

# Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl Media Conference

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Bronx, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

**Coach Terry M. Smith**

**Coach Dabo Swinney**

**Patrick Kraft**

**Graham Neff**

**Mark Holtzman**

**Justin Shackil**

Press Conference



So talk about a little bit symmetry there.

Penn State has played in the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl once before in 2014. We sold out for the game against Boston College, a very exciting game, a great moment for the entire Penn State family.

Clemson, they did play in New York once. They last played -- you'll like this because it's your alma mater -- they last played in 1952 against Fordham at Randalls Island, and it ended up in a 12-12 tie. Incredible.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: I remember it well.

MARK HOLTZMAN: So do I. I wasn't even born then. Interestingly enough, with Clemson, as I've done a little bit of homework here, other than South Carolina and North Carolina, where do you think more students are from than any other region in the country?

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Well, it could be a trick question, so I'm going to go with it here. Hard to believe, though, but probably New York City.

MARK HOLTZMAN: I haven't done this enough to give you a trick question. Yes, it is the New York metropolitan area. Bottom line, we are getting a rare jewel here at Yankee Stadium. Two such legendary programs. I believe that there's going to be tremendous interest. Already sales are extremely brisk. There's tremendous amount of interest both locally and nationally.

This is, believe it or not, going to be the 15th Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl at Yankee Stadium. It's the 11th year with the ACC and the Big Ten, and it's getting better than ever and bigger than ever, and the game is really becoming respected as one of the -- after the CFP games, we're now a player in some of the major bowls as we continue to move up the spectrum of bowls.

I also want to at this time thank a number of people who have made this game possible or it wouldn't happen, because as you know, when we first went into this, there were a lot of people saying that you couldn't do a bowl

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Such a seminal moment for the game, it is Penn State and Clemson, two schools steeped in rich tradition here. You have Penn State at the Big Ten and Clemson out of the ACC. How excited are you to have these two storied programs involved in the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl?

MARK HOLTZMAN: Thanks, Justin. It's truly a dream matchup for us. Arguably the best matchup we've ever had for the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl up to this point.

This year's Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl truly is a for all college football fans across the country with this game between two such legendary football institutions and powerhouses. Meeting for only, believe it or not, the second time in their storied history in over 100 years. Both schools started football before 1900, and this game, of course, is on ABC TV, so it's going to be nationally televised. Very special. Very special.

As I said, Clemson and Penn State, two of the most storied programs in college football history, and they're going to be here at Yankee Stadium. Between the two of them, a combined 269 seasons of playing college football, dating back to the 1890s.

In the last 50 years, five national titles between the two of them. Almost every year both of them are ranked in the preseason top-10 and end up at the end of the year in the top 10, yet, they have played each other only once in 130 years in the 1988 Citrus Bowl where a freshman receiver by the name of Terry Smith was on Penn State.



game at this time of year in the New York metropolitan area. It's too cold. People aren't going to be there. You're not going to get enough support.

There hadn't been a bowl game for a long time, but there were certain people who felt it would work. Right up at the top Hal Steinbrenner and the Steinbrenner family. They believed in this game and believed that college football would have a place in the New York metropolitan area this time of year.

Then, of course, team president Randy Levine. This game was really his brainchild, and he had conviction right from the beginning that it would work. With his will power, we can accomplish almost anything. He was a major factor in driving this game to becoming a reality.

Then, of course, I have to thank our title sponsor, Bad Boy Mowers, their president, Pete Ballantyne, their VP of marketing Lindsey Keller. What a great partner. We couldn't be doing what we're doing without support from a great title sponsor, and we hope that we're going to be -- they're going to be with us for a long time.

Also, of course, ESPN, our good friend Burke Magnus and Kirk Dargis. They've been with this game right from the beginning. They believed in it. We couldn't have gotten to where we've gotten today without them believing in it and supporting it all these years, and we're very thankful to them.

Also, I can't forget the ACC, Commissioner Jim Phillips, who has always been there behind us, not only as Commissioner of the ACC, but before when he was an athletic director at Northwestern and his team played in the game.

