

Capital One Orange Bowl

Monday, August 15, 2022

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

Eric Poms

Bill Hancock

Daniella Levine Cava

Jose "Pepe" Diaz

Jack Seiler

Oliver Gilbert

Tom Garfinkel

Frank Gonzalez

Press Conference



The celebration, while great, was tempered by the impacts of COVID-19. But it was an outstanding experience for our community and the student-athletes who participated in the game nonetheless.

At this time I'd like to invite up Bill Hancock, executive director of the College Football Playoff to the podium to share some exciting College Football Playoff news. Bill.

(Applause)

BILL HANCOCK: Hi, everybody. Did you catch that Eric almost introduced me as the executive director of the Orange Bowl Committee? Let us start no rumors.

(Laughter)

I'm here with a very happy task. I'll just get right to it -- to announce that the 2026 CFP National Championship Game will be played right here at Hard Rock Stadium.

(Applause)

Q. We are so honored that you allow us to be part of the South Florida community. We did have a terrific event in 2021. Maybe no greater tribute to the cities, the stadium and all of you, that we did have such a spectacular event even though we were dealing with COVID.

It was remarkable. We decided it is deserving, national championship in a beautiful facility. And those players got to be champions, and they got to be champions, to a large extent, based on what your community did to host them.

So congratulations again on this honor. It's not only a great day for South Florida, but it's a great day for college football.

Why did the CFP come back? Because you have every attribute to put on a successful event. You have this incredible stadium. Which way is it? I got turned around. Where should I point? You have all this incredible stuff all around, just remarkable world-class facilities.

ERIC POMS: Good afternoon. My name is Eric Poms. I'm the CEO of the Orange Bowl Committee. And joining me here today as part of our program will be Bill Hancock, executive director of the College Football Playoff; Jack Seiler, the immediate past president and chair of the Orange Bowl Committee; Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava; chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz of the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners; vice chairman Oliver Gilbert, Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners; Tom Garfinkel, vice chairman, president, chief executive officer of the Miami Dolphins and Hard Rock Stadium; and Frank Gonzalez, president and chair of the Orange Bowl Committee.

Our community is incredibly grateful for the longstanding relationship we share with the College Football Playoff. We were honored to host our third playoff semifinal at the Capital One Orange Bowl here at Hard Rock Stadium this past December featuring outstanding matchup between the University of Michigan Wolverines and the eventual national champions, the University of Georgia.

The Orange Bowl Committee is also proud to be part of a community-wide effort, alongside our partners at the Miami Dolphins and Hard Rock Stadium, Miami-Dade County and our government partners to have hosted the 2021 College Football Playoff National Championship Game in January of that year.



Your air service -- we look at basic things. We look at stadium, air service, lodging and perhaps, more importantly, the quality of the people who, as a village, manage the event on our behalf. And you do it so right in every single way.

I remember when I was a child growing up in Oklahoma, and just seeing the Orange Bowl game happen on our television, black-and-white television, and just thinking, this is magic.

And I remember thinking, I was about 10 years old, I thought, I will never get to go to the Orange Bowl game, much less be a part of it. And now here I am, and you have brought me into your community.

There's so many people to thank. If I start doing it, I'll goof up and leave somebody out. But I want to start with the executive director of the College Football Playoff, Eric Poms. Oh, wait.

(Laughter)

(Applause)

Orange Bowl staff, Orange Bowl Committee, phenomenal. The stadium, Tom you and your staff, Myles -- I saw Myles before -- just you run such a great ship. And it's a remarkable place. We were talking before about if you had brought somebody who was here, like, 15 years ago and brought them to the stadium today, they wouldn't know where they were.

I felt that way about flying into Laguardia not long ago, when I thought, I'm at the wrong airport. If you brought me into this stadium and I hadn't been here in 15 years, I would have said, wrong place. This is not the stadium that I know.

The grounds are so gorgeous. And of course the facility itself is beautiful. Truly a world-class facility, as we all know, and truly a deserving facility to host the College Football Playoff.

Cities, county, just phenomenal support that we've had from all of you through the years and phenomenal support as we went through the bid process.

