

Starco Brands LA Bowl

Hosted By Gronk:

Boise State vs UCLA

Saturday, December 16, 2023

Los Angeles, California, USA

SoFi Stadium

Boise State Broncos
Coach Spencer Danielson
Andrew Simpson
George Holani
Press Conference

UCLA - 35, Boise State - 22

Q. Coach, you got off to a nice start, had a lead at the half. What happened?

COACH DANIELSON: Didn't execute. Take full responsibility for it as a team. Defensively we didn't execute. Offensively we couldn't sustain drives. And then we gave up some big plays defensively, lost some of the momentum. Work to find ways to get it back and didn't so I take full responsibility for the whole team.

Gotta be better in the second half. When you're going into the half with a lead and we're getting the ball we gotta be better. We'll learn a lot from it, look at the film and be better in the future for it.

Q. Have to get right back to recruiting all that. You talk about family and just that whole environment, what you've built. When you get back to busy, Idaho has the only In-N-Out (indiscernible) possible, and now NIL deals are kind of going up. Is that something you're going to try to get for J.T. and the whole line next year?

COACH DANIELSON: For the whole team and for the coaches, no question. There was an eight-hour wait in Boise to go to In-N-Out. So we've got to find a way just to even -- get the NIL deals just to skip the line it would be worth it.

We're going to keep it -- I told the players -- my number one goal is to continue to make Boise State a place where



players come, they stay, they're developed, they play in the NFL. They have what God has for them after. And they're world changes. And that will not change as my number one goal from the second I took this job going forward. And I believe it will be that.

Q. George, you have one of the probably best games ever in your career last game ever on your birthday, what is that feeling especially being back in LA?

GEORGE HOLANI: It's a blessing. It's all glory to God. Without him nothing is possible. But shout-out to the O line. The tight ends, the receivers, every play, they're dominant up front in the run game. And they were able to be consistent like that throughout the game.

So, I mean, there's definitely a lot more work and definitely could be better for sure.

Q. Coach, you talked about that second half. How much -- I know you haven't looked at film yet -- but how much was human nature, being up 16-7? How much was it their defense? And secondarily if you can talk about how Ethan Garbers came in in that situation?

COACH DANIELSON: Obviously, holistically, the beautiful part about football is it's not subjective. We watch the film it's going to be very clear what happened and what we didn't execute. If it's a call, offense or defense, if it's a missed tackle, missed play. We'll look at the film and find out why.

As a coach it's my job to make sure we execute and play well we didn't it's 100 percent on me and I'm excited to look at it and find ways to grow moving forward.

And we have a great group of seniors, this was their last game wearing blue and orange. That's what breaks my heart as a competitor. Our goal at Boise State is to win the Mountain West Conference championship and a bowl game. We brought the championship back to Boise -- very proud of that, but we didn't finish the end of that goal.

As a coach how can we make sure we do that in the future.



We've also got a young team. And we'll look at ways to continue to develop our team. And we'll be better in the future for it. In regards to the second half. There's going to be a lot of things we look at the film to see what we have to do better, as I say, holistically, to make sure we execute. We don't give up the big plays on defense, we move the chains on offense.

At the end of the day football is a simple game. We have to make sure as coaches we put them in the right spot, players will execute better moving in the future.

Q. How much did you expect Schlee to be the starter and how much did things exchange schematically going from Schlee and Garbers? And, George, you guys got three field goals in the first half and were up 16-7, but how deflating was it not to be able to convert touchdowns and just settle for field goals?

COACH DANIELSON: Obviously, with the bowl game and a bowl game -- we played our championship game two weeks ago -- there's moving parts on both sides in terms of the roster. We watched the game film we had and who was going to be starting quarterback, who wasn't.

We felt good going into the game if either one was the starter we had a plan. Obviously looking at it we gotta do a better in a lot of different situations, which is on us a coaching staff, on me.

But we had a plan going into the game if No. 9 or No. 4 were playing. Garbers did a great job when he came in, some throws key throws, had some key runs. And we have to put them in better spots.

Q. Three of those drives you got in the red zone, ended in field goals. How badly did you want those to turn into touchdowns and how did that kind of change the game?

COACH DANIELSON: Absolutely. Football, how you execute in the red zone is everything. Not field goals, scoring touchdowns. Defensively, it's all about holding an offense to 3 or nothing. We talk about it defensively.

As an offense, did a great job moving the ball into the red zone. We have to find ways to capitalize and put that ball in the end zone. We had multiple opportunities to. We just didn't get it done.

Obviously the difference between nine points and 21 points is going to be a big part in the game.

On the flipside, their offense did a very good job when they got in the red zone, capitalizing on a couple third downs

and turning those into touchdowns. We'll look at it holistically as a staff to make sure we find better ways so if we do create plays where the offense gets in the red zone, we hold them 3 or nothing. And then offensively making sure we turn them into touchdowns.

Q. Andrew, 336 yards they had in the second half. Once Garbers came in how did that kind of change the game?

ANDREW SIMPSON: He was just making good throws. We have to do our job every play, and we had a good plan going in, but at the end day we have to make tackles and play as a team, and those plays wouldn't go the way they did if we do that.