And then, of course, the Big Ten, Tony Petitti and AJ Edds, they've been right there supporting this game as well.

Like I said, it takes a village to accomplish something like this, and everyone combined, has made this game successful.

Then, of course, I have to talk just for 30 seconds about the boss, George Steinbrenner. Every year that we have this game he is smiling, because this was his dream. For those of you that don't know, George was an assistant college coach at Purdue and at Northwestern before he went into business with his father in American shipbuilding.

He had such a passion for this sport. As a matter of fact, I was just sent a picture a few days ago with George as an assistant coach at Northwestern. Who was the assistant coach next to him? A guy by the name of Ara Parsegian.

Yes, he had a vision and made sure that when the new Yankees Stadium was built that the dimensions -- because a lot of baseball fields -- now, every baseball team wants to have football games now and copy us.

He made sure that the dimensions of the field would be proper so that we could have a football game in there, and we wouldn't have to put both teams on both sides, which happened in one baseball stadium that will go unnamed. He was really a driving force behind this.

Every year we have this, I know he's up there smiling on us that we're having college football at Yankee Stadium.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Again, we'll be kicking off at noon in the Bronx Saturday, December 27th on ABC. It will be Clemson and Penn State. Now we're going to welcome in a couple of representatives from Clemson University. Leading it off will be their Director of Athletics, Graham Neff.

Graham, great to see you here. Welcome to the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl. I want to know, what was your initial reaction when you realized that a bowl game in New York City could be on the docket for your school.

GRAHAM NEFF: Well, thank you, Justin. It's great to see everybody, and certainly couldn't be more pleased and excited for Clemson University to participate in the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl. To your question, certainly as this was tracking and we began to connect some dots and look at the possibility over the past few three weeks, became really excited.

I'm actually coming to you here this morning from Manhattan overlooking Times Square right here. Mark referenced some of the notes from Clemson, and New York and the northeast corridor is a significant strategic area for Clemson University.

We play a basketball game here tonight in the Garden, the Jimmy V Classic. Much of our advanced team, as I'm sure Penn State's team is up here to prepare the logistics for the team, or for the game.

So many current students, alums, parents, business partners, populate here, and we're proud to wave the flag of Clemson University as a land grant state of South Carolina institution, but as we continue to extend our brand, that certainly is very intentional around New York.

So the opportunity to have the Clemson Football Tigers up here on December 27th is incredibly exciting. To Mark and his staff, an incredible first-class operation. Couldn't be more excited for Coach Swinney to bring the Tigers up and



for us to have a great week as a football program and memorable experiences, but more importantly, as an institution.

For our followers, supporters, IPTA members, students, alums, it's truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity as an institution, and we can't wait to activate throughout the whole month of December and beyond.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Thanks so much. Spend a lot of time in December here in New York City between Tigers Basketball and Football coming up at the end of the month.

Now we're going to say hello to the head coach of the Clemson Tigers. It is Dabo Swinney making his 18th consecutive appearance in a bowl game as the head coach of the Tigers. Dabo, I heard you campaigned pretty hard once you knew that the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl could be a possibility.

Along those lines, I hear you're a pretty big fan of Frank Sinatra, right?

DABO SWINNEY: Yes, yes, for sure. This is a bowl that I have always kept my eye on. I mean, what a unique opportunity to be able to play a football game in Yankee Stadium. This is an opportunity that we have not had in my tenure as the head coach, and so just really excited about taking our team.

I know we'll have a lot of kids on the team that have never been to New York, so for them to have an opportunity to not only go to an iconic city, but to play in a historic stadium and with so much tradition and also to bring Tiger Football up there where we have a huge alumni base, just really excited about it.

And then the fact that you get to play a national power like Penn State is a really special opportunity.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Dabo, we're excited to have you come here to New York City for the Pinstripe Bowl experience in late December. Nothing like it. I'm sure it's going to be a treat for you and your program.

Saturday, December 27th at Yankee Stadium, Penn State and Clemson will kick off live on ABC. Justin Shackil in studio along with the director of the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl, Mark Holtzman. We heard from Dabo Swinney and athletic director Graham Neff of Clemson.

