



December 30 Press Conference Quotes - Air Force

Coach Troy Calhoun

On both teams wearing dark uniforms: "I don't think that will matter. We are accustomed to working in those blue uniforms."

"We're extremely grateful to have a chance to come to Fort Worth. It's a fantastic city and very hospitable. It's a place we absolutely enjoy. It's been first class and a great experience for our players. I think anytime you earn a bowl bid, it's a special moment and also we get a chance to play a fantastic football team in the University of Houston, a team that deserves to be a Top 20 squad. They've earned that by the way they've played throughout the season. I think anytime you get to a bowl game, by and large, you are going to face a very good football team. We're going to play an excellent team."

"For us, you have to stick to the core of what the Air Force Academy is about and that's the kind of team work and kind of discipline and spirit in which you have to play. If we do that well, then you have a chance to compete extremely well and that's exactly what we are going to do."

"When you come here you have to find a way to balance the activities and the fun you have when you are at any bowl game but ultimately your focus has to be on getting ready to play. Our guys are ready to do that."

On team workouts at Kennedale High School: "They did a super job. It's a place with a great weight room, great indoor facility and some of the stuff we were able to do on their game field was great. One thing you can tell about this area is they are committed to young people. It's not just football. It's the overall educational experience the kids have when they go through the various public schools."

On winning for the Mountain West Conference, which is 3-0 so far in bowl games this season: "That's the conference we are part of yet first and foremost we want to play for the United States Air Force and the United States Air Force Academy."

On having to do things different at the AFA: "Frankly at the Air Force Academy you can't rely only on size and speed. You have to do something that is different. If everybody in college football was lined up in the I formation, we would be in the shotgun. If everybody in college football were running teams, we'd be a passing team. We have to be resourceful and find a system for the guys that do at least make it a little more challenging in preparation. But you still have to execute."

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Offensive Lineman Peter Lusk

On winning for the MWC: "I don't think it's anything the players think about much. We've been following the other teams. We watched the Wyoming game and we were rooting for them. Hats off to Wyoming. They played really well. We watched BYU and Utah. They are our conference teammates but I don't think it puts any type of pressure on us to win. We want to win for the team. But, I think it's kind of in the back of our minds you could say. We want to represent the conference well. It's a great conference. A lot of people talk about the big three (TCU, BYU and Utah) but some of the lower teams play pretty tough too. I think that's one thing the national media kind of overlooks. They say our conference really isn't deep enough but if you look all the way through our conference, teams are able to compete.

On the challenge of facing bigger defensive linemen: "My sophomore year when I started playing a lot, I was intimidated. I was like 260 pounds then and I'm even smaller now but once I got that first snap, I realized that I could get lower than some of these big guys and push them around a little bit. I have to give hats off to coach Calhoun and coach (Clay) Hendrix, our offensive line coach, for the technique they teach you. That's one thing about us. We're small but we are so disciplined that we use technique to our advantage and we are able to fend off big guys. I regularly play people who outweigh me by 50 or 60 pounds. I'm small but I figure I'm quicker than a lot of the big guys so I can use that to my advantage.

"You hear it all the time about controlling the line of scrimmage. I think there has been a lot of focus on their passing offense against our pass defense, but if you look at it, it's about how much pressure we can get on them and on the other side of the ball, it's our offensive line being able to block, create holes and keep the Houston offense off the field.

"We played Houston twice last year. They gave us a different defense the first time so when we saw them the second time, they changed defenses so we had to make an adjustment, change our play calling and change some blocking schemes. I'm sure we'll have to do that tomorrow too.

On breaking a two-game Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl losing streak: "It's great to come here. We've had fun during the week but at end of the day, it's a football game and whether you win or lose it's how you feel afterwards. I think back to the last two years and after the game, it's New Year's and we all want to go out and have fun but we felt rotten. All we did is sit in the hotel room and get the night over with. We all really want to pull out a win here."

On playing Houston again: "It will help. We know some of their players and what they like to do but I'm sure it helps them just as much. They know our offense, having seen it twice. It's kind of like we all know what each other is going to do. It's time to check it up and play football."

Defensive Lineman Ben Garland

On winning for the MWC: "It motivates you. It's in the back of your mind but first is winning the game for the guys next to you. Then definitely there is the side note of winning for the Mountain West Conference because it is one of the top conferences."

On getting pressure on Houston quarterback Case Keenum: "Discipline is very important. You have to keep him in the pocket, keep the pressure on him and make him feel like he could get hit at any moment. You have to get him off rhythm. You have to be disciplined. If you have him running out of the pocket, he can feel like he can do what he wants. He is a great quarterback and he will perform. You have to control yourself a little bit. It can't be an all out rush or he will slip out. You have to be disciplined, stay in your lane and make sure to contain him."

On breaking a two-game losing streak in the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl: "It's been heart ache the past two years. I don't think anybody is ready to accept that again.

"I've been happy with what our team has done this season. We've got one more game. We could have done better in some games but it's now time to show what we can do."