Let me tell you a little bit about the process. We started talking to Eric -- well, Eric started talking to me the day after the game, in 2021, and suggesting that we might come back some day.

And we worked through the process. We engaged with other cities. We got to last fall. We thought we were going

to be at the finish line last fall. And it turned out we weren't because we needed to figure out what was going to happen with expansion of the CFP.

So when our board decided, in February, not to expand in this current 12-year contract, one of our first calls was to Eric, to say, hey, you still interested? And it took Eric about 4 seconds to say, yes, we are.

And we worked through that -- this happened in February. So we worked through the winter, spring, summer, and a lot of work went into this project.

The contracts are all signed, sealed and delivered. We have dotted our I's and crossed our T's and the last element is adding what's here today to the soup. The soup is you folks. And we cannot thank you enough.

So, it's our pleasure. And I think we have a little video just to get us all excited about coming back to Miami and college football. So where is the producer?

(Video)

(Applause)

ERIC POMES: Thanks so much, Bill. We really appreciate that. We're thrilled it's coming back to Hard Rock Stadium, the 2026 CFP National Championship. At this time I'd like to invite Jack Seiler, the immediate past president and chair of the Orange Bowl Committee. And I'm proud to announce here today the chair of our 2026 host committee to the podium. Jack.

(Applause)

JACK SEILER: I'll tell you what, it was kind of cool watching that video, wasn't it? Getting ready for football season? All I can say is thank God the Dolphins played the other night so we can get back in the mood for football. This is fantastic.

But first of all, thank you, Eric, and thank you for your leadership and the Orange Bowl, or at the College Football Playoff, whatever it is. And, Bill, thank you, and more importantly, your leadership has been amazing but your friendship, your partnership with us at the Orange Bowl has meant so much through the years. And your steady hand has gotten the College Football Playoff where it is today. Thank you so much for that.

This announcement is the result of many years of hard work. We went through the COVID-19 pandemic. We hosted an amazing effort during that pandemic. But I'd be remiss if I didn't start with recognizing a gentleman I was



sitting in front of today, but truthfully we're all standing on his shoulders because of the 2021 effort, Judge Michael Chavies. Judge, thank you.

(Applause)

Secondly, there were a lot of people in the room involved with that 2021 effort. Judge Chavies led it, but we know that so many people stepped up, worked so hard to really pull off what was at one time almost deemed impossible. And all the people who served on that host committee, thank you so much for your efforts. And thank you for those who have joined us again in 2026. It's going to be spectacular.

While we were honored and grateful to be able to host this event, we knew we would want to bring the full championship experience back. Mayor, we talked about that at the game. We talked about that after the game. This is about a full championship experience for our community. Not just here on the field. Not just here at the stadium.

And, by the way, Bill, you could have pointed any direction with the stuff that Stephen Ross and Tom Garfinkel have done at this stadium. You could have pointed any way because we've got racetracks and tennis courts and gondolas. This is the most spectacular entertainment facility anywhere in the country. So, Tom, thank you for that leadership. It's awesome.

But as we look at what we did here last time, we realize we the impact, the tourism impact. We want the full impact of the national media, the international media. All that exposure with the hotels. We're delighted to get the opportunity to host that in 2026.

We want to take a second, though. This is a real community partnership. The main thing I'm going to be doing up here today is just thanking a few people and running through and making sure we recognize all the people that are so important to this effort and have been so involved in order to bring this back to South Florida.

I want to start with the Orange Bowl Committee. This Orange Bowl Committee backed the '21 bid. As you heard Eric mentioned we've had 22 national championships that we've been involved with at the Orange Bowl. We're delighted to be involved in this to back this bid. This is our second national championship with the CFP. For those Orange Bowl Committee member who are here, please stand, so we can thank you. We appreciate it.

(Applause)

You'll hear from Frank Gonzalez a little later. I won't single him out for recognition. But I know he's got some words to share. And then I'll tell you something, as we often talk about in this day and age, leadership means something. Leadership's important. Leadership is what gets things done, what makes communities great, which elevate communities.

And Miami-Dade is blessed to have great leaders and great community builders. And it starts at the top with their mayor, Mayor Levin Cava. Thank you so much for your efforts, from the day --

(Applause)

Somebody mentioned it, from the day the game ended, but you actually started during the game. And we absolutely love your leadership on this, and it's fantastic.

