



**2018 Cheez-It Bowl**  
**TCU**  
**Team Arrival Press Conference**  
December 22, 2018



**COACH PATTERSON:** Phoenix has been unbelievable to us. It is one of the best -- just personally for me, destination's awesome. We love the weather, obviously. No humidity as a general rule. Plus it's always had great venues. The hospitality has always been second to none. That's what I told my kids, any time you can come west and we come to Phoenix, they're always going to get treated awesome. It's always good for us to play a great bowl game.

We have to change our luck a little bit. We're 0-2 here, but it's been two very close ball games. We've given you great games, and we're going to try to change our luck a little bit.

But great opponent. It's been one of those years for us where it's been interesting. I don't know how many of you have paid attention, but we've had almost 30 season-ending surgeries and injuries. So when you start playing with your third-team quarterback and third-team tailback -- but this group here has really fought through it. We ended up first in the Big 12 in defense. A group that's really fought back offensively and really a group that's going to play hard. If you've ever watched us play, I think you'll get a chance to see that.

Hopefully we'll put on a good show on the 26th so that, again, we can make one of your bowls be spectacular. So we really want to appreciate and thank the Cheez-It Bowl and Phoenix and all of the Yellow Jackets for all of hospitality, not just in this bowl game when you come out but really everything in the past. It has been spectacular.

**Q. Coach, now that you're here, is there an added excitement? Do you feel like rejuvenation, touching down at the bowl site?**

**COACH PATTERSON:** As I was talking to one of the other coaches, five weeks ago, we weren't thinking we would be in this position. Cal won three out of the last four ball games.

I think any time you come to a bowl -- I tell people all the time -- I don't mean this in a bad way -- you get a chance to meet new people.

I still remember a long time ago, we were at a bowl on the west coast. Our kids from Texas, it was the first time they had ever seen the ocean. A lot of our kids, this is the first time they've ever been to Phoenix. You get a chance to be in the desert air, see different people, do things. I think that's the most spectacular thing about a bowl game, is the life experiences of the people, not just them but us. We get a chance to have friends for the rest of our lives because of the help and the brotherhood we get a chance to be a part of.



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So we get a chance to be back here with our friends, get a chance to play one more bowl game. This will be -- since I've been at TCU, this will be the 19th bowl game in 21 years that we've been a part of, so get a chance to add one more win, hopefully get a chance to do that against, I think, a very good opponent in Cal.

It's been a little bit different, both in separate ways. They had a stretch where they were -- they had lost ball games and fought back at the end of the season. And we've had a stretch where we fought back. And so both play good defense. Both offenses trying to prove at the end of the season that they can do the things we need to do to win ball games. I think that's what makes football a lot of fun.

So I think it's a great matchup. I'll be honest with you. It is a great matchup. We play Cal here in a couple years in a home-and-home series, so this will be kind of be a preview for how those games are going to go.

**Q. Coach, if I could ask you a question. I know this is your third game -- only your third game this year that's outside of the state of Texas. How does that kind of factor into your program and your preparation for this game?**

**COACH PATTERSON:** Well, you know, we've actually played really well on the road. And so in our years here, I think the biggest thing is you always like when you travel and you have older teams because they handle the experience of all the change. You stay at a different hotel. You eat different food than what they're normal to.

But, you know, next year, one of the things about being able to come to this bowl game, we had 47 new freshmen and redshirt freshmen who were players on the team when we started the season. And this is just another bowl game.

There's a lot of kids that usually in the Big 12, we only travel seven. So this gives an opportunity for 50 young guys -- 55 young guys to be able to travel. Some of them have never been on an airplane. And our older guys do not treat them well when it comes to things like that, I'm afraid. (laughter.)

But it allows them to gain some experience because next year that table turns for us. We go to Manhattan, we go to Lubbock, and we go to Ames, Iowa. We go -- I think our nonconference game is against Purdue. So for us to get an opportunity to give them one more opportunity to learn how we do things, how we travel.

It's a business -- it's business trip for us during the season. This bowl game's a business trip. But initially here for the first couple of days, it will be about having fun.



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We basically got all of our big practices in. We've already had nine practices. So when we start tomorrow for our tenth, it will be just in shorts. We basically got all of our work done. So now it will be refining everything and getting ready to go. So we're excited about it. Get guys rested up and get ready to play.

