

# Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl: Boston College vs Nebraska

Saturday, December 28, 2024

Bronx, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

## Boston College Eagles Coach Bill O'Brien

Press Conference



Nebraska 20, Boston College 15

**Q. Coach, that fourth quarter, being able to get the spark, I know you probably wanted it sooner, but what sprung it in that fourth quarter and got the team going?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, these guys fought hard. We have a tough football team. They never quit. That's what BC is all about. Give a lot of credit to Nebraska. They did a good job of controlling the game.

But in the end, we had a shot there. Couldn't stop them on the four-minute drive there at the end. But got the blocked punt, kind of hung in there. Had trouble scoring in the red zone. I thought we moved the ball pretty well, but we had trouble running the ball, had trouble scoring in the red zone.

Like I said, give Nebraska a lot of credit.

**Q. You made a great comment about resiliency. All year it's been a tough season for you guys. Tell me something you learned about your team that you didn't learn before this game.**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, I learned -- there were a lot of guys that played today that hadn't played that much, and I really respected the effort that they played with. You had guys like Kevin Cline and Eryx Daugherty, Ryan Mickow, Dwayne Allick had to go to center. Then there were guys on defense, obviously, that played a lot, Ashton McShane played a lot today, Cam Martinez played a lot.

I thought those guys fought, man. I've got a lot of respect for this football team. I think we have a bright future at Boston College. Today didn't go the way we wanted it to go, but today could have got really ugly. It really could

have because Nebraska, they did a good job. But our guys hung in there. They fought, and I have nothing but good things -- very proud of our effort today.

**Q. You mentioned Dwayne having to go in for Drew. How much did that change the offense, if at all, and what did you think about Dwayne's performance?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Didn't change it at all. We were on the same plays. We struggled to run the ball overall. Nebraska's front, very big, very physical, and we just struggled to run the football. We did throw the ball pretty well. I thought we were productive, but we couldn't score. So that's a problem because you have to score to win.

But Dwayne did a good job. Dwayne is a very tough guy. He's a BC graduate. He's in graduate school. He's what BC is all about. He stood up to the challenge, went in there, and he played tough.

**Q. In your words, sum it up, how did BC fall down 20-2?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Look, we went for it on 4th down a few times. I decided to do that. We were having trouble kicking the ball. So I didn't want to kick it. We were in that area where you're either going to plus-50 punt it, which we could have done, but we're not great at that, or tried to kick a 50-yard field goal, which we're definitely not ready to do that. I went for it on 4th down and probably put the defense in a couple tough positions.

Look, Nebraska did a good job. We had trouble running the ball, had trouble scoring in the red area. We moved the ball. I think at halftime we had the time of possession, we had yardage, but didn't have the score. It was just a combination of things. But we'll be back. BC will be back.

**Q. You mentioned going for it a few times. For those of us who haven't seen you, are you traditionally this aggressive on 4th downs?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yes. Yep.

**Q. I know the game is really fresh in your mind, but**

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**just thinking right after the game, is there anything that comes to mind immediately going into the next season that you need to improve and looking to 2025?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, I told the team, there's different categories of players. There's the guys that played their last game, which I have all the respect in the world for those guys. They went through a lot at BC. They bought into what we were doing when we got here, and they were great leaders. Played their last game, played their hearts out.

Then we have guys that are coming back next year that we feel really good about. A lot of those guys got a lot of playing time today that they hadn't gotten all year, and I thought they hung in there. So there's a lot to build on.

Then we have guys that are brand new that didn't play in the game that just arrived here a week ago. It's transitional period in college football. It's not good to lose. Like we'll never accept losing at BC, but I thought that we showed up and played very hard today, and I was very proud of that.

**Q. What are the positives that you take from the whole week and the experience with the team?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, the bowl was awesome. The Pinstripe Bowl did a great job. I've been to a lot of bowls. Been to the Sugar Bowl, been to the Cotton Bowl, been to two Gator Bowls. I've been to a lot of bowls. I've been coaching a long time.

And the Pinstripe Bowl, without a shadow of a doubt, is one of the best bowls. Just the people that we worked with, everybody from Mark Holtzman on down, just did a really good job of having some events for us but also understanding that we're getting ready to play a game.

I thought everybody was treated well. The hotel was great. Columbia University was great to let us practice there, and we thank them. It was a really good experience for our whole program.

**Q. Got called for that late hit on Raiola at the end. What did you see? Obviously it didn't seem like you agreed with that call very much.**

BILL O'BRIEN: No, I didn't. I don't really want to comment on the officiating, if that is a good answer for you.

**Q. Just wondering, obviously you were around Tom Brady. You also clearly have gone up against a lot of good quarterbacks, as well. What stood out to you first time seeing Dylan Raiola live?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, I've known Dylan for a long time. Dylan came to the Alabama camp when I coached there. I've got a lot of respect for Dylan. He plays the game very calmly. The game comes pretty easy to him. He's been around football his whole life. His dad was a great player.

He does a good job of managing the game. He's got a great future in football. Getting to watch him on film, getting ready for the game, seeing a lot of great things from him. Talked to him right there at the end. Got a lot of respect for Dillon. He did a really good job today. Give him a lot of credit.

**Q. The blocked extra point and the blocked punt, what did those do for you guys?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, it was good. The blocked extra point put us on the board because it was a struggle. Gave us two points, which for a while looked like that was all it was going to be. And then the blocked punt was huge. Matt Thurin did a good job, Nick McGriff.

And they asked me, Do you want to go after it?

I said, Hell, yeah, I want to go after it.

So we went after it, and we got it. And that was a great job by those guys. We had practiced that all week. And kind of got us back in the game and then just couldn't hold them on that four-minute drive.

But just too little, too late. But our guys played hard, like I said.

**Q. Obviously not the ending to your first season at Boston College like you wanted, but your first season is officially in the books. What was this year like overall for you?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, look, like I've said before, we got hired in February. We tried to get in there and meet with all the guys one-on-one. We tried to hire a staff as fast as we could.

I thought we did a lot of good things. Not enough. There's a lot more that we can do. We can do a lot better. There's a lot of things we can improve on, both on and off the field, and we'll work hard to do that.

But look, it's not great to go out on the losing end in the last game of the season, but I do think there's a bright future. I really enjoy the job, and I think there's a lot of good players in that locker room coming back for 2025. So I'm looking forward to taking a couple weeks off. We'll be back January 13th to start school and we'll get going on 2025.

**Q. The guys who played their last game, as a first-year coach in the program, how did they help with your adjustment coming in late and then the whole summer, through the season, knowing that they're going to graduate and maybe not reap the benefits of 2025 and beyond, but what did they mean to building that foundation?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, there's no doubt that they laid the foundation, the foundation of discipline and toughness. Most players, they just want to be coached. They want to be led. These guys were very coachable, whether it was the winter workouts, new way of doing things in the weight room, spring practice, definitely new way of doing things, training camp. Our summer training was very good. Training camp was good. A lot of it was because of those guys, the captains did a great job.

We had some adversity we dealt with during the year, and the captains were always steady, good leaders, tough guys. Joe Marinaro, Donovan Ezeiruaku, Ozzy Trapilo, Drew Kendall, Kam Arnold, they just did a really good job. Can't say enough about those guys right there that played their last game. I have a ton of respect for them.

**Q. Both today and the lead-up to this game, you've described this game as a preview of the 2025 season. How do you assess what you saw today?**

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, there's a lot to improve on. We lost. There's a lot of things to build on. I was very pleased with how some of those guys played. You look on offense and you see, like I already mentioned the offensive linemen that played, but then you've got obviously Jordan McDonald will be back, and you've got Turbo Richard will be back and Lewis Bond will be back and Reed Harris will be back and Jeremiah Franklin will be back.

You go on defense and you look at a lot of those guys, Bam Crouch, I thought he played a really good game, Bryce Steele, the DBs, the three safeties, KP Price, Carter Davis, Omar Thornton, Ashton McShane, Max Tucker. There's a lot of guys coming back, and we're adding to those guys with some of the new guys that will be here, whether it's the freshman class or a couple guys from the portal.

And then the D-line, a lot of those guys are coming back. Q Hutchins, Owen Stoudmire, George Rooks, Sed McConnell. Kwan Williams got injured there at the end, but a very tough, tough player.

I'm very encouraged with the guys that are coming back. Looking forward to working with them.