Also, the gentleman that I've had a chance to work with so many times through the years, different sports events, different activities, and he is a passionate fan of both college sports, high school sports, pro sports. And that's Miami-Dade chair Pepe Diaz. Pepe, thank you so much for your leadership.

(Applause)

And then the guy wearing the best looking pants in the house here, an old friend of mine from the days in the Florida legislature, but obviously former Miami Gardens mayor and also vice chair of the county commissioner, Oliver Gilbert. Oliver, thank you.

(Applause)

And then we've got, I know, county commissioner Kionne McGhee. Kionne McGhee, I thought -- I thought I saw. And we've also got some county commissioner members and staff. We want to thank you all for your long-time support and your partnership in this effort.

I mentioned it briefly, but the Miami Dolphins and Hard Rock Stadium and especially Stephen Ross and Tom Garfinkel, think about what they have done with the evolution of this stadium, the evolution of this property. Steve, Tom, Myles Pistorius, Todd Boyan and Nat Moore and everyone on their outstanding team have just elevated this property to be the premier property in the country.

And having this world stadium as a venue, I think, put us over the top. So, Tom, please thank Steve. Thank you to your whole team. We really appreciate it.

(Applause)



And the gentleman that had the best advertising in the room when I walked in, but his team from Hard Rock Entertainment, but he's the chief operating officer of Seminole Hard Rock, and with him he has Jim Korona, his senior vice president, and Gordon Sipple. Where is Dave Hardemeyer (phonetic). There's Dave. Thank you.

(Applause)

What a great partnership this has been for Hard Rock Stadium and for Hard Rock.

And then we want to just thank a few mayors that stepped up helped out. We've got Broward County Mayor Michael Udine and County Administrator Monica Cepero, Palm Beach County Mayor Robert Weinroth and County Administrator Verdenia Baker, City of Miami Gardens Mayor Rodney Harris and City Manager Cameron Benson -- is Rodney here? Absolutely, Rodney, thank you.

(Applause)

I think it's a good time to be in office at Miami Gardens. It's exciting.

City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and City Manager Art Noreiga, who aren't here, but representing them is City Commissioner Manolo Reyes. Manolo, please rise. Thank you.

(Applause)

But also Manolo is helping us two ways, the head of the DDA. And your leadership there also assisted us with this effort. And then city of Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber and City Manager Alina Hudak, two of them that we met with right away said, what do you need, how can we help. Just great leadership coming from all those cities in the county.

We also want to thank Governor Ron DeSantis, who has expressed support for this, and Angela Suggs, who is the president and CEO of the Florida Sports Foundation. You see Angela? There she is back there.

(Applause)

And then we have with us from the South Florida Tourism Bureau, who have just been incredible stepping up, getting it done. And there's a few people I'm running through here but every one of these people deserve to be mentioned and deserve to be thanked.

It starts with the president and CEO of the Greater Miami

Convention & Visitors Bureau, David Whitaker. David, thank you so much sitting in the second row. And David never far away, a gentleman I know that you stepped in to his shoes and those bright Orange shoes were hard to fill. But one of the great friends of the Orange Bowl through the years, Billy Talbert. Billy, great seeing you here.

(Applause)

And then we want to thank Stacy Ritter, president and CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau. I was with her today at lunch. She couldn't make it down here. But Dawson Pritchett is representing her today. Dawson, thank you, and thank you to the Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB.

George Linley, executive director of the Palm Beach County Sports Commission, I walked in with you. George, thank you for your leadership and Palm Beach's support.

And then we've got Grisette Roque Marcos, executive director of the Miami Beach Convention and Visitor Authority. I don't see her yet, but I know she RSVPed. And Christina Crespi, executive director of the Miami DDA. Christina? There you are.

(Applause)

I almost thought that jacket might be an Orange Bowl jacket there. Maybe we've got something in the works.

And of course we want to thank commissioner Keon Hardemon, the chairperson of the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council, for his leadership.

And a couple other partners that we've had in this process that have just been awesome. Hydi Webb, the port director and CEO from PortMiami. And also then from Miami International Airport Ralph Cutie, the director and CEO of the Miami-Dade County Aviation Authority.