**Q. What do you think the difference between you and Cal offensively is going to be?**

**COACH PATTERSON:** I don't know. We're going to find out. (laughter)

**Q. I'm sure you've made the adjustments. It is not a secret to either one of you, I guess.**

**COACH PATTERSON:** It's hard to tell when you haven't played anybody -- We've changed five conferences in my 21 years at TCU. And so one of the things I tell people all the time, you have to play people a couple of times before you can tell really what your game plan has to be, floor plan to get going when you get to.

So in Cal's case, I would look at it -- the things that are probably very much the same, Justin -- Coach Wilcox and I have in common, I think we played Boise State when he was the defensive coordinator. So I've had a lot of experience against Boise State. Chris Petersen was the quarterback at U.C. Davis when I was a linebacker coach there, not to give my age away a little bit. All of these guys are a little bit younger doing all that stuff. But really they've grown up to become really good football coaches.

Cal is kind of built like a defensive coach. They're going to play good defense, not trying to be opportunistic on offense. And that's really what's been for us -- the difference for us in the last four ball games is we didn't turn the ball over. We won three out of four ball games, and we got takeaways.

I think one of the things that happened with them is they really stepped up their game defensively. Offensively they became opportunistic, making sure that random football tried to be played but really tried to control the football and take advantage of what was given to them.

Of all of the film that I've watched during the last three weeks, I would say that would be about the same. Both teams kind of come at you. I would probably tell you that we're playing with a younger quarterback -- older quarterback but he hasn't played much. They're playing with a redshirt freshman quarterback.



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Our starting tailback is gone but Sewo [Olonilua] is back. So you have one of our two starting tailbacks. And everything else is about the same offensively.

I think compared to probably Oregon, because we played three, I think this is a better offensive line. They have a better offensive line than what we played when we played out in the Alamo Bowl against Oregon. And Stanford was really good.

We've been able to have a process to understand a little bit the crossover games and understanding how good those teams are when we played them. So it will be interesting to see how we turn out here because you're -- one of the things about bowl games, I think, is they're springboards of what your team is, how you're going to move forward going into spring ball. In fact, I usually use, especially with young teams -- and that's the way I do it this year. These were not bowl practices. These were extreme ball practices.

With our young players, that meant -- that meant they were harder. But we also had a game plan part of it Because you're not just trying to win this ball game. You're also trying to grow your team up so you don't go 6-6 next year. So how do you do that? And so that's how I'm staying at TCU for 26 years. I wake up thinking they're going to fire me every day. So you get just ready to go.

**Q. I'm standing here also with an alum of TCU, so we've got our TCU here. The last couple games, you've had a lot of injuries. How did you -- you got that team really pumped up. What did you do to get them going? Part two, not everybody here knows how tough horned frogs are. So can you share a little bit of that.**

**COACH PATTERSON:** Number one, I think we kind of got down to a football team that's growing up -- they had no agendas at the end of the year. One thing that happens to young teams is they have these visions of always making great plays and doing this and doing that.

I think what happened to us in the last part of the season, except for the West Virginia game, which is a really good football team, is we started playing for the right reasons, which is what our history's been. It has always been about "we," not "I." I think when we figured that out, that we just played for "we," not for "I," then good things happen to you. And to be honest with you, it did.

One of my best practices was the Sunday night -- I've said this before -- was the Sunday before the Baylor game where the guys on Sunday that were out there, redshirt freshmen, sophomores, they were all young but they were all -- they were having a great time and there was no -- they were just -- they wanted to win a ball game, period.



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So for coaches, that's exactly what you're trying to get accomplished. You just want a team that just wants to step on the field, do the best they can. And TCU has always played hard. And that's one of the things people said, you come and play hard because we practice hard. We do off-season hard, everything.

So you have to be ready for your opponents. If you just looked at the last two ball games we played against Pac-12 opponents, we were down to -- we were down to Oregon 31-0 and came back to win in overtime. And then we were down to Stanford.

So this ball game will be no different. Hopefully, we won't fall that far behind because I have to take extra baby aspirins before the game when you do those kinds of things. I would rather stay away from the baby aspirins or changing shirts or whatever else we have to do to try to win.