



**2018 Cheez-It Bowl
TCU Media Day
Quotes for Ridwan Issahaku,
Lucas Niang, Ty Summers, L.J.
Collier, Ben Banogu**



December 24, 2018

Q. Talk about your year.

RIDWAN ISSAHAKU: It got better and better. A lot of young guys, a lot of new faces. Really kudos to Coach Patterson's job. Glad we're here.

Q. Talk about the transition from quarterback to safety. Was your college career everything you thought it would be?

RIDWAN ISSAHAKU: It was a process. It was a process for sure. It was all worth it. Like I said, I was blessed to have a coach like Coach Patterson, the knowledge and just being able to change from quarterback into such a player.

Q. Was it interesting to see how well Gary [Patterson] does in turning offensive guys into defensive guys?

RIDWAN ISSAHAKU: It is amazing, actually. He'll find one or two things great about them and turn them into All-Conference. It is kudos to the job that Coach does. A blessing.

Q. Just wanted to ask you a couple of questions. What is it like for you to be out here playing at the Cheez-It Bowl?

LUCAS NIANG: I've never been out here.

Q. What you did think about the name of the bowl, Cheez-It?

LUCAS NIANG: I found out it was part of Fiesta Bowl. I can't say I've had a better experience in terms of hospitality.

Q. How have you been planning for the game, mentally?

LUCAS NIANG: Mentally? Watch films.

Q. Lucas, talk about your journey from Connecticut.

LUCAS NIANG: I just wanted to play football at the highest level, with the best competition and get an education as well. So this school offered both of those. Distance wasn't a factor for me.



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Q. Did they talk to you about Mike [Collins] when he was in the process of coming?

LUCAS NIANG: Yeah, after high school, not before, after high school. When I was home, we went out to dinner together.

Q. Obviously you're a guy that gets a draft grade. Are you for sure coming back?

LUCAS NIANG: I'm not sure. I haven't made a decision yet, but I'll decide.

Q. Do you feel like you're ready to take the next step?

LUCAS NIANG: That's the goal, but I'm not in a rush, you know. I think highly of myself. I would like to go pretty high. They made me who I am. I wouldn't be near as good without them.

Q. Talking about going against guys like Ben [Banogu] and L.J. [Collier].

TY SUMMERS: Oh, yeah. You come to college to play college football. That's what I got a scholarship for. But at the same time, the most important thing I can get out of this, aside from the chance to go to the NFL, is the degree. The degree is going to carry me a lot further than all that other stuff. I majored in communications. I'm looking to go to possibly into medical sales. That's kind of what I'm thinking. I know a lot of people in that area.

Q. I'm assuming you've seen Cal on tape. What's something you see in offense that you're like, "We've got to watch that"?

TY SUMMERS: They've got some pretty good speed and athleticism in their interior O-line. That's something we're going to have to watch out. We have guys working into the second level.

And then just making sure our eyes are in the right place because they're going to try to do a lot of play action stuff, things to get us to look in the wrong spot and dish it out to a tight end or to a receiver in the slant or little things like that. Basically, just everyone focusing on doing their individual jobs. Every team is beatable, and every offense is containable. Making sure you focus.

Q. Playing at TCU, Big 12, big crowds, you know, in your team at TCU, what have you learned most?



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TY SUMMERS: All of the come-from-behind victories that we've had because I feel like ever since I've been at TCU, we've had at least -- one year I think we had five of them. Just the type of teams we've had since I've been here that have always just rallied, came together, stuck our cleats in the ground and fought back. So kind of those experiences. Those are the biggest things that I'll take away.

Q. I asked L.J. [Collier] over there, do you remember your first sack, your first big play. What about you?

TY SUMMERS: Oh, yeah. My first, I feel like, statement play -- I had a couple of tackles that were kind of cool but they weren't in bigger moments. But my favorite moment was my freshman year against Baylor, we had a double overtime and I ended up getting the last tackle of the game. I had 23 tackles that game. It was the best game I've ever had in my career up to this point since I was a freshman. Everyone stormed the field because we had won the game, beating Baylor. They had a chance to go to the playoff, and we ruined that for them. It was the whole experience of that moment was big. That was something I definitely remember. I will remember for the rest of my life.

Q. Coach was talking about the adversity this year. Did you learn anything about your squad this year going through all that and the way you guys fought, or is it what you expected?

TY SUMMERS: We're always known for having a bunch of hard-nosed guys that just want to play football. So we also have the mentality of next man up. So whenever there's constant injuries like we've suffered this year, which happens. It happens all the time. It's football. We know that our second or third-string guys, we're always putting them in position ready to play.

Coach P (Patterson) says the ones, twos, threes, fours, fives, all the same, same level of intensity, attention to detail. So by doing it in that manner, he's preparing guys that maybe aren't expecting to play at the end of the year to get ready, which in this case as we experienced this season, they need to be ready. They came in whenever we needed it.

Q. You guys made it down here. What's it like for you guys to be playing in the Cheez-It Bowl?

L.J. COLLIER: It is an honor, man. There was a point in the season we didn't know if we were going to get here, but we're here now. We're just enjoying it. The hotel's great. The hospitality is great. Everybody here is great. We're just enjoying it, and we're ready to play.



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Q. During Christmas and the holidays, I don't know if you're here with your family. You're with your teammates. What's it like being here?

L.J. COLLIER: As Andy Dalton says, you only get one time a year to go to a bowl game. You get the rest of your life to spend with your family. It is an honor. It's a privilege. It is always a privilege to go to a bowl game. This is a time to show off your hard work and why you guys are here.

Q. Talk about the preparation of the game.

L.J. COLLIER: I feel like we're ready. Coach P always gets us right. That's why when we make it to bowl games, that's why we're scary because we get so much time to prep for our one opponent and really dissect everything, watch film, and just try different things at practice.

Q. You guys face a lot of adversity this year. Talk about that and how you're able to overcome it.

L.J. COLLIER: We just came together. We talked about it during the summer. We didn't know we were going to have so many injuries. Next man up. Just got to go out there and play hard. That shows the recruiting and just how well we're coached and how well we play.

Q. What are you most looking forward to in the game?

L.J. COLLIER: Really just getting out there because it has been awhile since we played. So I'm just ready to get back out there again. Go, frogs!

Q. Ben, I'm sure you got to see some film on Cal now. What do you think of their offense going into this matchup?

BEN BANOGU: Well, you know, their offense, they're efficient in what they do. They're kind of like us, they've fought through a lot of mid-season adversity. So they have guys that can create plays. Their quarterback, he has his own special way of getting around the pocket.

Their running back, he's a pretty shifty guy. He has great vision. I don't really think that they were able to turn the ball over that much. A lot of games that they've played, one, their defense has stepped up and played really well.



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So for us, our mindset is just be the best unit out on the field. We can only control what we can control. So our plan is to play hard and execute and try to do our 111 and the rest will take care of itself.

Q. They're Number 16 nationally in defense. You guys are 26. I mean, it's probably going to come down to defense. Do you kind of embrace that defense battle?

BEN BANOGU: Yeah, defensive battles are always more fun to play in, just for me. But at the end of the day, someone's got to make a play. So however we win, if we can win 55-56 or 3-2, it doesn't really matter to me.

Q. For you in general, has the season gone about how you expected? How would you kind of assess it?

BEN BANOGU: In the beginning of the season, everyone has their thoughts and aspirations of what they want to have happen at the end of the year. And first off, you want to be that team at the end of the year that's at the top, but sometimes it doesn't go that way. Sometimes you fight through a lot of things throughout the season, and you can't let that kind of bring you down or don't let that help stall the season.

I think we did a great job of fighting back and just showing what kind of men we are. I think a lot of times teams kind of just -- if they're not doing well, they kind of throw that season away.

But for the seniors and for the young guys that haven't gotten a chance play in a bowl game, we wanted this more than anything. So for us, being here is a great way to end the season. But the best way to end the season is to win!

Q. For you personally, did you feel like you accomplished everything you wanted coming back?

BEN BANOGU: Me personally? No. I mean I felt like I accomplished a lot and everything. But on a personal level, I feel like there's still some things that I kind of left out there. But that's okay. It's part of the game. There's a lot of things out there that you can't control. So for me, it's just to play my hardest and to do everything I can to help this team win.

Q. You and L.J. [Collier] had gone to the Senior Bowl, you guys were kind of the two staples with all of the injuries. Do you take pride in that, though, even though maybe you didn't make as many plays as you guys might have liked to? But you guys still made quite a few.



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BEN BANOBU: Last year, Mat [Boesen] and I were kind of like the two ends that we were doing. And this year, it is me and L.J. So one thing I will tell you, it is nice to have some consistency.

It's great watching him fly around. He feeds off of me just like I feed off of him. To have a guy that can kind of disrupt everything and kind of feed the play to you and make you look good, it is always good.

Q. When you look at his story, obviously you played high school football in Texas. He was at IA, or IIA now, I think. Sometimes those guys get overlooked or don't even get discovered but kind of his journey from small town to where he is now, likely NFL drafted.

BEN BANOBU: For him, I was telling, it is an amazing accomplishment to come from where he came from and to be in the situation that he's in right now. It's great, and I'm really proud of him.

Kind of similar to mine, although I didn't get a scholarship coming right out of high school to TCU, but coming in as a transfer and kind of having to prove myself to my teammates and to my coaches and to myself, tell myself I actually could go out here and play with the level of competition that I wanted to be a part of.

You know, I'm just proud of the type of player and person that he has become throughout this whole process and the short amount of time, the couple years I've been here. I've seen him grow and mature into a football player that a lot of people can be proud of.

Q. Can you talk about the scouting reports.

BEN BANOBU: I doesn't really change too much for me or L.J. [Collier]. We have to play our game, and we know to play to our best of our ability to help our team win. So if teams are gaining on us and they're trying to take us away, kind of make us have less of an impact in the game, it is up to us to do our job and to trust in our teammates to go out there and make plays. That's what our defense is made for. It is always good to see guys come up and just kind of be that guy each game. And it might be week 1 or it might be week 14. There were times where we had freshmen, true freshmen, coming in at linebacker and they were giving us checks. Coach P's (Patterson) philosophy is next man up. We just lived by it.