(Applause)

This doesn't happen without the hoteliers. One of the things Bill talked about is our hotels. We've got great hoteliers and great hotel partners. Want to thank all the hotels in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach.

And I also want to thank the university partners that have joined us in this effort. As part of the bid the University of Miami joined us. We've got Rudy Fernandez, the executive vice president for external affairs and strategic initiatives. And we have Dan Radakovich, the vice president director of athletics. If they would please rise. There they are in the back there. Thank you.



(Applause)

They'll tell you how great the stadium is week in, week out. Nice to see that.

Also as part of the bid, local university, Mike Covone, director of athletics from Barry University, one of our host sites. Mike, thank you and thank Barry.

(Applause).

And then two other South Florida partners here from the universities. We've got a gentleman that's been around Orange Bowl almost as long as Eric has. Has really just made such a difference everywhere here's gone, and now FIU is so lucky to have him as their athletic director, Scott Carr, director of athletics, FIU. Scott, thank you.

(Applause)

And Brian White, director of athletics, Florida Atlantic University, has been supportive. Thank you to all of them.

We're also delighted to recognize the executive director of the College Football Playoff Foundation. And this executive director has just done such a remarkable job. Britton Banowsky has done so much going from the football side and the intercollegiate athletic side to now taking the College Football Foundation, I think, built to heights you guys never imagined.

And Britton has got the Extra Yard for Teachers program going. And with the '21 effort, we had such great success raising money just to run through these numbers. We raised more than -- we invested more than three and a half million dollars in South Florida education out of the 2021 game. Imagine what we're going to do with a full house and a full stadium and a full impact.

We created 23 innovation spaces across the tri-county area. Just spectacular for our young students to be able to learn in, to grow in, mature in, a nice, safe secure environment.

More than 20,000 students and teachers have been touched by what we did with the 2021 effort that was led by Britton Banowsky and the Extra Yard for Teachers. And I think we're going to have a more impactful project. But I want to single out a couple of people on that for what they did.

It started with Anthony R. Abraham Foundation and the chair, Tom Abraham. He stepped up. Incredible leadership and what did he say this year? How can we do

it all over again. Tom Abraham, thank you so much, appreciate your leadership.

(Applause).

And we have the Florida Lottery secretary, John Davis talking about dollars for education. What a great partnership, partnership with the college if football foundation even more, extra dollars, extra yards for teachers and students. We want to thank the Florida lottery. Is John Davis here? No.

Then GA Telesis stepped up, incredible leadership from a gentleman that joined the Orange Bowl Committee a few years ago, but Abdol Moabery and his wife Cathy from GA Telesis has so impacted the school districts and what we're trying to do with education. Abdol, thank you. Appreciate it.

(Applause)

And then for this year we've got a team assembled that should be pretty exciting, pretty dynamic team. Not surprising, as Michael Chavies knows, the judge, you want to start any effort you get really good vice chairs. And we have asked Adolfo Henriques, the vice chair of The Related Group to also serve as vice chair of this committee. Thank you to Adolfo Henriques.

Also thank you to Brian May. I know I saw Brian here, head of Capital City Consulting back there. Brian is our go-to guy when we need to get our ears to the ground and understand what's happening around the community. Brian, thank you for stepping up as vice chair.

And Ron Albert, he's had the most work over the last couple of years, since '21, since we started working on this. But Ron's a partner at Harper Meyer Perez Hagen Albert Dribin & DeLuca. And I'll tell you what, Ron, your efforts on behalf of this committee, getting this done, we have our host committee it's been really remarkable. Ron, please rise so we can thank you.

(Applause).

Just two last thank yous. One, we were delighted to have the group that brought the 2023 National Hockey League All-Star Game to South Florida -- talk about an exciting time, we did that in '23; we've got the World Cup coming; we've got Super Bowls coming; we've got the College Football Playoff. But from the Florida Panthers here today we've got the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Revenue Officer Bryce Hollweg; chief operating officer -- Shawn Thornton, chief revenue officer. Congratulations on your '23 NHL All-Star Game and thank you for joining our effort.



Where are the two gentlemen? Thank you.

