

Valero Alamo Bowl: Colorado vs BYU

Thursday, December 26, 2024

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome

BYU Cougars

Jay Hill

Defensive Coordinator

Aaron Roderick

Offensive Coordinator

Jake Retzlaff

Chase Roberts

Connor Pay

Tyler Batty

Jakob Robinson

Isaiah Glasker

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us today for BYU's press conference. It's my pleasure to introduce defensive coordinator, Jay Hill, and offensive coordinator Aaron Roderick. Gentlemen, would you introduce the players you brought with you today?

JAY HILL: Yes, I'll start. I've got Tyler Batty, defensive end, All-Conference player for us. Lucky to have him. Then Jakob Robinson, plays corner and nickel for us. Had a great season. Then Isaiah Glasker, who is one of the best play-making backers in the country right now.

AARON RODERICK: We have Jake Retzlaff, who is our quarterback. He's done a great job this year. Chase Roberts has been a three-year starter at wide receiver for us. Very good football player. And Connor Pay, who you are a four-year starter at center. Seems like he's been here forever. Really lucky to have all three of these guys.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coaches. Questions, please.

Q. For any of the coaches, when it comes to playing in

a dome and whether it's just the atmosphere or just the feel of not having to worry about weather conditions like you would at your home field, is there anything different that comes into this environment rather than something else you've experienced this season?

AARON RODERICK: Offensively there's not really anything different. We practice in an indoor facility quite often, but it is nice to know you don't have to worry about the wind or anything. You just play ball. So we're looking forward to that.

Q. Coach, what do you think about the opportunity to be going up against somebody as talented as a Heisman Trophy winner at corner? What type of challenges are you guys preparing for when it comes to it? A lot of people think, Okay, just stay away from his side. What are things that you think about with the challenges he presents for your offense?

AARON RODERICK: Well, he's a great football player, first of all. I'm a big fan. To play as many snaps as he plays on offense and defense is very impressive. He plays at a really high level all the way through the fourth quarter. He's playing just as fast at the end of the game as he does at the beginning, so that's impressive.

The problem with going away from him, though, is their other defensive players are really good too. They have a good defense. So we know what we're up against, and we're excited for the challenge. I feel like we're going to match up well, but we have a lot of respect for them. They have good players.

Q. Coach Hill, what is it like preparing for players such as Shedeur Sanders and Travis Hunter and what they bring to the offense?

JAY HILL: Well, they're obviously very effective in what they do. They throw the ball really as good as any team in the country. Shedeur is completing a lot, a very high percentage of his passes, and he's got four very good weapons to throw to.

It's an explosive offense. I think it's a fun challenge for us.



It's their pass offense against our pass defense that will be kind of the matchup on our side of the ball that everyone is going to be looking at. I'm excited for the challenge.

We're going to have to do some things obviously to get some pressure on him and then do some things to disguise coverages. Shedeur is a very intelligent quarterback, so if you just sit in one thing and he knows where to go with the ball, he's very accurate.

Q. Chase, you guys have pulled out some games as an underdog this year. What does that stay about this BYU team and the mentality that you play with?

CHASE ROBERTS: Yeah, that's just always how we've been. Ever since the start of the season we were underdogs when it came to winter workouts, spring ball, fall camp. That's the mentality that we had going into each game, and that's the mentality we have going against Colorado.

We're just excited to go do what we do and show that we can play football, that we can match up with anyone, and that we can score a lot of points, and we stop them on defense. Just excited to play a talented team like Colorado and go show what we can do. Every game has been a statement game, so we're going to go make another statement this Saturday.

Q. For Tyler. When you watch Shedeur on film, they obviously gave up a lot of sacks, but he also avoids a lot and makes some plays. What's the challenge of facing a guy like that that you know maybe you can get to, but he is still probably avoid some of those and make some plays?

TYLER BATTY: Yeah, I will say it's an exciting opportunity. It's a great challenge. He does run around well and extend plays. He's accurate with the ball even when he is getting hit and even when he is being pressured.

So for us it presents an awesome opportunity to get after him and get some sacks. We know he's going to hold onto that ball a little bit longer. At the same time you just have to be careful to not let him kind of run free and complete those long balls down the field.

Q. For any of the players and maybe multiple players, Coach A-Rod the other day said that bowl games are a lot about motivation and which team wants to be there the most. Convince us that you guys want to be there the most.