Now we'll introduce to you a couple of representatives from Penn State. Again, this is Penn State's second appearance in the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl. They made their first trip memorable back in 2014 with a

one-point win over Boston College in overtime in the Bronx.

We say good morning to Penn State Athletic Director Dr. Patrick Kraft. Dr. Kraft, thanks so much for joining us. Great to see you.

What was the overall excitement like knowing that Penn State would be playing in a bowl game so close to home?

PATRICK KRAFT: Yeah, Mark and Justin, first, great to see you guys. We were excited. I mean, postseason is postseason. You never take bowl games for granted, and it was a great -- our fan base, the team, and coaches are really excited to get back to New York.

Our friends from Clemson may not get to do it very often, but New York and the holidays is pretty special, so we are very grateful. It's a car ride or a train ride to Manhattan, so we're really excited.

I want to thank the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl folks and the Yankees, the Steinbrenner family, Randy Levine. Mark, I appreciate you and your staff. And by the way, I love that story. I did not know that about the Boss, which is really cool. I didn't know he was an assistant coach at Purdue and Northwestern, so Big Ten roots there, which we appreciate.

Playing in Yankee Stadium, it's one of the most iconic buildings in the world. I'm excited for our guys to have the opportunity to play there and for our fans to come. We know from past experience how well you all treat the student-athletes, the coaches, and the fans in this game, so it's a great opportunity. I feel very blessed to have it.

I also want to say it's fun when you get to do these things with friends. Graham Neff, Graham, my man, is a dear friend, a great colleague. Coach Swinney I believe is one of the best to ever do it, and it is a great honor for Penn State to play Clemson and to be able to be on the field with a program, which I take great pride in doing that, but being able to play them and what they've built is something that we all look at and strive for.

It's a great honor. We're excited. Happy to get there, get to play ball again, and have all the families and the fans together. It's going to be a special, special day.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Dr. Kraft, thanks so much. Look forward to talking to you more along the way.

We're now going to welcome in the Interim Head Coach of Penn State, that is Terry Smith. Terry, Dr. Kraft was talking about what an honor it was just participating in this



game. I wonder, as a head coach of the team that you played for, what type of honor is it to guide this program to a bowl game?

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, I'm super excited about the opportunity. Obviously a return trip for myself to the Pinstripe Bowl. I was a part of the 2014 game. It was a memorable moment for us as Penn State.

Super thankful that I have the opportunity to represent my university that I played for. I was uniquely a part of the first time we played against Clemson back in the Citrus Bowl of January 1988. We've only played them two times, and I'm like the common denominator to playing them.

Just looking forward to getting to meet Coach Swinney. I have so much respect for him and his program that he's run. He does it the right way. You know, we're in such a volatile time in our game of how to conduct business, and he's one of the ones that has set the standard of how to do it and get it done. So much respect there.

Just excited, you know, for our fan base that we already are very strong in the northeast corridor and especially in New York City. Just looking forward to such a matchup against a historic team of Clemson's nature.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Thanks so much, Terry. Now, all four gentlemen that we heard from, the two schools, they are going to be conducting a Q&A in just a few moments.

But Mark, I want to get your thoughts on something here, because when I think of the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl and seeing teams in the past walk through the doors at Yankee Stadium participate in this game, the game is there, it's the centerpiece, but the backdrop is holiday season in New York City.

What type of experiences are lined up for these two schools leading into December 27th?

MARK HOLTZMAN: Well, it was very important to us to make this a week that these kids will never forget, the coaching staffs will never forget, all the alumni and the fans will never forget.

We want the kids who play in this game to be able to, when they have kids a few years from now when they get married, when they have kids and then their kids have kids, they can tell them about the time that they came to Yankee Stadium, played at Yankee Stadium, and all the stuff that they experienced. So we try and make it very special.

We're starting out this week Monday night, opening night. We're going to have the opening night at the Boathouse in

Central Park. What more of an iconic venue can you go to than the Boathouse in Central Park. That's going to be terrific.

Then we go from there. As always, we pay homage -- the whole world especially -- everyone who lives in New York and around the area was affected by what happened at 9/11, and we feel it's very important to take these kids to the 9/11 memorial and museum, and we will do that as well as we do every year.

