

January 1, 2012



An interview with:

**TOM STARR
TOM BRADLEY
TONY LEVINE**

TODD BELL: Good afternoon. I'd like to welcome you to the head coaches press conference for the 2012 Ticket City Bowl. We'll begin with an opening statement from Tom Starr, the CEO of the Ticket City Bowl, then we'll go to the coaches.

Let me introduce Ticket City Bowl CEO Tom Starr.

TOM STARR: I'll just be a second, get the stars of the show up here quickly.

I would like to say thank you, as well. I think I've talked to most of you over the last three or four weeks. Thank you for your coverage. I know Todd, Tim the rest of the gang are treating you well, so hopefully you've been taken well care of.

Again, it's our great pleasure and honor to have these two great institutions in our game. Great football legacy. Just had a great time with Coach Bradley and Coach Levine, two real class gentlemen. We've had a fun week. Now it's time to tee it up tomorrow.

Welcome and thank you for being here.

TODD BELL: We have with us Tony Levine, head football coach at the University of Houston, and Tom Bradley, head football coach at Pennsylvania State University.

I will turn it over first to Coach Levine from the University of Houston for an opening statement.

COACH LEVINE: The first thing I need to do is apologize for Coach Bradley being overdressed for this press conference (laughter).

COACH BRADLEY: I told you what you wear. Didn't you get the memo (laughter)?

COACH LEVINE: I didn't get the memo (laughter). Just came off the practice field about 15 minutes ago. But really excited to be here. Really, really looking forward to the game tomorrow.

I can speak for our players, we have a couple with us, that we're looking forward to this game for a number of reasons. I said this, and I mean this, some people laugh, but in particular myself, I've been so busy the last couple weeks, I know LSU and Alabama are playing, and other than that I don't really know who else is playing in these bowl games this season. The reason I say that is I'd like to see a better matchup on paper than Houston and Penn State.

I think it's a matchup of two very distinct and different styles really across the board. Our offense against their defense, their offense against our defense. Obviously the kicking game and styles of play.

When you look at them, at least what I did initially, is looked at Penn State statistically on paper. Once you see where they're ranked among 120 Division I-A schools, doesn't take long once you hit 'play' on the DVD player to see why they are.

They're very physical in their style of play and in their stature. I said a couple weeks ago we have not played a team like Penn State all season. It's a tremendous challenge for us as a coaching staff, obviously for our team.

One of the other things we're looking forward to during the course of the regular season when you're playing every week, if you have a game that does not go your way, typically you have five, six, maybe seven days to have that bad taste in your mouth, and you get a chance to try to redeem yourself a week later.

Well, we went 12 weeks in a row with feeling pretty good about ourselves, then we stumbled there at the end. It's been a month since we last played. Our kids are anxious to get out and approach this challenge tomorrow morning the way we have our 13 games this season.

We got here on Thursday. We did most of

our work back in Houston prior to Christmas, then gave our players a couple days off, then actually came back to Houston for three practices before we came up here Thursday afternoon.

We've had a great time here. It's gone by quickly. We've had a couple of good practices. This morning we practiced for a little over 45 minutes just as kind of a final tune-up before tomorrow. The kids are upbeat, the tempo has been great. Really looking forward to this football game tomorrow.

TODD BELL: Coach Bradley.

COACH BRADLEY: Some of you guys looked a lot better than you'd look after New Year's, but not all of you. I'm looking at one in particular. Look like you just got home (laughter).

You know what, we've had a great week of practice. We're really looking forward to this game. One of the things I tried to find Case Keenum all week, looked all over for him so I could do something to him so we could get him out of the game. Don't know where you had him hid out, Tony. He was hiding somewhere.

Houston is different, contrasting styles. Their tempo is different than ours, defense is different. We haven't played an offense like this in a long time.

I think the most impressive thing, anybody that can throw 45 touchdown passes, only five interceptions, that's pretty darn good. Watching stats roll across the TV last night from other quarterbacks, they're not even in the same league as him. That's the one thing that is going to be a big challenge for us.

In any bowl game, got to be able to survive the first quarter. We can't duplicate what they do. It's impossible. We are not used to doing that. Don't have that many wideouts to do all that. Anytime you play a bowl game, you have to be able to survive the first quarter to get caught up to speed. We haven't played now in five, six weeks. That's one thing you worry about, getting lulled into sleep going against your scout team. You really tend not to get as good a look as you're going to need to get because we can't duplicate that kind of speed.

This has been a great experience for our players. I don't know of anyplace that we've been that treated as nice and kind and been more cooperative of anything we've asked. Our players had a great time this week.

We came down the 26th. We did our work up there till the 21st, let them go home to Christmas, we all reconvened down here, got in

five good days of practice and just treated it like a game week.

TODD BELL: We'll go ahead and open it up for questions.

Q. There's more reports today about the coaching situation. How do your players handle that as this leads up into the game? Are you under any impression from university officials that this is your last game with Penn State?

COACH BRADLEY: They haven't said anything about us regarding the coaching search. As I said the other day, I had an opportunity to speak with the committee. Spent some time with them. They were very gracious. I was able to talk to them about the way I would do things. That's all that I can ask.

As far as rumors, I don't pay much attention to them. You guys haven't hit the jackpot yet.

Q. Coach Levine, who would you say this season that with what you've seen with the running game as dynamic as this, would there be a similar opponent that you guys have faced? How do you prepare based on previous games?

COACH LEVINE: I go back a little bit to what I said a couple minutes ago. We really haven't faced a team like Penn State, really not only this year but in the last four years we've been here. In the same way Coach Bradley said they can't simulate what we do, we can't simulate what they do either. So it's a challenge for us.