(Applause)

And the last thank you is to the community. This did not get done without the whole South Florida community pulling together. And we see a lot of the faces of the community here in this room, a lot of representatives in this community in the room.

But the Orange Bowl Committee, the host committee, we're just stewards for this community. This community putting on great events, great sporting events, great athletic activities, great competitions. And so on behalf of the host committee we extend our thanks to all of South Florida, to our communities, to our neighbors and to all those who are going to enjoy the fruits of this great effort.

So let's have a great 2026 National Championship Game. And let me turn it over to the mayor of Miami-Dade County, and as I mentioned already her leadership played a vital role in hosting our 2021 effort. Her instrumental support has played an even more vital role in hosting our '26 effort. She's the first mayor to be elected in county history. She's led Florida's most populous county for the last two years. And imagine this, managing that and navigating that through the pandemic -- incredible leadership through the pandemic, Mayor Levine Cava.

And she manages a budget of \$9 billion, 28,000 employees, and she has worked so hard to help us get to where we are today, please welcome your mayor, our mayor, county mayor Daniella Levine Cava.

(Applause).

DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA: I was wondering what all these good looking guys were doing here. I was thinking you're all former football players in your former lives, and then I found out you're the Orange Bowl Committee. Ooh, this committee.

How many of you actually played football? All right. Well, I never did.

(Laughter).

But I did do some cheerleading in my day, just to say. So I know we all got here today to celebrate a really important occasion. And that would be Vice Chairman Oliver Gilbert's 40th birthday. Happy birthday, Oliver.

(Applause)

(Laughter)

So that cannot go without being said. Shall we sing? Okay. I'll spare you. All right.

But anyway, I'm really thrilled to be here with all of this great leadership. Thank you to our chair, our vice chair, our mayors, our commissioners and all of the leadership that's represented here today.

Jack, thank you for the lovely introduction and the kind words. And honestly, you guys had me at hello. I really did not know much about this whole event. And when we were together in 2021, I definitely got the bug.

And I do recall that I started gently pushing for this great achievement. So I had some little influence over the process. I do remember, I do remember the conversation.

So there were a lot of people who were skeptical about us doing it in 2021, but we pulled it off without a hitch. It was a great success. And as you said, what better place? We have it all. We are ready to showcase yet again that our community is ready, ready, ready to host this fantastic event.

So thank you for your confidence in us. Thank you for the obvious that we're the only best place to be.

So we know that we have an incredible history hosting events, as you said: 90 Orange Bowls; 11 Super Bowls; 21 College Football National Championships. Really?

I know you guys have been working on this for a long time. Very, very impressive.

And this will be our second National Championship in the College Football Playoff arena. So we are the perfect destination. I think that little video showed it all. Beautiful beaches. They had a lot of those in the pictures. They also had the great stadium. And world-class entertainment, like has been said. This is not just a football venue. This is truly an entertainment venue. And we've got it all.

So we are going to be immensely proud to host these great college players. And the coaches and the fans and all of those who will travel right through Miami International Airport. Thank you, Ralph, for doing a great job.

January 2026, right around the corner. So this is really going to be a great legacy for us. We're going to put another feather in our cap of great events. So we're thrilled to carry this tradition forward. So Hard Rock Stadium, you're looking great.



I know in 2026, even better. So just happy to sit on the sidelines and celebrate the game. Thanks, everybody.

(Applause)

JACK SEILER: If you've been around South Florida for a while, you know this next gentleman is someone that, every time there's a sporting event, as I mentioned earlier, every time there is some athletic endeavor, he steps up; he leads, and he makes sure that we put on the best of the best.

And I would ask the chair of the Miami-Dade County Commission, Pepe Diaz, to join us up here, just a few remarks. And maybe tell us about the next great sporting event we're hosting here, Pepe.

(Applause)

JOSE "PEPE" DIAZ: Thank you, Jack. And Jack, let's make this straight up. Thank you for your leadership. You've been around. You've done it all. And we've been through a roller coaster ride in some events together.

But I would tell you that you've always been there. And we've achieved, in great part, thanks to your leadership. Thank you.