We're also going to be ringing the bell at the Stock Exchange, which is one of the iconic moments of the week.

You have 150 to 200 million people around the world seeing the opening of the bell. It's televised globally, and we're going to have the head coaches, the athletic directors, and the team captains up there ringing the bell of the New York Stock Exchange.

What they're going to do also is right on the floor there, there are many Clemson and Penn State graduates and they're high-fiving them as they go up there to ring the bell. It's a very special moment.

Then we're going to take the traveling parties to Radio City one night to see the Rockettes. We're big on anniversaries. It's the 100th anniversary of the Rockettes. What could be more iconic to New York than Radio City and the Rockettes?

It's just a stone's throw walk from where the teams are staying at the hotel, so they won't get caught in traffic. They're going to go to Radio City. That's always very special, too.

What else is iconic to New York? The morning shows. NBC, CBS, ABC, they all have their morning shows. They emanate out of New York, and ABC has been kind enough to work with us, and we're going to be able to take some of the traveling party on to the set of Good Morning America to see it live and then meet the celebrities who host it afterwards.

So that will be very special.

Then, of course, there's always a very strong charitable component to what we do. We're very committed to that, and we'll always be. Clemson is going to be visiting the Memorial Sloan Kettering Kids Pediatric Center. We'll be taking Clemson players there. Penn State is going to be visiting the New York Red Cross. They'll be going there as well. We tie that in as well.

Of course, we have cooperation from other colleges for practice facilities. Once again, your alma mater comes into





play. Fordham is going to be one of the practice facilities, and the other is going to be Columbia University. We all work together to make this a very special week.

Then, of course, there will be some Broadway shows sprinkled in, which I'm sure some of the coaches will want to go to, and we'll try and help them with that as well. We're going to try and make this a very, very unique experience not only for the coaches, but their wives, their kids, and we're also going to be doing stuff on Christmas.

We're bringing in Santa Claus. You're going to have hot chocolate with Santa. We're trying to really hit all the high spots and make it a week that they'll never forget.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: It's all the holiday highlights that you get here in New York City, and that's what makes the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl so unique here in this college football bowl season.

Once again, the game will air on ABC, Saturday, December 27th. You can go to [PinstripeBowl.com](http://PinstripeBowl.com) to purchase tickets.

Two storied programs will meet in the Bronx, Saturday, December 27th at noon live on ABC. It will be Penn State and Clemson in the 2025 Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl. Time now to hand things over to Michael Margolis, the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl head of media relations for media Q&A. Michael, good morning.

MICHAEL MARGOLIS: Good morning. Thank you very much. Questions, please.

**Q. First question is for Terry. So Zane Durant became the first player to opt out last night. What would you say about Zane Durant's impact on this program? Do you have a gauge right now on how much of your first string is going to be available for the Pinstripe Bowl?**

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, Zane opted out. Zane has meant a lot to what we've done defensively here at Penn State. He anchored our defensive line. He's played tremendous football for us. We've gotten great value from Zane.

He chose to move on at this point. We're super happy and we're super proud of him. At this point he's the only one that has opted out. We're just looking forward to putting our best team forward and trying to get ready for this Clemson team that creates all kind of challenges for us.

**Q. This question is for both coaches. Your players, a lot of them, might have started the season with dreams of playing in playoff type bowl games, but this one**

**still, like you mentioned, has meaning to it. What's kind of your message going to be to your players heading into this game just as far as the opportunity that's still in front of them here?**

DABO SWINNEY: It's a great opportunity. I think any time you get a chance to represent Clemson, represent Penn State, it's a special opportunity, and to be able to do it on a stage like the Pinstripe Bowl presents for everyone, it's a unique experience.

So super thankful that we get to play again. There's a lot of people not getting to play, so thankful that we've earned the opportunity, especially from where we started our season. Certainly did not have the start that we wanted, but these guys have finished well, and they've earned the opportunity to be here. Just excited to be able to play one more time.

