

Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl: Boston College vs Nebraska

Saturday, December 28, 2024

Bronx, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

Nebraska Cornhuskers

Dylan Raiola

Rahmir Johnson

Ty Robinson

Press Conference



Nebraska 20, Boston College 15

Q. For all of you, the younger players, who do you think after a full slate of practices and a bowl game might have played their way into position to get some playing time where some of these guys left in the portal and whatnot?

TY ROBINSON: Yeah, from a defensive perspective, I think Willis and Vincent Shavers really showed out today. I'm really proud of those guys because of how hard I've been on them the last couple weeks while we've been in bowl prep. It goes to show, Vincent had a day, and Willis finally started to become the player that we knew he could become.

RAHMIR JOHNSON: I was glad to see Quinn out there get his first touchdown. Also from a defensive standpoint I'd say Donovan. He played his ass off today. I ain't going to lie.

DYLAN RAIOLA: I think Jacory obviously played -- what he does. They probably said all the guys' names. Everybody stepped up. I'm proud of them.

Q. Rahmir, Matt Rhule just came out and told us about your mom passing away in November and how you stuck with the team, only went back home once during the bye week. Just talk about that experience and what led you to want to stick with the team and come back and finish this thing out?

RAHMIR JOHNSON: Yeah, when I came back for my sixth year, I wanted to do something special. Everything I do is for Nebraska, is for this team. So when I found out

the news about my mom passing, I told Coach Rhule, I don't want it to be like a big distraction. I don't want the team to be like, oh, Rahmir, I'm sorry for your loss and all that stuff.

But you know, this is what it means to be a Cornhusker. I love this program. I'm dedicated to this place. Even with news like that, I still want to play for these guys. That's just the type of person I am.

Q. All three of you were on the field for the defining play of the game. What was the message in that huddle about what you needed to do on 4th and 2, and then to watch Rahmir get it done, what was that feeling like?

DYLAN RAIOLA: That's a play that in fall camp that's a day-one install, set the tone, and kind of our DNA, get downhill, run the ball. I think whoever sees No. 9 running at them like that, they're going to duck out of the way.

I think the touchdown we ran the same play. Looked like he choke slanted him or something. That's a tone-setting play for us. We know when that play is called, it's time to go to work and get the win.

RAHMIR JOHNSON: I mean, yeah, all year it was a big back play, obviously, but Coach was just like, get the 1st down, protect the ball, and he was like, let's just finish it the right way. I saw the lane, Ty created the lane for me and we got the 1st down, we got the bowl win, and here we are today.

TY ROBINSON: I just told Rahmir to follow me, and on the edge I saw three dudes and they all kind of stopped when they looked at me, and then I felt Rahmir hit the seam and I got right behind him to make sure he could keep going. I'm out there, I don't know much except go hit somebody.

Q. I was wondering, what does winning this bowl game mean to each and every one of you?

TY ROBINSON: I'd say for me, and I can probably speak for Rahmir, as well, just being here for six years, having that opportunity to come back and to finally -- the goal was

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when we first got here was leave this place better than we found it, to start something new, to lay that foundation for the years to come, and I think with today's win, us older guys were able to do that for guys like Dylan to keep going and keep building up this program for the years.

RAHMIR JOHNSON: Well said. He said it perfectly.

DYLAN RAIOLA: Yeah, I think it was just send these guys out on a high note. Personally, I wanted this one for Rahmir, like what he said he'd been through. It's just a tight-knit group, and it kind of sucks it's our last game together, but that's life, and we'll be champions forever now.

Q. Rahmir, you finish as a bowl champion and you have that trophy in front of you just a borough over from where you grew up. How special was it to win and do what you did today being in your hometown here in New York City?

RAHMIR JOHNSON: Yeah, it was real special. Every time I was looking up in the crowd and seeing who all I see, I saw my old youth football team, the Harlem Jets in the corner, I saw my family in the end zone where I scored at.

It just meant a lot, man. For me, it's like I played my last game in this city against a team which was my first offer, and to go out with a W, this is special. Like Ty said, we worked six years to get to this point, and I'm glad we left the field as a winner, and I'm glad we paved the way for the future to my right, and I see special things coming in the near future for this team.

Q. Ty and Dylan, can you guys speak to the emotions that you feel for Rahmir sitting next to him being with him for six years, knowing what this year has been like for him?

TY ROBINSON: Yeah, I told Rahmir in the locker room after that, I said, this is for life, this brotherhood that we built. It means so much. The next time they come to New York City, I'm going to be hitting them up as we hang out, go wherever. It shows what kind of person Rahmir is, to go through that type of adversity personally. I mean, I kind of understand it from a different perspective, but it takes a lot. I know the mental toughness that he's had throughout the season has just proven how good of a man he is.

DYLAN RAIOLA: Yeah, I piggyback off what he said. For the year I've gotten to know Rahmir, I always knew he was a special guy. But now I'm happy to call him a brother, and I love him like my own brother. Yeah, there's nothing much more to be said than that.

RAHMIR JOHNSON: I love y'all too, bro.

Q. You had that scrambling there near the end, a little scrum ensued, BC gets called for a late hit. From your perspective take me through what you saw on that play.

DYLAN RAIOLA: Yeah, we actually called that play for me not to run, but the way they lined up and showed it, I had to read the D-end.

I just pulled the ball and I saw the green, and then he tried to take me out, which is why I came up and kind of reacted. But I guess it was just kind of the fire in me, kind of game's on the line, I lay it on the line for my team.

I got up, I knew I wasn't going to do anything, but my linemen came in and kind of cleaned up for me.

Q. Obviously there's so much focus understandably on the playoff, but now that you've been through this experience of preparing for and playing in this game, what do these bowl games mean, both in terms of what you can gain competitively from them but also just the experience as teammates?

TY ROBINSON: I mean, yeah. Those three extra weeks, it's just like another spring ball for the young guys. We watched I think for like the first two weeks, it was really just young guys going out there and competing against each other, getting better. It was awesome to see them grow. From my perspective, we've never had those December practices so I never really knew what that was going to be like or what you could gain from that, but after seeing these last few weeks, I see how important it is to get those. This is a way better football team than we were when we finished at Iowa.

Q. Ty, the defense came up with several big 4th down stops. What did you think of the way you guys played in those big moments being able to get off the field?

TY ROBINSON: Yeah, we knew they were going to be going for it on 4th down. That's just kind of who they were. When you play defense it's all kind of a mentality thing. Coach was really aggressive, he told us he was going to be really aggressive with his play calling, and again, kudos to those guys that were going out there, blitzing hard. The D-line holding their blocks and the safeties and the DBs being able to cover guys long enough for us to go and actually make an impact on those plays.

Q. Ty, you've played with Javin Wright for a long time. He's been through a lot just like Rahmir. For him to

lead the team in tackles today and go out on a high note, how cool is that, and what has he meant to you as a defender on that side of the ball?

TY ROBINSON: Yeah, man, both being Arizona kids, me and him were roommates for like a year or two. Just to watch, every year it seems like some new adversity for that guy. I love him. I love him to death like a brother. Just to watch him persevere, he's always got a smile on his face. He's just the most over-joyful guy ever, even facing all the health issues he's faced. To be able to watch him go out there and fly around and be happy, I can't remember what play it was, but I think he tripped or fell or something and he just comes off to the sideline laughing and smiling. I'm like, what are you laughing for. He's like, I tripped over everyone and fell into the pile. It just goes to show what kind of guy he is.

Q. Dylan, Donovan Jones, we knew him as a safety. He's out there playing corner. When you're at practice and you're throwing against Donovan Jones, from your perspective what kind of corner is Donovan Jones? What do you see from Donovan Jones as a corner?

DYLAN RAIOLA: Yeah, I think he's the next wave of great corners to come through here. I think what makes him great is his competitive spirit. He's not going to take no for an answer and he's going to go compete for what he wants. I think normally when you put those two together, you get a damn good football player. So Donovan being in our class, super proud of him, and he showed why he can play at this stage and this level.

Q. Dylan, Coach said that that last drive, the four-minute drive at the end was the first time the offense has taken the ball and said enough is enough in a situation like that. Can you speak to your mentality and the vibe you got in the huddle when you guys got the ball back up five points?

DYLAN RAIOLA: Yeah, we kind of wanted to get the feeling of the, oh, gosh, is it going to be good or bad, kind of out of our system. Everyone was -- we were going to go win the game. We weren't going to give them the ball back. That's exactly what we did. We ended with the ball, and we got to line up in the best formation in football, no thinking, no motion, nothing, victory. Can't get any better than that.

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