(Applause)

I'll tell you, you're right; this is the place to be. Miami-Dade County, we're it, baby. Everybody in the world wants to come here, be part of us. So this is the right choice. Congratulations.

And I also want to thank a couple of other people, and I'll make it as short as possible. I want to thank a gentleman that was also with me on many of the events we brought together, everything from Wrestle Mania, came for the first time here, to all the way to F1 just recently.

But the most important part, when it came to football and the Orange Bowl and everything else, Eric, thank you for everything you've done for us and all these years, man.

(Applause)

You're one incredible person, and you've done an incredible job.

And we've been around the block for 20 years. And then there's a gentleman that showed up, and he said, you know what, we're not going to be second to anybody. And we're going to move forward. And he started, and he took over the stadium. And he created the stadium. He told us

in the beginning, look, this is going to be the best stadium there ever is. Guess what? He proved it. Steve Ross. Thank you for what you've done for us in our community.

(Applause)

Always.

Then there's another gentleman that stepped it up, too, and said, I'm part of the Dolphins organization, but I'm going to make a difference, and I'm going to make sure that we get every event we can. I think we've pretty much got everything -- we've got a couple more somewhere. We'll try to find them, Jack, we'll try to find a way to get there, and that is Tom Garfinkel. Thank you, sir, for all your hard work and your team.

So I could go ahead, and my colleagues, we all work together, when it comes to the greater good for this community. That is what it is, the greater good for this community because we're here from all over the world. We're larger than 18 states in the United States, as a county. Larger than 77 countries out there. So that's pretty powerful for a little community where a Cuban refugee is here.

So we have a dream that it can be done in this community because of this great nation of ours. We're very proud of it.

But you're right, it takes a whole community to make it happen. And in this community, we make it happen. Thanks to everybody that's here. Thank you so much.

(Applause)

JACK SEILER: At this time I am delighted to welcome up the gentleman that represents this district. The gentleman that has represented this district, whether it be as mayor, whether it be at the county. He's the vice chair of the Board of County Commissioners. But he's a dear friend. Oliver Gilbert, come on up and bring those -- I think those pants may steal the show today.

(Applause)

OLIVER GILBERT: Good afternoon. Y'all, it's my birthday, be more excited than that. You see, I've done partied all weekend. It's my birthday. But this is clearly the best present. This is special.

I know it's been said, mayor, chairman, thank you. Tom, Steven, thank you. When we sat down and talked about what we could do in this stadium, what we could do in this community, the community of Miami Gardens. Not a lot of people believed. There weren't a whole bunch of cheerleaders back then. But your commitment and Steve's



commitment, the city's partnership, has shown that we can attract world-class venues here on a regular basis.

We do better hosting than anyone else. And it's not just the wonderful facility, it's the wonderful hearts and spirits of the people in this county.

When you look at people who are here, you've got a commissioner from the city of Miami because they're going to play a game in Miami Gardens, but they're going to stay in some hotels on Brickell. And they're going to hang out on the beach; and they're going to eat at some restaurants, and they're going to take Ubers and help support our economy. We love hosting; we're good at it.

Thank you very much for bringing it back. Whenever you decide what the new format is, we want to be first at hosting the next big game. We want the next championship game. Can we clap for that, you all?

(Applause)

There's this song Ain't Too Proud to Beg -- well, I don't know, we might because it's important to us. We love having you all here. And it's not just the people who are going to visit here. It's the eyes of the world will be on Miami Gardens and Miami-Dade County.

We do a good job of showing the best of this community, the best of this state and the best of this country.

I appreciate all of you all. Thank you, Mayor Harris. And thank you, Angela Suggs, shout out again, Florida Sports Foundation, we couldn't do any of these things. They're always supportive. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

JACK SEILER: Well, the last two speakers, both mentioned him, he's someone that has came here about a decade ago to join the Miami Dolphins. Steve Ross entrusted his team, entrusted his organization and entrusted his stadium and the whole Miami Dolphins organization to him, and he has taken it to even higher levels, even greater levels.

And I know that, Steve, probably one of the best decisions you ever made was bringing Tom Garfinkel in, knowing what Tom could do in modernizing this stadium and modernizing this whole property.