TERRY M. SMITH: I would echo those sentiments from Coach Swinney. We have the opportunity to play at a historic venue, Yankee Stadium. Like I said, I played there or we coached there prior once before. It's a great venue. It's a great opportunity for our guys.

Obviously our year hadn't gone the way we thought it would go from the beginning. We went through the coaching change, I took over midseason, and right now we're on a three-game winning streak just trying to piece together, trying to figure out how to win a fourth game in a row.

So it's a great opportunity between two great historic programs. Clemson University and Penn State University, a lot of history between the two.

For our guys we're super excited, and it's just a tremendous opportunity to try and end this season on a high note.

**Q. This one is for both Coach Dabo Swinney and Terry Smith. Both these teams ending the season on winning streaks and with a lot of change coming, be it the coaching staff or the senior class leaving. How important is it for both of you guys to win this game coming up late in December?**

DABO SWINNEY: Well, I mean, I think, again, any time you take the field, the goal is to win the game. That's why we practice and prepare.

This is a tough challenge. I mean, again, we've had a great finish winning our state championship, winning four in a row. Everybody wants to take momentum. One of our goals is to win the closer, so this is the closer. It just so



happens that we're playing in Yankee Stadium to do it.

I think any time you can finish your season with a win it's a great thing. The same for Penn State. A huge game, huge opportunity, and I know our team will be excited about it.

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, as ultimate competitors, the goal is always to win. We all know based on going into the offseason the momentum of a victory into your offseason helps your offseason workouts, your spring ball, and how you approach next season.

We're looking forward to trying to gain that momentum and continue the momentum of three-game winning streak. Like I said before, it's a tremendous opportunity for our guys, and they're looking forward to just enjoying our process of trying to get better and win one more game.

**Q. This is for Coach Smith. Why have you decided to stay at Penn State and be a part of Matt Campbell's first staff?**

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, my love for the university. I've expressed that time after time. I love the university. I've known Matt Campbell probably 15-plus years when I was a high school head coach at Gateway High School. Matt was at that time the head coach at Toledo, University of Toledo. He recruited my high school.

We went up there, had done some seven-on-seven camps there, and just had a relationship with him. I've known him. I know what he's about. At this point in my career I truly can only work for certain types of individuals, and we're aligned at the point of he's blue-collar, he creates toughness, discipline, and just the core values of what Penn State represents.

I felt like he was the right leadership at the time, and I wanted to stay a part of it. It's worked out for my family. Obviously I'm excited that Matt is welcoming me to his staff.

**Q. Coach Swinney, I heard you say that this will probably be the first trip to New York for some of your guys. I was wondering, when did you make your first trip to New York, and what was your initial reaction of seeing the skyscrapers, the traffic for the first time? This year, what off field activity are you looking forward to the most?**

DABO SWINNEY: Man, my first trip to New York City would have probably been -- I think I went up with my father-in-law for a Yankees game probably when I was about 30.

I mean, it was a long time, and I was overwhelmed. I had never seen anything like it. I was completely overwhelmed and it was an amazing experience.

As far as what I'm looking forward to as a part of this bowl game is I'm really looking forward to going to the 9/11 Memorial. The Stock Exchange, that will be a pretty cool experience. I've been several times. I've been to a few games at Yankee Stadium now, and I actually have in my office I have first base from Yankee Stadium from back in 2018.

I've been to a Knicks game. I've been to a Mets game. I love all the sporting events.

Probably some of my best memories from New York going up when they used to have the draft at Radio City every year. I've been there several times for that, and then I'm actually at the College Football Hall of Fame event that's going to happen tonight. This event used to be in New York every single year, so every December I would go up to New York for a couple of days.

A lot of good memories in the city, and we've actually recruited a few kids from up there.

**Q. Terry, now that we know this is your last game in that head coach position, can you kind of describe what this six-, seven-, eight-week stretch has meant to you in your career, and how did you feel like the locker room handled the developments this week? I know a lot of them were kind of championing for you to be the head coach. What was your message to make sure that they rallied behind the next guy in Matt Campbell?**

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, for me personally this has been the greatest seven weeks of my coaching career. The opportunity to represent my alma mater and sit at the very top of it to try to salvage a season that didn't start off the way we wanted; it was a tremendous opportunity for me.