I guess the nice thing is obviously in bowl season you have more time to prepare. But, again, for what they do and how tremendously well they do it, it should be a big challenge for us across the board.

Q. How nice has it been to come to Dallas and be in a different atmosphere for your team, escape the things that have gone on this season, be in a new town?

COACH BRADLEY: Anytime you get to a bowl game it's exciting. We've earned the right to be here. Our players have enjoyed it. They've enjoyed Dallas. Been to a lot of bowl games at Penn State. We encourage them to get out, get around, take a look at the city, do it in the proper manner. They've done that.



...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

TicketCity Bowl coaches press conference

Just a chance for us to get away as a team is always good.

Q. Tom, is McGloin going to be out tomorrow?

COACH BRADLEY: Matt McGloin will not play tomorrow.

Q. How much will that affect what you can do on offense with Bolden in there?

COACH BRADLEY: Robert has a different style than Matt and we've adjusted accordingly.

Q. Tom, if tomorrow is your last game, what memories will you take with you?

COACH BRADLEY: Well, I think after, what's it, 33 years of coaching, being there, playing at Penn State, there's so many great memories I have, players, things that have happened, bowl games. Met some great people not only on the football team but people with Penn State, people through football. It's been a tremendous, tremendous experience.

Q. Tom, would you ever consider coming back or staying with Penn State if you're not head coach as a defensive coordinator or would this be the end?

COACH BRADLEY: I'm not sure about that. That's the kind of question I can't answer right now. I'm sure there will be some other opportunities.

Q. Tony, you had a chance for the BCS bowl, didn't make it. How have you kind of kept your team focused on this game, getting them mentally prepared for tomorrow?

COACH LEVINE: I think it's really been easy because not a whole lot of teams in the country get a 14th game, not a whole lot of teams in the country get to play that game in January.

What we've done, we've had 12 times where we came out ahead and one time where we didn't. It gives our team, our coaching staff, our players an opportunity against a great opponent on a national stage to really show people that the fluke was the one game, not the 12 games.

Really with all those factors, it's been really easy to turn their attention, turn their focus to this game. They're excited to play.

Q. Tom, what is Devon Still's status? How is his toe? Any other guys on your team that will miss the game due to injury?

COACH BRADLEY: Devon will be ready to go tomorrow. Dr. Sebastianelli has been treating him. We expect him to be able to go full go.

Beachum is not going to make it back.

Q. Tom, since you've known for the past two weeks, Rob has been getting all the snaps with the first team, how has he progressed as a first-string quarterback compared to where he was when he got benched earlier in the season?

COACH BRADLEY: One of the things he has been a starter, he has started games. It's not an awkward situation for him. Now he knows he's going to go the whole way if he can.

I think he's done very well. He's done a great job with command of the huddle, getting prepared for this game.

Q. How confident are you in the quarterback situation after the way he played earlier in the season?

COACH BRADLEY: I think he'll be okay. He's had a different amount of time to prepare. He's known he's going to be the starter. Earlier in the year we were bringing him in, bringing him out. That won't be the case tomorrow.

Q. Tom, could you describe the importance of a pass-rush tomorrow. Would you be more inclined to go after Keenum?

COACH BRADLEY: I'm not going to tell you that (laughter).

I'll tell you this. I told Larry Johnson and Ron Vanderlinden I'm glad they're the defensive coordinators.

Q. Tom, does McGregor become the No. 2? How are you going to approach the quarterback situation?

COACH BRADLEY: I'm going to go with Robert the whole way. McGregor does become the No. 2.

Q. Will you guys rely on the wildcat as much as you have?

COACH BRADLEY: Not really.

Q. Tom, in the past you've faced some very prolific quarterbacks in bowl games as a defensive coordinator. Is there anything you

ASAP sports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

TicketCity Bowl coaches press conference

can draw on those past experiences having this much time to prepare for a quarterback like that?

COACH BRADLEY: It's painful to stand there on the sidelines. We haven't seen anybody like him in a while, though. I'm trying to go back in my mind. A couple years ago Indiana came in and threw it 60, 70 times. Michigan State I think at Beaver Stadium 60 some times. Plus they keep you off balance with the running game. Everybody thinks it is all passing, but they're very balanced in certain situations.

Q. I know you are probably aware of the history of this stadium, the things that have gone on. Talking to Penn State players, they've not been aware of that. Have you shared any stories with the players about the history of this facility means? Have you sensed they have any sort of understanding of all that?

COACH LEVINE: I think our players do. I have not shared any stories with them. Again, the majority of our team is from Texas. We got a number of players from this area.

For me just driving up here this morning, seeing it, there's so much history here. It's going to be really an honor for our team to play here tomorrow. We haven't really talked about that specifically with our players.

COACH BRADLEY: Dr. Joyner gave us his history lesson. He played his last game here when they beat Texas 30-6. My oldest brother played his last game here against Baylor. I got his history lesson on the stadium.

Other than that, I tried to explain to our players the significance and all the great players that have been to the Cotton Bowl.

Q. Tom, how are you going to deal with their pace? I suppose that's one of the things you can't simulate in practice. Sub in more often, I'm assuming?

COACH BRADLEY: Sometimes it's difficult with their pace to sub in more often. We've tried to duplicate that at practice. We have seen that tempo before. A lot of teams we play have three different tempos. Their tempo is one tempo: fast.

Q. You've seen it before in little spurts?

COACH BRADLEY: But not for that length.

Q. Tom, given all the swirl around this program the last two months, how hard do you think it's going to be for the assistant coaches if they're not retained to get other jobs?

COACH BRADLEY: I can't answer that question right now. I really can't. I'm not sure.

TODD BELL: Thank you very much.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports