

Pop-Tarts Bowl: BYU Cougars vs Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Orlando, Florida, USA

Camping World Stadium

BYU Cougars Kalani Sitake Press Conference



opportunity to play again with these seniors and to play again as a team and to do it in a wonderful setting.

I think it will be warmer there than it is here in Provo, Utah. We will be excited for that during the holidays and just looking forward to all of it, all the festivities and everything that goes into a bowl game.

We know that the Pop-Tarts Bowl does it the right way, and we are really excited about the matchup and excited to play again as a team.

What questions do you guys have for me?

Q. Obviously news started breaking that you might play Notre Dame and then they obviously withdrew. Did that get out to the players at all? What was kind of your reaction and now that you're getting another quality opponent in Georgia tech?

KALANI SITAKE: Obviously, we played yesterday and didn't do as well as we wanted to. But getting on the plane we knew -- even now in the locker room we knew it, we were going to play another game.

The goal was to create as many opportunities to play together as possible, so we created one more this year than we had last year. We got to the championship game. That was a cool experience even though it didn't work out the way we wanted it to.

We got to be thankful for that opportunity and look forward to trying to get everything we can to get back to that game again next year.

Part of that is being able to bowl prep and to develop our young guys and develop our depth. So we are going to utilize all the extra practices to get our team ready and make sure that we are ready to go, because Georgia Tech is not an easy team to play. They do a lot of things that will be difficult for us. I know they are going to be at their best, and we have to be at ours too. It is a sense of urgency to get that going and knowing that it could help us into next year.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Sitake, we look forward to hosting you in a couple of weeks to face Coach Brent Key, who you just heard from, and the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets. If you can start us off with an opening statement, we will move into questions from there.

KALANI SITAKE: Of course, thank you. Really excited about the opportunity to play in this bowl game, the Pop-Tarts Bowl. We are excited to accept the bid to play into it officially and to know who our opponent is, Georgia Tech.

We have a lot of respect for them. I have a lot of respect for Coach Brent Key. He's also a guy that is coaching at his alma mater like I am.

I believe a couple of decades ago he was a GA at Georgia Tech, and I was a GA at BYU. You look at us now, we are both leading our teams and get to meet in Orlando.

It's a wonderful place. I know Orlando really well. It is a home of my in-laws, so my wife is from the Orlando area. She is a Polk County girl, as they say down there. She is from Dundee and went to Haines City High. Still have a lot of connections there and a lot of family there in that area too. It is going to be a lot of fun, and looking forward to the matchup.

Georgia Tech, I see a lot of things in their program. It is very similar to ours. I know that they are tough and they play really hard. They are not afraid to run their quarterback as well. A well-balanced team. I think well-coached. You look at what they do fundamentally well, it is everything.

I am looking forward to the matchup. We know it is going to require us being at our best and just looking forward to the



I don't know all the other specifics behind it and the details. We are just honored to play Georgia Tech.

Q. Do you have an update on Bear's condition yet, or is it too soon for that?

KALANI SITAKE: He is a fast healer. He'll be fine.

Q. You noted the bowl practices. How do you juggle maybe getting your program ready almost using this as a springboard for 2026, but also giving you the most opportunity possible to your senior class?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I mean, you have to follow the momentum that you have from the season and then you have to develop the young guys. In a lot of ways it might be different types of practices.

The thing is we can use all our red shirts just like we did in the championship game. It makes things a little bit different, but it makes it even more fun. Everybody has an opportunity to participate.

We have to get back to practicing, though. I know we will have a couple of days off to get the guys over the season, to heal quickly, but then we have to get back to work.

Q. I was at the Big 12 championship. I saw Bear play. He's an impressive kid in person. Can you talk a little bit about what he brings to your program and kind of what you have seen out of him in his first year?

KALANI SITAKE: I have been impressed with him, a true freshman, has done a great job leading our offense and just really impressed with his progress that he has made. Glad that he gets to be with us for a while.

But we were going against a quarterback in Haynes King that is seasoned and he can throw the ball, but he is also their leading rusher too. He does a lot of things right.

I think it will be good for us watching the film and good for Bear to see how other quarterbacks do it. He is a learning machine, so he is going to get better. Even from yesterday, he will get better from that experience, and I look forward to seeing him when he takes the field again.