Q. CJ was in a tough spot today. What did you see from him and the inability to get the ball moving down the field in the passing game? In the second half how did that make things tougher in the offense?

COACH DANIELSON: Proud of CJ. It was a tough situations to step into. He didn't blink, didn't hesitate. The down side in the second half he was in situations where they knew he had to throw the ball. Third-and-12 is not ideal for any quarterback, I don't care who you are, but especially a true freshman making his first start.

We've got to be more efficient on first and second down, put him in better spots. And he'll grow from this experience and he'll be better for it.

Q. Him aside, do you need to add to that position to the portal before the next season?

COACH DANIELSON: We're looking across the board. My number one goal is taking care of our players. We've got a young team. We've got a great team, great kids, great young men that are going to be world changers. We're going to keep them in Boise, Idaho.

Then we're going to look at the our where to see where are positions that we need to find guys that are not here that fit this place, fit what we're about, and we'll look at it holistically that way.

Q. You had many ups and downs this season. What's your favorite part of the journey and also going forward?

COACH DANIELSON: Definitely my favorite part of the journey is just with these young men. They impact my life every day -- Andrew, George, just to name two. They changed my life. And they impact me. Seeing them come to work every day, seeing them go through the downs

where everybody counted us out, they didn't blink. They linked arms and said let's do this together.

Found a way to win a championship, when it was a .01 percent chance of it happening. That's my favorite moment is these kids impacting me. They changed my life. I'm blessed to be around them. Every moment I'm around them on and off the field is the highlight for me.

Q. George, can you talk about the long touchdown run, but also just the first half, maybe how frustrating it was, field goals instead of touchdowns?

GEORGE HOLANI: Yes, in the first half, we kicked a couple of field goals and we definitely could have executed better on offense, just to score those extra points.

Coming out the second half, obviously, we had, what, back-to-back three-and-out drives. And that's not it as an offense. We need to get those going, especially when we have the momentum.

And then in the run game we've just got to keep, as a running back, just keep trusting it, keep trusting it's going to pop. It's going to be dirty runs all game. But when you get that advantage in the fourth quarter -- and shout-out to O line again, blocking up front -- that crease hit inside. And I was out of there. I just tried not to get (indiscernible), tried to get the speed up there for sure.

Q. George and Andrew, I'm curious, this last month has been one of the wildest months really in program history probably. What will your takeaway be from it, George? And Andrew, what your takeaway is?

GEORGE HOLANI: You know how strong the team is, the perseverance of them. Continue to stay bought in, especially with Coach D. He's the real deal and he cares truly about us. And everybody loves him. So shout-out to Coach D.

But I would say having guys continue to come in day in and day out. And even when things weren't going good for us, just basically embracing the suck and taking it one day at a time.

And obviously we made it to the championship and no one can take that away from us. But we will be better.

Q. George probably played his last game as a Bronco today. What was it like to see him break that 66-yard touchdown run? What does that do for his legacy moving forward?

COACH DANIELSON: George's legacy has been

imprinted for a long time. It didn't just happen today. And what he does off the field, how he leads, how he trains, how he's one of the humblest young men I've ever been around and has all the stats to back up to someone who humility is not common.

To see him come out potentially the last day playing here in the blue and orange to make that run was awesome to see him do. I've seen him do it so many different times.

But his legacy is way more than just that run, way more than what he does on the football field. His legacy resonates with every single person in that locker room, every single coach in that locker room.

George Holani has changed my life. I tell him I owe him the rest of my life because how he impacted him. Seeing him break that long run was awesome. I've seen him break a ton of runs in his career. But his legacy resonates way more than just on the football field.

Q. How do you want this team to be remembered? How are you going to remember this team with everything you overcame this year? And with it being such a young roster and so much potential talent returning how exciting is the future of this program as well?

COACH DANIELSON: I'm excited. I believe God is up to something big at Boise State. And I believe the best is still to come. It is a legacy that this group of seniors imprinted. When everybody counted them out -- like I said, the 4-5 Broncos was going to be an asterisk year, a year everybody looks and frowns upon -- this senior class, these brothers we have linked arm and said not happening.

So being able to flip the switch, win a championship is not only going to propel us in the future on the field but that's something that no one can take from them in life. When everybody counts you out and says you can't do something, when you put your head down, work, do it with a smile on your face, love the people you're around, success is waiting for you.

It doesn't mean you win every football game. It breaks my heart we lost today. I'll learn from it. You learn two ways, pain or wisdom. Today we learned from pain. We'll learn from it, grow from it going forward and it will help us be better in all facets.

But I'll remember a team as team counted out and just kept swinging, and didn't look for anybody to give them approval, just kept swinging. And when you do that consistently, you are going to find success.

We found a championship this year. No one can take that from the senior crew. But their legacy resonates with me how you're never out of the fight. And I think that is something that even if these seniors never play football again, they can grab onto that in life, and I believe it's going to be a huge propelling force for the rest of our team going forward on and off the football field.

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