And just from the Formula 1, to the tennis, to the, you name it, what you guys have done -- I remember talking to you way back when we were trying to negotiate stadium issues, and you kept telling me how things were going to

change. Well, that might not be here in four years. That might not be here in six years.

And it was incredible vision on your part. Incredible vision you shared. Steve Ross joined in that vision, wrote a substantial check for that vision you had; but Tom, you have now done such a remarkable job. We're delighted to have the vice chair, president and CEO of the Miami Dolphins, Tom Garfinkel.

(Applause)

TOM GARFINKEL: Thank you very much, Jack. Honor to be here today with everybody. You know, I'd like to thank the CEO and president of the NCAA, Bill Hancock, who is here with us today.

Maybe the next one, if we're lucky. Bill, thank you for your support and always being there for us.

And you know, Jack, I'd like to recognize -- we lost Jack's dad this year back in June. Pete, your grandfather, Ernie, started the Orange Bowl, and your dad. And the legacy of Orange Bowl and college football, and what a big part of it your family has been. So I just want to recognize your dad and your grandfather and your family, and thank you for all your leadership because without you we wouldn't be here today. So thank you.

(Applause)

Eric Poms, as well. Eric, thank you. I get up here, I get to put a suit on and everything and take credit for things, but the reality is the heavy lifting is done by Eric Poms, by Jack, by Frank, by people on the Orange Bowl Committee. I want to thank you for all the heavy lifting.

It wouldn't be possible without your help, as well as Todd Boyan and Myles Pistorius from my team, Chris Clements and others, Nat Moore, who do the lion's share of the work.

I get to get up here in front and get my picture taken and everything else, but they're the ones doing all the work. So thank you. Yes, please.

(Applause)

I won't name everybody in here today. I'd like to thank -- I think Jack covered most all of it -- but I do think it's important to recognize Mayor Levine Cava, and Commissioner Gilbert, thank you for your friendship over the years and helping us get to this point.

Certainly Mayor Harris, a great partner and friend that you've become, thank you for everything you do for us.



And I think I want to recognize, especially, Pepe, because Pepe will be stepping off the commission soon, unfortunately. But I think as a legacy, as a supporter of sports in this community and everything you've brought to this community, to the county, just want to recognize Pepe. And thank you very much.

(Applause)

Steve Ross, you know, we wouldn't be here without Steve. I think people forget sometimes that Steve invested hundreds of millions of dollars to make this, privately, to make this facility what it is. And we sat down and talked to him when I first got here. And he literally put hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of his own money to make this facility the kind of facility that can host world-class events here, the kind of facility that the CFP wants to come to.

And without Steve's vision to do that and his commitment to do that, we wouldn't be here today. I want to recognize Steve for that. Look, I love college football. I've always loved college football.

I'm going to tell an Orange Bowl story. It's amazing to me that I came here as a student at the University of Colorado, at the time it turned out there wasn't a national championship game, but Orange Bowl, in 1991, was the University of Colorado against Notre Dame, 1 and 2 in the country. The Buffalos were victorious that day, thankfully.

I think I slept on the beach that night. I was broke. I was a college student. I had no money. I went to Penrod's. I think I slept on the beach outside of Penrod's that night, or something like that.

But that was back in 1991. You all know Penrod's. But to think that I'd be standing up here, what, it will be 35 years later hosting our second National Championship in a stadium I helped be a part of renovating and everything is really special.

And I'm hopeful -- notice is out to Rick George and Karl Dorrell to get Colorado back in the hunt, or my other alma mater, for graduate school, the University of Michigan, it would be great to have them here as well.

But I love college football. And we're looking forward to hosting a great event here in 2026. The best National Championship game we can have. I just want to thank everybody. Thank you for being here today. It's going to be exciting.

By the way, in 2026, consider this, Steve's vision of a global entertainment destination, we'll have Orange Bowl

National Championship game, Miami Open tennis, Formula 1, World Cup soccer, Dolphins games, Hurricane games, and concerts, like we just had two sold-out concerts, Bad Bunny concerts, the last two nights.

I think the vision realized for Steve and for myself and the team that helped build this place, to have all those events in one year is really remarkable, and we're very proud and honored to have the National Championship game. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

ERIC POMS: All right. Just two last speakers and we're going to, I guess, open it up for a quick press conference.

But before I introduce the next gentleman, I do want to take a second. Eric's been recognized, but for those of us at the Orange Bowl Committee, we know that this gentleman's the best in the bowl business. He's been someone that -- he's respected across the country, from the conferences to the CFP, to the colleges and universities.

And we are so lucky to have him as our executive director. I think he's going to remain our executive director for some time here, Bill, but I will tell you, the best in the bowl business, Eric Poms. Eric, thank you.

(Applause)

And then this year, the president and chair of the Orange Bowl Committee, a gentleman that has been so successful in business, so successful as an accountant, just been a community leader on so many different fronts.

And we were fortunate and truly blessed at the Orange Bowl when he decided to step up and serve as our next president, as our next chair, please welcome Frank Gonzalez, president and chair of the Orange Bowl Committee.

(Applause)

FRANK GONZALEZ: Not sure if you can tell, I'm representing Orange Bowl. Might be a give-away here. But thank all of you for giving me the opportunity, for giving us the opportunity to be here today.

As the organization that has hosted the first 20 National Championships here, it was an integral part of hosting the first College Football Playoff National Championship game here in 2021. We felt that it was important for the Orange Bowl Committee to once again take the lead in bringing this stellar event back to South Florida and to Hard Rock



Stadium in 2026.

I would like to acknowledge our Orange Bowl Committee leadership that's here present today. Our next chair, Dr. Yvonne Johnson Phillips.

(Applause)

First vice chair, Brad Houser.

(Applause)

Second vice chair, Henri Crockett.

(Applause)

Treasurer, Hector Tundidor.

(Applause)

Our secretary, David Heffernan.

(Applause)

And, of course, the rest of our board of directors. Thank you so much for being here.

(Applause)

We have nurtured our relationship with the leadership of college football throughout the years and knew that once again that knowledge and expertise would be a key to the bid process.

It's important to note that just like the 2021 College Football Playoff National Championship game, it will be designed and operated by the College Football Playoff, much like the Super Bowl is operated by the NFL.

The 2021 CFP National Championship Game benefited our region in many ways. And we know the 2026 National Championship game will have an even greater impact than the last one.

First, the area will experience significant tourism and many business opportunities, as we know.

Second, with the visibility generated throughout an international television audience and an extensive national media coverage, Miami and South Florida will be the center of college football universe.

Third, visitors and local residents will enjoy many high-caliber ancillary events, including Playoff Fan Central, Playoff Playlist Live Concert Series, and many others.

As Jack mentioned, this is truly a collaborative effort between all of us and all these entities in our community and the tri-county area.

We are proud to lend this Orange Bowl's administrative and hospitality experience and expertise to both the bid process and to the host committee. Thank you so much for having us. Thank you.

(Applause)

ERIC POMS: We're almost done. But I do want to take a moment to acknowledge the bid team that worked on this because they worked tirelessly, as Bill said, as they worked through the process.

I see Myles Pistorius over there. I don't know if Todd Boyan is somewhere here. They're part of Tom's team and they're amazing to work with, both for our traditional Orange Bowl and for this bid effort. Thank you all so much for that.

We have a great team on the Orange Bowl staff that joins the host committee staff to put this together. It's Ana Hernandez-Ochoa, our COO; Mitch Morrall, Chief Administrative Officer; Goldwyn Harper, Chief Marketing Officer; and our CFO, Brian Park.

They have Mo Taylor, our senior director of marketing. She headed up the last championship game, administratively. And our Director of Communications, Mike Liotta. These people, as Tom said, they're they ones doing much of the work. We want to acknowledge that.

We deal with the folks at the CFP, not just Bill, but I know Brett Daniels is here. There he is. Just worked tirelessly with us over the past more than year to put this together. Dave Marmion, not here today. I want to thank him as well and the CFP team.

Of course the CVBs. I want to mention the CVBs, work very closely with David Whitaker, Stacy Ritter and George Linley and their teams.

This is an exciting day for Miami and all of South Florida. We're thrilled that the 2026 CFP National Championship Game will be back here at Hard Rock Stadium.

We thank you for coming out here today. We are looking forward to 2026; it will be a great year.

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