The message that I just gave our guys was we want to keep the main thing the main thing, and that's play ball, right? You know, we used an analogy of going into the pencil sharpener. You know, you get a pencil, it's dull. You can't write with it. You go into the sharpener. You have to give some of yourself to be able to produce a result and to be able to write that pencil.

That's what we hung our hat on. The process of the sharpener was every day of practice, every day of sacrifice, every day of giving of ourselves to come together as a team. The guys in the locker room, they bought into it. There was accountability. We watched practice as a team, good and bad. We addressed it to the team, good

and bad. There was accountability into how we wanted to conduct our business. They appreciated it.

I can't be thankful enough of our guys, our leadership in the locker room. They allowed me to lead them. It turned out to be a better ending than what the season started out.

**Q. This is for Graham Neff, athletic director. Coach Swinney mentioned earlier that the season didn't start the way they wanted and we've seen in college, in today's world, that teams will let go of coaches. I'm just curious from your perspective, Graham, just what is your confidence in Coach Swinney to turn Clemson's program around just by having this kind of season?**

GRAHAM NEFF: Well, goodness, certainly with Coach and his 17 seasons at Clemson and historic moments and ten-win seasons, eight-win seasons is what we aspire to this year, national championships, and without question had continued in full confidence in his ability to lead us throughout the rest of this season, which we've shown, winning the state championship, and the winning streak here to the end leading to New York, let alone the excitement for the path ahead.

Couldn't be more excited to watch the '25 Tigers while certainly pointing ahead to the '26 Tigers and beyond. Coach Smith, hearing your analogy of the pencil sharpener, I can already hear that in a future Clemson team meeting too. That's really, really good.

Coach's ability, even as Pat said to start, just to connect with our players and to continue to lead and be an incredible leader and developer of men in college football going forward is unmatched and without question, and just an incredible fit here at Clemson.

That's been shown for two decades that Coach has been at Clemson, and I expect that to continue for many, many years ahead.

**Q. Terry, it sounds like a lot of activities. Have you guys formulated what your travel will be?**

TERRY M. SMITH: We are heading up to New York on December 27th.(sic) we will spend Christmas in New York, and we're excited about it. I do want to go see the Rockettes and all the monuments and enjoy New York during Christmas while getting ready to play the game.

**Q. So you are leaving on Christmas day?**

TERRY M. SMITH: December 22nd.

**Q. Dabo, we saw yesterday Avieon Terrell declared for the draft. First of all, with him do you know if he's going to play in the bowl game? How are your conversations going with the other junior that is have draft and bowl game decisions as well?**

DABO SWINNEY: Yeah, it's been good. We've had a little time to do that. We'll have our team meeting on Thursday, and that will be our first practice, and we'll see where everybody is. I'm sure we've got a couple of injury situations as well that we've got to deal with, but we'll get it all ready to go and head up to New York on the 22nd as well and get ready to play.

**Q. Terry, when you talk about the opt-outs, guys leaving early, coaching staff changes, what's going to be the key to get this to December 27th, to get it to the finish line with a team that can play against Clemson and represent this university well? What's that process going to be like?**

TERRY M. SMITH: The process is the same as anything. It's going to be the next man up. The standard is the result. We'll field a team that's going to be ready to compete. We have our work cut out for us to play against Clemson, but we're going to put a product out there on the field that's representative of Penn State.

We're going to play really hard and play really tough, and we're going to get after it. Then the result will be the result, but the next man up has to deliver the job.

**Q. Coach Swinney, I know there are times when you have a little downtime that you like to take Will and Drew and Clay off to see baseball games. You've seen games in Yankee Stadium. Is there one game or two games there in that stadium that kind of stands out that you made a memory with your boys? What's it going to be like for you to stand on the sidelines maybe with maybe Monument Alley behind you actually coaching in a game on that field?**

DABO SWINNEY: Yeah, it's really amazing. I was a baseball kid growing up and coached my kids playing baseball. I'm friends with Joe Madden. And when he was the manager of the Angels, they were playing in Boston. So went to Fenway Park and he got us tickets and we kind of sat right there by -- and they actually won the game versus the Red Sox. The game is over, he brought me on the field to do the high-five line with all the players. Ohtani was on that team and I guess Mike Trout.

Anyway, the game is over, and he says, Hey, I want you to come into the locker room here and give the post game speech. Next thing I know I'm in the locker room at



Fenway Park giving the postgame talk to the Angels.

Then I got to throw out the first pitch at Wrigley Field. That was one of the coolest moments that I've ever been a part of.

Now I get to coach a game at Yankee Stadium. That is some kind of trifecta from a kid from Pelham, Alabama that grew up playing shortstop for the Panthers.

Super proud of it.

But I mentioned it earlier, it was on Memorial Day in 2018 we had gone up for a weekend in New York and to catch a Yankees game. Got a chance to be on the field with Joe, who was the manager then, and meet a lot of the players, et cetera. Every two innings they picked the bases up and they put new bases down for some reason.

The guy walks over to me. I'm sitting right there, and he says, Coach, do you want the base? I'm, like, Yeah.

I literally walked out of Yankee Stadium back to our hotel with first base, the whole way. I got a lot of looks, but that was probably my greatest memory. You just feel the history when you approach the stadium. You feel the history.

Just touring around and seeing all the -- you know, they have a museum there at the stadium as well, and just going through and checking all that out was awesome. Jonny Mosley, who is a friend who works with the Yankees, he hosted us. It was an amazing experience.

**Q. Terry, will Ty Howle be part of your coaching staff for the bowl game? How have you gotten to know him over the past eight weeks differently than the past -- the years that you've been together?**

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, Ty Howle is a Penn State Letterman, tremendous asset to the program. We are working through dynamics right now with staff changes. As of now he'll be with us, but just working through that. To be honest, I'm not quite sure.

He's a tremendous asset. You know, he's recruited unbelievable tight ends. He's an unbelievable coach. He's done a tremendous job for us and he has a big part in the success that we've had here the past seven, eight years. As a Penn State letterman, I couldn't be more proud of him, and just happy for all of his opportunities and just what he's brought to Penn State.

**Q. Dabo, Saturday in Charlotte was a little bit of a different experience for you in the ACC Championship,**

**taking a little bit of that TV debut. What was that like? Is that maybe something that down the road you're like, hey, this could be an opportunity after coaching?**

DABO SWINNEY: I have no idea. That would be for somebody else to determine, but I enjoyed it. It was fun. Got a chance to see Tony and obviously know a lot of the people with the network and coached Eric. It was weird not being in the game -- being there but not being in the game. That was kind of different, but I enjoyed it.

**Q. Terry, Matt Campbell said yesterday that he was going to begin the process this week of sitting down with players and talking about their futures with them. What will be your role in that, and how have you handled this situation in trying to pitch guys on Penn State throughout this?**

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, I met with Matt and his staff that has already come to Penn State last night. We went through the entire roster. We discussed the entire staff and auxiliary staff.

Ultimately, he has to make decisions, but I informed him of basically the personnel in the building just to enlighten him so he knows who each person is when he sits in front of them and talks with those guys.

He's in the process starting today of meeting with all the staff. Then in the next few days he's going to meet with each individual on the team. Then from there he'll start to make some decisions.

**Q. Coach Swinney, you mentioned earlier that a lot of your players haven't been up this north from South Carolina. What was the reaction between players, coaches, even family members that you guys would be heading up to New York to play in the Pinstripe Bowl?**

DABO SWINNEY: They're excited. They're excited about it. Like I said, it will be a unique experience to have Christmas in New York City. Our guys are in finals right now. We'll have our first team meeting on Thursday. That will be the first time I get a chance to get in front of the whole team since this was announced.

I know we'll have an eager group. Again, I've always enjoyed postseason and the experiences that come with it. I've been all over the country in bowl games with this game, but I've never had an opportunity to have a postseason game in New York City. It's unique for me, and I'm really excited about it, and I know our players will be as well.

