



2019 PlayStation Fiesta Bowl
UCF
Team Arrival Press Conference
December 27, 2018



MODERATOR: Good afternoon. On behalf of all bowl staff, volunteers, and our board of directors, it is my pleasure to welcome UCF to the 30th annual PlayStation Fiesta Bowl. The eighth-ranked Knights are appearing in their second straight New Year's Six bowl with the opportunity to report back-to-back undefeated seasons.

UCF's current 12-0 run this year was capped by a 56-41 victory over Memphis to repeat as American Athletic Champions. Tuesday's matchup with 11th-ranked LSU will be the first meeting between the two teams and the Knights' tenth bowl game in program history.

UCF made its first Fiesta Bowl appearance in 2014 with a 52-42 win over then-sixth ranked Baylor. The Knights are led by first-year and first-time head coach Josh Heupel, himself a consensus All-American quarterback. He led Oklahoma to an undefeated season and a national title with the victory over Florida State in the 2001 Orange Bowl.

And now I'll turn it over to Coach Heupel, who is joined by defensive lineman Titus Davis and offensive lineman Wyatt Miller.

COACH HEUPEL: Thank you so much for the warm reception. Myself, on behalf of our entire administration, our football staff, and our players, we're absolutely so excited to be here. Having been a part of this bowl game three times in the past, I know that it's one of the best games in college football every single season.

I know that the hospitality is first class, and our players are so excited to be out here and be a part of this great tradition. Look forward to enjoying the week out here, getting to know the area, the community. And certainly look forward to playing a great football game here in a few days against a great opponent in LSU. Excited and appreciate the opportunity that we have, and looking forward to the week.

Q. Glad to have you all in town for the Fiesta Bowl. Curious, with the win streak and all the talk about you going head to head with an SCC opponent, some people have called this the Twitter National Championship for fun. What would a win mean to your program here in the Fiesta Bowl?

COACH HEUPEL: For us, it's a way to send our seniors out in the right way. It's an opportunity to again put our brand, our logo in front of the entire country and do it in a great way. Our mantra the entire season has been about going 1-0, focusing on the things that really matter, which is on preparation.

Our kids have done that before we got out here and took a break for the Christmas break. We're excited about playing a great opponent and, obviously, it's a huge test for us but one that our entire staff and our players are really looking forward to.

Q. Guys, what does this trip feel like so far? I know it's very early on, but does it kind of have the same feel as last year going to the Peach Bowl? Is it as big and all of that?



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WYATT MILLER: Yeah, I think so. Anytime you get a chance to play another game, especially against an SCC opponent, it's a big deal for us. And it's a big platform for us to show who we are and what kind of team we are and just showcase the talent that we have on this team. Like I said, just another game. We're going to take that as serious. It doesn't matter what it is; it's just another opportunity to play the game.

TITUS DAVIS: For me, and Wyatt as well, we're seniors so this is our last game and our last time to go out with a bang. So we're trying to do that.

Q. Just your memories of playing out here in the Fiesta Bowl. Why do you think it's always been such a wild time out here?

COACH HEUPEL: It has been wild. A couple of them didn't go the way we wanted to. I think, one, this game always attracts and brings in two great opponents. I think they bring in exciting football teams in all three phases but on the offensive side of the football as well. And I think when you get all those things in one venue, it creates a great atmosphere, a great game.

The games have been sold out. Been great passion and energy from the fan bases that have traveled to the game but also from the fans here inside of the city, they take a lot of ownership and pride in this game, a lot of pride in the community and what this football game means to college football. So I think you add all those things up, it has produced a lot of great games.

Q. Guys, what was the feeling -- what are you guys looking forward to doing now that you guys have arrived here in Arizona?

WYATT MILLER: I've never been to Arizona before. I was talking to Coach [Heupel] and Titus [Davis] on the way in. I didn't know that someplace could have as much dirt as this when you don't see any grass. I'm not used to this. So just kind of getting to learn a new place.

I think that's one of the most important things about college football that people don't know, is the places that you get to see. Of course, it's only for a day or two, but the places you travel. And many people don't get this opportunity, so we're just going to take full advantage of it and just enjoy it.

TITUS DAVIS: Yeah, for me as well, just enjoying the festivities. I've never been to the Fiesta Bowl. I've heard a lot about it, how great it is and the things that comes with it. But, for us, we're just looking to go 1-0 again and get back to work, practice hard and finish what we started.

Q. After everything that's happened the last couple of months, what does it mean to have McKenzie [Milton] on that plane with you and on this trip with you guys?



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TITUS DAVIS: It means a lot for us, man. He's our brother. He's always been there for us, and we've always been there for him. It's meant a lot for us. It is a win-win, just having him here, having him in our presence, having his encouraging words on the sideline, whether that's in the locker room, wherever. And just for him to be out here, him to make that sacrifice for us, it's a great deal.

WYATT MILLER: We don't need any extra motivational factors, but McKenzie is a leader on this team, and we're not the same team when he's not on that sideline with his voice. And you hear him speaking up. And that's the thing about this team, is when you look at a team and you say I have two leaders or I have one leader, this team has 10, 12, 15. And that's what makes it so great is because everybody speaks up.

When one person says something, Titus has my back or I have his back. I think that's what comes with great leadership, is having other guys that are going to stand beside you and whether -- if it's wrong, then they're going to say, "Hey, this is not what we need to be doing." McKenzie is one of those guys that, when he speaks, people listen. We're going to be behind him in whatever he says. And it's just another great voice to have on the sideline and that encouragement to us.