



**2018 Cheez-It Bowl**  
**Cal Media Day**  
**Quotes for Coach Justin Wilcox**  
December 24, 2018



**COACH WILCOX:** Really appreciate being here. I would like to thank Mike Nealy and all the Yellow Jackets. This bowl game is one of the premier bowl games in the country. I've had the chance to experience it a couple of times before. I can speak for our program and our players when we truly say thank you and appreciate hosting us this week.

We're excited to play against TCU, one of the premier programs in the country under Coach [Gary] Patterson. We have a ton of respect for them. We're looking forward to a really hard-fought, tough game come Wednesday. And I'm excited to share some of our players here today with you and for you to get to know them.

I just want to introduce them real quick, and then we can open it up for questions. Starting over there is my right is our senior center, Addison Ooms. Next up would be our senior running back Patrick Laird, senior inside linebacker Jordan Kunaszyk, junior safety Ashtyn Davis, and junior inside linebacker Evan Weaver.

I just want to say thanks to the Cheez-It Bowl staff. We, as a program, are truly humbled and excited to be here and look forward to a great matchup against TCU.

**Q. You spent a lot of time in the Valley of the Sun recruiting and Scott [Leightman] mentioned building the program, rebuilding the program. What did you notice about Arizona high school football? And why did it make sense to bring so many kids from the Valley up to your program to help build it for the future?**

**COACH WILCOX:** This year it has been a really strong year for us recruiting here. And year to year the dynamics change based on what we're looking for, the players, maybe both ways. And so this year signing six guys, we have a strong presence here. Charlie Rangel who is a really successful high school coach here in Arizona for a number of years, has great connections.

The kids kind of fit with what we're looking for from a skill standpoint, academic standpoint, and character standpoint. So really fortunate and lucky to get those guys to sign on with us and look forward to them joining our team.

**Q. How impressed are you going against Gary Patterson, being able -- the 18 years and the success he's had?**



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**COACH WILCOX:** I think it's -- in this day and age, to do what he's done for the length of time and win as much as he's won is really impressive. Always had a lot of respect for him and how his teams play. You know you're always going to get a really well-coached team and a really tough and physical team and it's been year in and year out.

So I think you don't see that as much anymore with the dynamics of college football. And for somebody to do it that long at that level is very, very impressive.

**Q. Every conference has a different style of play. How does going through the Pac-12 prepare you to play that style of football against TCU?**

**COACH WILCOX:** One of the things about the Pac-12 is the variety that you see week in and week out. It is a very, very competitive conference and some great players and great coaches. And I know being a defensive guy, when you line up one week and you play against Oregon and then you've got Washington State doing what they do and you've got Stanford running it like they do, I think the variety makes it really challenging. Also makes it a lot of fun.

So we know we've got a great opponent to prepare for in TCU, and they give you a lot of variety as well on both sides of the ball. So it will be a real challenge for us, and I know our guys are going to be excited for that.

**Q. Do you realize tomorrow is Christmas?**

**COACH WILCOX:** The weather here doesn't give you any indications, if you're not from Arizona, that it's Christmas because it's 70 degrees and there's not a cloud in the sky. It's beautiful.

**Q. People in Tahoe sending you pictures of the snow on the trees?**

**COACH WILCOX:** Snow, yeah, but this is so cool. This will be a Christmas these guys will remember forever.

**Q. All right. If you weren't being a coach, what would you be doing?**

**COACH WILCOX:** That's a great question. I'm not sure I can answer that. I got into coaching a long time ago, and I really can't see myself doing anything different now. I have a lot of interests; but, right now, what I'm passionate about is my job. So I'm fortunate that way.



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**Q. What made you decide to be a coach?**

**COACH WILCOX:** A couple of people that I played for when I was a high school athlete, had some great coaches that impacted me. And then in college, I had a couple of people that impacted me late in my career who really encouraged me to be a coach: Bob Gregory, who's the coach of Washington. Chris Petersen, who was the receiver coach when I was a player at Oregon, Bob Foster and Nick Aliotti, all of these guys that I played for towards the end of my career, they were the ones that made me look at it and think I would want to do what they were doing.