Q. I think last year the game was on December 28th. Will you guys follow kind of the same pattern of going before Christmas, spending Christmas in Orlando, and also there will be a Sunday I think where you won't be able to play or practice. How will that affect you? What's the plan for the trip as a whole this year?

KALANI SITAKE: We have had Sundays every weekend

this year, so we will be good and make it work. We have had it during bowl games too. We will organize it. I mean, everything that we do is detailed. We will have a plan for all of it.

Obviously, we would love to get to Orlando as soon as possible. As early as they will let us come. I know the guys want to be down there, and they are excited for it. I think there is going to be a lot of fans there supporting us too.

With the schedule and everything, I am not worried about it. We will be fine.

Q. The game is actually on a Saturday, so Sunday won't come into effect. I was just curious about if the guys like spending Christmas basically at a bowl game.

KALANI SITAKE: Well, I think if you like receiving gifts and giving gifts, then it doesn't really matter the location. I mean, I grew up with warm Christmases. I think they will be fine there.

It will be fun. It will be an opportunity for us to be together during the holiday and one to remember. I think this is one of those moments, and anybody, whether they want to do their Christmas early or do it later, this way I promised my kids two Christmases, so everybody should do the same, and it will be a lot of fun.

One is going to be in the warm area of Florida and it is going to be a lot of fun, guys. I am looking forward to the game and everything that leads up to it. I know Pop-Tarts will show us a good time.

Q. You noted that you and Coach Key are both alums of your respective programs. What does that mean to you on the heels of your extension leading BYU in a power conference? Now you're locked in with a long-term deal, leading a program that means a lot to you, what does that bring out as a head coach being at your alma mater?

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, not to get too emotional, because I did that last time, last week, but I really am thankful that I have a long-term contract and commitment to be here. So, it is something that I value. I have become a better person being here and being the coach, being around amazing fans and amazing young men that I get to be around and mentor.

They have taught me quite a bit. Everybody that has been around BYU, I feel like I am the one that has been a benefit from everybody. I want to stick around as much as I can. I need some more improvement.



What I want to do is make sure that just because it's a long-term deal that I don't take it for granted and that I keep working hard and stay humble and stay hungry throughout the whole process.

Luckily, I have a lot of people around me to remind me of that and just really look forward to it and just being able to talk to recruits and let them know that they do serve a mission to come back, that I will be here for the entirety of their career, which is going to be really meaningful for us in recruiting.

Q. On a much lighter note, with this being the Pop-Tarts Bowl, what is your favorite Pop-Tart flavor? You can't say all of them.

KALANI SITAKE: I haven't met a Pop-Tart flavor I didn't like, but I will say this: I am pretty easy. Strawberry is always the one to go to, because I think that is the one everybody tried first. I like strawberry. I do like wild berry. I am not against brown sugar and cinnamon. What else can I name? Cherry is good, too. The cookies and cream is a good one, too.

I love them all, but if someone is being judgmental around me, then I am probably going to go with the one that is not frosted just to shut them up a little bit.

Q. I'm wondering, from the player perspective, having Alabama lose last night, does that increase the frustration of not getting in and maybe also increase the incentive in this bowl game?

KALANI SITAKE: I think I said a lot yesterday when we were talking about -- when the playoff committee had to make the decision, and I am just going to be honest with you. It is not easy. It can't be easy being in the playoff committee. Once they made a decision, it is set. So I choose to be positive about everything.

I think it is a hard thing for them to do. I think they did the best they could. We have an opportunity to play a game, and the goal is for us to play as many as we can, and we have one more now, and it happens to be against an amazing program like Georgia Tech.

We're looking forward to the matchup. I can't really say anything other than they did their best, and I am looking forward to watching how the playoff plays out. I think there are some great teams in there. The unfortunate part is that there are a bunch of teams that could play in it, and that is what made it really difficult.

Whether they expand it or not, I have no idea, but the fact

is we get to play in this bowl game against Georgia Tech, and it makes me really excited.

Thinking about the Pop-Tarts thing, I have been known to stack Pop-Tarts on top of each other and take a bite. If you guys want to try that out, it's a good way to live your life. So, just try all the different flavors, and it's a good way to go. That's how you get this physique by doing things like that, being creative and innovative with your eating style (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: With that, Coach, we'll let you go and look forward to having you and the Cougars down here in Orlando soon.

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