JAKE RETZLAFF: I can take that one. If you guys know my history being a junior college player, walking into a

stadium like this is a lot different than any stadium we've walked into. We are plenty excited to be here. Obviously being as big of a stage as it is, primetime and playing against a good team that draws a lot of media attention, we are excited to show what we've got.

Like Case said, we've been doing it all year.

We've been the underdog all year, and we've been ready to make our statements all year. So we'll be excited.

We'll be dancing in the end zone and having fun on the field all game. You'll see when we play best, I know we have a lot of smiles among all eight of us. There's a lot of smiles when we're playing best. You'll see the smiles come Saturday, and we'll be excited to hit that field.

Q. Connor and Isaiah, same question.

CONNOR PAY: Thank you. I was getting bored in the corner over here. For guys like Tyler and me, this is our last chance in a BYU uniform, and that's plenty of motivation.

Going along with everything that Jake said to make this game really exciting, but this is the last time we get to wear that Y on our chest and be with our teammates. You want to go out and perform the best you ever have. It's your last chance. There's nothing to hold back.

That's the mentality that we're taking to this game. At least for the seniors. Like Jake said, there's a lot of cool things surrounding a bowl game like this, and we're really grateful to be here.

ISIAH GLASKER: I would probably say mostly playing for the seniors, but you see, like, Travis Hunter and these guys, especially him winning the Heisman and stuff, I feel like that's something I want. All the boys want to play against him. Especially just the competition really.

Us having to play another team in our conference I feel like that's motivation too just to start this conference rivalry. So I feel like those are the things that we're most excited about especially and just with our seniors and stuff. I love these boys, and that's the only motivation that I need, so...

Q. My question is for Jakob. How would you describe the culture of BYU football as a player, and how has it impacted you, especially going into postseason? I know culture can kind of shift sometimes. Is the culture the same or very much getting better and better as you have been in San Antonio?

JAKOB ROBINSON: I would say Kalani really preaches

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

about love and learn. It's kind of just BYU as a whole. I feel like in our locker room it's love and learn. If there's a fight ever, we've got to shake hands after. It's never hold grudges. So, yeah, I think that's the biggest thing for us.

Q. Connor, I wanted to ask you, Colorado is obviously a team that generates a lot of attention, while BYU has kind of flown under the radar in a lot of ways. Do you like that dynamic? Do you wish there were more eyes on BYU football and people appreciate what you do, or how do you size that up?

CONNOR PAY: I think we're totally fine with it. Being the underdog or in some ways maybe underappreciated, we're comfortable being there. We're used to it.

I mean, they've played really well this year. They deserve the attention that they're getting, and that's totally fine. We're comfortable where we are.

We don't need all the media attention or all the other stuff. Our motivation comes from different places. Obviously you appreciate it when you do get recognized for things you do well. You're grateful for it, but it's not a necessity.

Q. Two questions if I could. The first one is for Jakob. Travis Hunter obviously won the Biletnikoff, but they got LaJohntay and Will and Jimmy Horn and all these guys. Can you talk about the challenge of going against this receiving corp, and have you gone against one as deep as this one?

JAKOB ROBINSON: They're all fast. They're all really skilled. We have seen really good receivers this whole year. I'm just excited to go against all of them.

We played No. 4 from Arizona, who is really good. So I think, yeah, we all just came in with the mindset that we're going to play good, so...

Q. Then for any of the players, both these teams were part of that four-way tie for first place. You're the two that didn't get to go to the title game. Do you look at this as sort of another Big 12 title game?

JAKE RETZLAFF: I think it's the people's Big 12 Championship personally.

Q. For Coach Roderick and Coach Hill, what can this bowl game do for you guys to springboard into 2025, next year, as a tone setter?

JAY HILL: I think any time you get a chance to go out on a win, that's a huge deal. It's one more opportunity for the young guys to continue to get better and to prove that they

deserve to be starters next year.

It's such a fun matchup that there's going to be a lot of hype, and I think that hype can lead you into next season with next year's rankings and things like that. There's a lot riding on this game, and we're approaching it as such.

AARON RODERICK: Offensively our first priority is to send our seniors off the right way. Then, secondly, we're treating it -- for the returning players we're treating it like the first game of next year. Just like Jay said, there's a chance to generate some momentum going into next season.

Q. For Aaron and Jay, how are you guys approaching junior college players getting an extra year? Have you had discussions with Darius and Mory Bamba on both of your sides, and Jake too about what they want to do?

JAY HILL: Well, I think that there's still a lot that's out there to be decided on exactly what that ruling is, but we do have a few really good players that fall into that on both sides of the ball, and we would be very excited to get those guys back if we can.

Q. I just wanted to know, since y'all have been in San Antonio, I know you had the pleasure of going to Sea World and riding all the rides. How was that experience being at Sea World, and how has it been here in San Antonio and seeing the Alamo and all that?

ISAIAH GLASKER: It was crazy. I have never actually seen a dolphin before. So, I don't know, being able to see a dolphin just kind of blew my mind. Just riding the rides, I don't know, it might have looked like I was crying, but I was not. I promise.

TYLER BATTY: It's been great being in San Antonio. We've been in and out of Texas and got to sample different parts of Texas over the past couple of years.

San Antonio has been great. Sea World was a ton of fun with the guys, going on all the rides and just hanging out, seeing all the animals and everything. It was a lot of fun. We've really enjoyed our time up until now.

Q. For Aaron and Jay, just obviously this is a team that's on your schedule for next season too. What is the challenge of that? What are you hoping to get out of this? I know both teams will look a lot different going into next season, but what are you hoping to get out of seeing what they do on both sides of the ball?

AARON RODERICK: I think the focus is just winning this



game. That game will come when it comes, and we'll see what each team looks like at that time, but the focus right now is to win.

They're a very good team. We have to be ready to play, and they have to be ready to play us too. I think we have a good football team too. To look ahead too far I think would be a mistake.

Q. For Jake and then Chase, obviously the other quarterback is getting a lot of accolades. Jake, how does that affect your mindset? Then for Chase, how does it affect your mindset that the other receiver in the game, the other big receiver, is the Heisman Trophy winner?

JAKE RETZLAFF: Shedeur is obviously a great player. It's been fun to kind of watch him play a little bit, but we kind of -- quarterback comparison is something we love to do, but at the end of the day I'm not playing against Shedeur. I'm actually playing against his defense.

What he does has little to do with what I do. So I'm focused on putting the ball in the end zone for our team against their defense. I'm not going to be worried about that. I know the four guys on the other side of the table are going to worry about him and take care of him, and I'm going to do the same with the defense.

CHASE ROBERTS: Yeah, I love players that love the game and that do things right on and off the game. I think Tyler Hunter is a guy that does that, so I look up to him. I'm just excited to go against him on the other side of the ball too. I'm excited that he plays corner as well.

To watch him and his game and learn from him, it's just I love the challenge. I want to go against guys like that. It's what you dream of as a little kid, to go against the best players in college football and then make it to the NFL and go prove yourself in the NFL.

So my goal is to obviously win the game as a team and then also to play well and to show that I can play and that we can hang as a team with these great players. So I'm excited. It's going to be fun.

Q. Chase, since it's the first time I've gotten to talk to you since you posted a little something on Instagram about coming back, can you walk us through a little bit of your decision to come back for your final year? Maybe some of the feedback that you got, and maybe the most pressing question is how did you decide on the song for your Instagram post?

CHASE ROBERTS: Our media team is awesome. They

helped me out with the song and the video and stuff. They did a great job. Jake was a big part of coming back.

JAKE RETZLAFF: He's back.

CHASE ROBERTS: Having Jake back another year, being able to have that connection, work in the offseason, it's going to be so fun. I think it's only going to up our play as a team and also our opportunities to go play at the next level as well.

We have a great staff, a great community. Just everything about BYU, it's hard to not take advantage of another year if you have one. That's the biggest thing.

I prayed about it and took it to God, and it felt like the right thing to come back and go win a Big 12 Championship. That's going to be the goal.

I'm excited to come back and be a part of this staff again and this team. I love my brothers, and it's going to be fun. We're focused on this game, and it's going to be the first game of the season. Kind of ride momentum into next year, so we're excited.

Q. Jakob, you have 11 career interceptions. You are now tied for second in BYU history since 2000 and tied for fifth in the FBS with active career interceptions. What's been the key to your success? What does it mean for you to be among the best in the country?

JAKOB ROBINSON: I would say for sure just trusting what Coach Hill calls. He sets us up to get interceptions. He always talks smack to us during practice about he would get more interceptions than all of us, and I believe him. I believe him because, I mean, he sets us up in the perfect position to get plays, so yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, BYU coordinators and players.

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