**Q. Coach Swinney, now that you've had a few days to**

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
**sports**



**focus on Penn State, what's your impression of the way they perform, particularly the last month of the season and the job that Terry has done?**

DABO SWINNEY: Well, first of all, I've got great respect for anybody who gets put in an interim situation. I've been there, done that. That is an incredibly difficult task to all of a sudden you're thrust into a completely different role and to have to kind of redefine roles and responsibilities. You wear a lot of different hats. That is not easy. Especially at a place like Penn State where there's a lot of people who care and are paying attention to everything that you do.

I just think he's done an amazing job. And then they've had injuries, but settling them down and finding a way to finish the season just like we have: disappointing start; both had high expectations.

But football is football. Football is hard and it doesn't always go your way, but most of the time it gets worse when things go bad.

What you've seen at Penn State is you've seen the character of their program, the character of their players, because they've continued to battle. Honestly, there's a couple of other games they could have won. They've competed, and they battled. I think that's a great reflection of who Coach Smith is and the job that he's done.

I think that it's just, again, a great opportunity for both teams to go compete to try to finish your season with a win. Excited about it.

**Q. Question for both Pat and Terry. Obviously there was a lot of public vocal support for Terry to be the next head coach permanently for Penn State. How did both of you navigate the final stretch here when it became apparent that Matt was going to be the choice? Not just for you guys all getting on the same page, but making sure the locker room understood why you went this direction and that the locker room understood the value that you still see in Terry and that Terry still sees in being a Penn State coach?**

PATRICK KRAFT: Yeah, Terry and I had communications throughout. There was a reason why I knew that Terry was the right person to get us through this because of everything he represents, who he is as a man, I think all of that is why I think we're in the position we're in right now.

Terry's leadership, his ability to hold the locker room together, his ability to be very honest and transparent with the players. So all of that really helped us get to where we are today in a really, really good spot.

It was, like I said yesterday, a no-brainer to have Terry here, and Terry and I had an open and honest conversation. I think we're positioned extremely well for the future. To have Terry's partnership with Matt in that building and knowing what he knows about Penn State and knows what he knows about these guys and what it takes to win here.

So I feel very blessed to be in the situation we're in. I'm very grateful for what Terry was able to do. I'm excited to have Terry lead us into this bowl game too. That's a crazy stat that Terry played in the last Clemson game, so that's good.

Although Terry, I don't know, did Joe throw the ball to you? He probably didn't. You were blocking. You probably blocked the whole game.

TERRY M. SMITH: Yeah, I actually red-shirted that year, so I was just a guy on the sideline at that point (laughing).

No, but I echo what Pat said. He just continued to have open communication. I wasn't aware of who the choice was going to be until it was the choice, but it was communicated that we were getting close to someone.

He called me in and we had direct conversation. It was full transparency. I felt really, really good with the selection, the choice. I felt really, really good with how I was approached about it. It was the way I was able to move forward staying at Penn State, because of the communication, the forwardness, the direct communication, and we were all on the same page.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: Thank you, gentlemen, for your time this morning. The game will air on ABC, Saturday, December 27th. It's Penn State and Clemson at Yankee Stadium. Stick around.

It will be Clemson and Penn State battling on the gridiron in the Bronx Saturday, December 27th at 12 noon. Justin Shackil and Mark Holtzman with you. We heard from both schools. As we continue to our countdown to December 27th and wrap it up here for the Bad Boy Mowers Pinstripe Bowl press conference, Mark, your final thoughts.

MARK HOLTZMAN: To say the least, we're thrilled that these two great institutions are playing in our game. Literally over the last week about 12 games had to go the right way for this to happen, because the draft process is pretty complicated.

We knew about Penn State a little earlier in the week, so we were good there. Clemson literally came down to two days ago the last few seconds in the draft, because all



bowls wanted Clemson, and I kept thinking of Dabo singing "New York, New York" and that got me through it.

Wouldn't you know it, we were able to get Clemson as well.

On behalf of everyone in our organization, we are absolutely thrilled and looking forward to a great game.

JUSTIN SHACKIL: We love it. The rich history of Penn State and Clemson will clash in the Bronx.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports