

Valero Alamo Bowl: USC vs TCU

Saturday, December 27, 2025

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome

TCU Horned Frogs Coach Andy Avalos Devean Deal Kaleb Elarms-Orr Bud Clark

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the TCU defensive press conference. It's my pleasure to introduce defensive coordinator Andy Avalos.

ANDY AVALOS: We have our safety here Bud, our starting middle linebacker right here, Kaleb, and then at the end, Devean Deal.

First off, we want to thank the sponsor, Valero, for putting on and giving us the opportunity to be here. Obviously the bowl committee and the city of San Antonio for hosting this bowl game.

We're very excited about the opportunity. We're playing against a team that's had a great season, that's given us the opportunity to finish strong by preparing to go out and play in this game and one last time with guys like this. These three are seniors here, and just to spend the last month with them preparing for this opponent has been a blessing in itself.

Q. Coach, you've transformed this defense over the last two years. It's become particularly good, especially against the run. What has gone into that transformation?

ANDY AVALOS: It's really attributed to these guys up here and their teammates. These three right here are tremendous leaders. They're great people. The way they carry themselves, the way they lead themselves every single day has allowed you to improve in a lot of different areas, the run game being one of them. Obviously that's going to be a huge challenge. USC has done a great job



running the ball this season.

But a big part of that is our front and committing to the development of not only the D-line but the linebackers and how they play together and how they work off of each other.

Q. Devean, you started the season with a scoop and score against North Carolina. What could top that to end the season?

DEVEAN DEAL: Another one? I was just talking to Bud right now, we both got touchdowns and hopefully Kaleb gets one in this game, but maybe a pick, maybe a pick six. Whatever comes to me.

Q. Kaleb, what are going to be the big challenges of slowing USC with the very strong passing offense, and what can you show with this opportunity in this game?

KALEB ELARMS-ORR: I think the biggest challenges will be just defending their tight ends and their receivers. I think they have very skilled players over there, but I feel like we've got very skilled players, as well. I think if we just -- it all kind of starts in practice. If we just have really good practices, keep straining, keep working hard, I think it'll show up to the game.

Q. Bud, I know you guys are coming into this game with your quarterback in the transfer portal. I'm wondering as a defensive player, is there any extra pressure to step up and perform and carry the load for this group?

BUD CLARK: You know, we just take it day by day. We look at it the same as any other game, any other situation pretty much, so we've got to move on from it. That's been our thing, honestly.

Q. Bud, you've been around this program for a long time. Didn't get the opportunity to play in the last home game because of an injury. What does it mean to be able to suit up and play for the Frogs one more time?



BUD CLARK: I get to be with my brothers, be with the coach that I love. I love playing with them, so I feel like this is what I get to do. I get to put my heart out for my teammates and my coaches and my people back at home.

Q. Kaleb, you've played nearly every game over the last few years. What do you attribute that durability to?

KALEB ELARMS-ORR: Say that again, say that last part.

Q. You've played nearly every game the last few years. What do you attribute the durability to, being able to play in all those games?

KALEB ELARMS-ORR: Yeah, definitely I kind of attribute it just to our staff and our coaches. They treat us well. They know when to tone it down when it gets close to the games, and then we have an amazing strength staff who really takes care of our bodies.

Our recovery standard is amazing. I attribute it to our staff and the discipline they kind of implement to us and how to just be a true professional because at the end of the day if you're not on the field and you're not producing, then you're not really a help to the team.

I just want to be as much of a contributor to the team as much as possible and help us win.

Q. Devean, what is your big motivation and for the team in general to thrive in this bowl game?

DEVEAN DEAL: Kind of like they said, another opportunity, last opportunity in college with my brothers and this team. I love playing with these guys, so motivation starts with ourselves. I'm a really competitive guy, and I know I want to put the best product out there and win for TCU.

We've had some guys talk about the last time they played USC and how much that meant for TCU as a program.

So ending on a high note, but just motivated for another opportunity to take advantage of it, one last one with my guys, my brothers, my actual brother. So all that is exciting.

Q. To that point, Devean, we've talked a lot about your brother and playing alongside him the last couple years at TCU. How's has that strengthened your relationship with your actual brother, to be along the defensive line with him the last couple years?

DEVEAN DEAL: Yeah, it's been pretty awesome. I always

joke in the games, I don't really notice until they'll be like Markis Deal with a sack and I'll kind of like fan out and be big brother for a little bit and like go hype him up.

But other than that, it's pretty much business except I got to room with him the last two years. I'd say he's a lot more mature than when I was younger. He's not as much of like baby bro, little bro. He'd be mad if I said baby bro. Little bro. It's been cool seeing him mature and grow up and get to spend every day with him.

I've been in college the last three years before that without him, so I get to hang out with him probably more than ever so it's been awesome. It's a blessing for sure.

Q. Coach, when you look at USC as you get ready for this game, what are the things you have to prepare for and lock in on?

ANDY AVALOS: They do a tremendous job building a run game and a pass game that work well together. Their pass game and their play actions off of their run game as well as if you've studied them or watched them throughout the course of the year, you're going to see they've got a very good vertical pass game.

Coach has done a great job with all the offenses that he's been involved with at his various stops. They're a well-balanced offense. When you play defense, it always starts at the line of scrimmage. We've got to do a great job in the secondary with our shells and with our pre-snap presentations look like, and obviously you've got to do a tremendous job fitting with seeing the right keys and fitting fast.

One of the biggest things with playing in a bowl game is in this case you don't play for a month. It still is tackle football. It's going to take us being in great shape, and we've been working on those things and making sure that while in a controlled setting at practice that we're working on those fundamentals that are going to show up.

Q. Andy, you mentioned these three guys are seniors sitting next to you. Talk a little bit about what they've meant to you and what they've meant to TCU.

ANDY AVALOS: First off, we were talking about it this morning and last night, a few of us coaches, just how special of a group it is. You know, you coach for a football for a while, but to have guys like this and their teammates for a season in one room and to go through the things we went through this year, to grow the way we did, to improve, and we talk about all the time staying in the fight no matter the circumstances, attack what we can control, these guys have done an unbelievable job at that.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Like I said a second ago, they're great leaders. They lead themselves. You know what you're going to get every day from each one of these guys when they show up. Like he's going to have the smile on his face that he probably has right now. Kaleb in the middle there, he's the businessman; he runs the show so he's got to be on point.

And Dev is like having another coach. I sit in the meetings, in the position meetings with Dev every morning and it's like having another coach in there, and it really is, from the front line to the second level to the third level, having another set of assistant coaches.

It's been tremendous.

Again, like I said for this last month just to be around them. I told these guys that at the beginning of the month that we're all blessed to get another month with you guys in this prep and to finish strong.

Q. Kaleb, you found out recently that you were all-Big 12 first-team defense. How did you feel when you got an honor like that, knowing that you're among the best?

KALEB ELARMS-ORR: Definitely feels very rewarding, a lot of work that I've put it in the off-season. But a huge credit to all my teammates on defense and especially on offense, too, just getting us prepared and getting me just good competition to go against every day.

Great teammates on defense to just push me every day and raise the standard. It's a great honor, but definitely credit to my coaches and my teammates for sure.

Q. Devean, you know better than most about showing up in a bowl game, last year's New Mexico Bowl, defensive MVP. What can you bring from that experience for you personally and for the rest of your team about showing up in a bowl game?

DEVEAN DEAL: Yeah Coach Dykes always talks about how you're going to remember the bowl experience based off whether you win or lose. I've been lucky enough to have been to three, and it's true. The ones that we won are a lot more fond memories.

Go out there, handle business, take advantage of the opportunity, and at the end of the day, it's another opportunity, so put your best foot forward and see what happens. It doesn't matter where the venue is. We're going to show up. We're going to stay in the fight, and I'm excited. The venue is pretty awesome. We got to see it. So it helps when you have a cool opportunity like this.

Q. It's always interesting to see in bowl games what kind of attitude and intensity a team is going to show up with. What do you see that is fueling or driving your group at this point?

ANDY AVALOS: Well, number one, it's the opportunity, right. We always talk about just being our best. We don't have to be perfect, simply be our best and work to grow and thrive each and every day. If we can do that, we're going to impact the others around us.

I truly feel like these guys have done a good job with that. These three right here are obviously a huge part of that, as we've worked to get to this point. We have a few days left to prep here, and they've got to be our finest days, too. As we get closer to the game here and making sure that we're extremely dialed into the details, all the situations that are going to pop up.

Again, it helps when you have guys like this that love the game, love their teammates and come to the facility every day and have a huge impact.

Q. Bud, there's been a lot of talk about playing with your teammates and your guys one more time, but this is a great opportunity for you personally, right, you accepted an invitation to the Senior Bowl, as well. What do you think a game like this can do and then going into the Senior Bowl to catapult you on to the next stage?

BUD CLARK: I feel like it can elevate me. I've got all my teammates with me, so I feel like that'll be pretty cool. It won't just be me, so I know I'll have my guys with me, so we'll compete all together. It'll for sure elevate us.

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