

Q. The transfer portal has really been a big thing this year with many teams losing players before their bowl games, but Boston College hasn't really been a team that's lost a lot of players to the transfer portal thus far. What does that speak to the culture of this team, and how does tomorrow's game help to build the culture of BC football?

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, I appreciate that question. We have lost some guys. Most of the guys that we lost to the portal were guys that were graduates. They graduated with a Boston College degree and they decided to go play their graduate year somewhere else. I give those guys a lot of credit. They worked hard for us, and that was a decision



that they made relative to their careers, having one more year of eligibility.

But the guys that have stuck with us, that's really what BC is. We're not a big portal team. That's just not who we are. We're going to sign some guys out of the portal, but the majority of our team will be built through high school recruiting and guys that really understand what Boston College can do for their lives.

BC is a life-changing place. It's an incredible degree. You've got a chance to play great ACC football. Then you do a lot in the community at BC. We do a lot for these guys and they do a lot for us, and I'm proud of the guys that will be playing there tomorrow.

Q. What was the experience like at the 9/11 memorial and what was it like being there with Alison Crowther?

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, that was incredible, to be there with Alison, where obviously she lost her son Wells, a BC grad, a BC lacrosse player. Obviously an incredible Boston College family and story. For her to take the trek over to be there, and she addressed our team and she gave us a little tour of the place -- she was part of the tour. It was just awesome.

The 9/11 memorial is very moving, very touching, especially for those of us that experienced that. I have two guys that I played football at Brown with that we lost in the towers.

It was a great experience. I was there with my family, with my son Michael and my wife Colleen, so it was a very memorable experience.

Q. I know you've mentioned how recruiting is an everyday event, and the reality for college football is that the portal is open during the postseason. Really how are you kind of navigating recruiting while you're in New York and away from campus?

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, you just have to budget your time. That's a great question. These are important jobs that we have as head coaches, right, so we have to do a great job of managing a lot of different things. You have to have unbelievable staff people around you. You have a great operations staff with Alec Kerr, who's been great with this bowl trip; you've got Spencer Dickow on the recruiting end of things and obviously our coaching staff; and obviously one of the most important people in our program, Berj Najarian, who's helped a lot with a lot of different areas of the program.

It's all about the people that you surround yourself with and

you have great people around you. That makes the job a lot more manageable. You can delegate and also budget your own time between coaching, recruiting, and then the portal. We've been able to do that and do a decent job of that so far.

Q. Coach, this week in particular, having the mid-year guys join the team, how have they assimilated themselves, and this bonding experience, being on the road and not necessarily on campus, how unique is that for those guys to kind of get to know their teammates in this setting?

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, I think it's been great. Those guys have come in and done a really good job. A good example is Shaker Reisig comes in and he's able to run the scout team, and we're able to teach him the offense.

I always think with some of those guys, especially at the quarterback position, as soon as you can get them in there and start training them, training them in our culture, training them in football, I think it's really good.

I believe our older guys have done a good job with these younger guys, hey, this is how we practice, this is what the expectations are. You can orientate these guys to our culture right away, and I think that's a big part of it.

To be away on the road when it's just us in the hotel, in the meeting rooms, maybe going out to dinner -- we had a nice Christmas dinner the other night, a team dinner, which was very nice after we went to mass. Father Jack did mass. It's been a good week.

I think that's why it's so important to go to a bowl, because it gives you those experiences that are really irreplaceable. Give a lot of credit to the Pinstripe Bowl. It's been a great experience for us.

Q. Just looking at the forecast for tomorrow, obviously rain and some cold. Does that play into what you want to do more so than a bright sunny day?

BILL O'BRIEN: I mean, we've played in all kinds of weather, as you know. We played in the pouring rain at Michigan State. We've played in ton of weather.

We practiced outside while we were here, and I think our guys are ready for the weather. Hopefully it doesn't pour rain, but if it does, it does. We'll be ready for it.

Q. What would a win tomorrow do for the future of this program?

BILL O'BRIEN: I think it's important. I think this is a really



important game. It's important for the guys that are playing their last game. We want to send them out winners. It's important for the future. It's important for the future. It's just one of those opportunities that don't come along very often where you can play an opponent like Nebraska and really go out there and put your best foot forward, and if you're fortunate enough to end up with a win, that'll be really good for our program, no doubt about it.

Q. You mentioned a lot of alumni there. New York City is a huge alumni base for Boston College. How are you enjoying meeting up with alumni and New York itself and being there with your family?

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, it's been awesome to be in New York City over Christmas. We've had a lot of people stop by the hotel. Like you said, there's a great, powerful alumni network of Boston College people in New York City. Saw a lot of them today this morning at the Stock Exchange.

I also want to give a shout-out to Columbia. Even though I'm a Brown grad, I will tell you that Columbia was awesome in letting us use their facility. They've got a beautiful facility over there and their field, and we were able to have some really good practices over there. So shout-out to them.

But being in New York has been great. It's been a really good experience. Give a lot of credit to the Pinstripe Bowl. I think they do a great job of welcoming us to New York City, and our guys have had a really good experience.

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