

December 18, 2013



An interview with:

Rod Carey

Coach Carey: Obviously we're extremely excited to be in the Poinsettia Bowl. It is really cold in DeKalb, Illinois right now, so it is really nice to be here. First thing the players will be asking me about when I get back tomorrow. So we're excited about the bowl, the weather, what Bruce and Mark have done putting this together, and this match-up together and really excited to be here. I can honestly say that. Like Matt said, it takes you all of about 15 minutes to run that film and, you know -- listen, I'll say it like it is, they're as good of a team as we have played all year and that's no disrespect to the teams that we have played. They are well coached and, you know, they do everything right. That's the easiest way I can put it.

You know, you lose a guy like they did with Chuckie Keeton and they put in a freshman and by the end of the year doesn't look like their offense is any different to me and their defense I suspect is as stout as we have played all year.

So we know what it's going to be. We wouldn't expect anything less from a great bowl like this. It's going to be a fun game. If you can't have fun playin' a game like this, you probably shouldn't be playing the game.

We're going to go out there, have fun, compete, and look to be in a good situation in the fourth quarter. That's all you ever ask for when you're playing an opponent like this. With that we will open it up for questions.

Q. How excited are you to be here in San Diego, playing here and the atmosphere and something we as San Diego fans don't know about you.

Coach Carey: I took a picture from my hotel room of the marina and the Bay there and texted it back to my kids and there was an aircraft carrier out there. My little boy Charlie got on the

phone and he's never seen one of them. I know he's fired up! I know our guys are fired up, too! They really are.

There are a lot of different venues we have been to on the stretch that we have been, going to bowl games and from my impressions right now this is as good as there is. Something you don't know about our football team? Probably there is quite a few things. We're almost on the other side of the country from here.

One thing -- how much time do you got? There are probably a million. I'll say this: I think you could switch these helmets and put that one in front of me and that one in front of Matt and we're coaching about the same kids. Tough, blue collar kids that play the game the right way. So if you can draw similarities off that that's something you probably don't know about us. Both teams play with a championship on their shoulder, and really come to work ever day.

Q. Coach, you were in the Orange Bowl last year, you were close to getting back to the BCS this year, there was any disappointment on the team about that?

Coach Carey: We talked about that as a team and we talked about that as a staff. We didn't "have" anything. It's not like we had the BCS and lost it. The BCS rankings don't mean anything until the final one and we ended up in the 20s somewhere in that and then you don't get one is kinda how it works.

We didn't look at it like that. The thing we were disappointed with coming out of the game just like Matt and his team is we didn't win our conference championship. We had every intention of doing that with the way we played a fine Bowling Green team that night and that's what we were disappointed with more than anything.

Q. How much fun have you had coaching Jared over the years?

Coach Carey: I tell you what, it's been -- I wish I had a quick one for ya, but it's unbelievable and not just Jordan but I look at Jimmie Ward, how



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much fun individual coaching him, unbelievable, too.

When you have a special player like that, they're football junkies, they can kind of predict what you're going to do before you do it and that makes coaching a ton of fun. Then you pile on top of it in Jordan's case and in Jimmy's case the great leaders and individuals, they're just fun to be around. A guy you like to sit down and chat with just about life, too, so it's -- I wish it wouldn't stop, I wish we had another ten years with them. That would be awesome.

Q. You know in the old days coaches used to come in here and throw down the gauntlet with the other coach next to them.

Coach Carey: How about that? It's because of you guys and you got this social media, we say something it gets on social media and it goes up on the bulletin board in the locker room and it gets back to DeKalb, so I ain't doin' any of that, you're crazy!

Q. Coach, talk about your team players that have stepped up and kind of gelling as a team, some notables that have surprised you over the season?

Coach Carey: Well I always look to our seniors. To be a good football team and be on the verge of being a great football team like you try to be the entire course of the year your seniors have to play like seniors and what I simply mean by that is there is really only two things that you ever tell a recruit, or at least that we tell them, one, you go to class and get your degree and you're going to play your best football as a senior and that's our job.

This year we have had that for the majority of the year, our seniors have played their best football as seniors. And I don't care -- we have some seniors that are in a back-up role and we have guys like Jordan, who is third in the Heisman, so you have to play your best football as a senior.

I look to them to lead this thing. I'm their third head coach this senior group, number three. And I don't flinch when I say this and some people think I'm crazy for sayin' it, but this is a player-driven team and if you don't have player-driven teams you're not in bowl games, I don't care where you are. Now it's our job to push 'em, and we do, and we get 'em going but they got to take control and they gotta play like seniors.

Q. Can you assess is the defensive challenge that your offense is going to face?

Coach Carey: Yeah, how much time you got?

Q. A little bit.

Coach Carey: Yeah. Well, first of all, their scheme is really challenging. They're an odd front team, they move and get into some even fronts too and they play multiple coverages behind that which you don't see a whole ton. When you got a veteran group like they do, they can do more so you have that challenge of the X's and the O's, but then you factor in the Jimmy's and the Joe's of the whole thing and like I said, all due respect to everybody we played, I keep sayin' that, but this is as fine of a defense as we have seen. They have a shutdown corner, two backers that many plays and their "D" line is as active and as big as we have seen all year, as that's going to be a challenge for us. You may have the perfect play called into the perfect defense and somebody whoops somebody and you're getting a 10-yard gain or a 5-yard loss. That's how I see this game goin'. I don't know that there is going to be that consistency from our offense that we can chunk play it down the field, they're too good. You're going to have to be explosive and when you are, you're going to have to capitalize on that. That's probably true of every game so that's a little bit of "coach" talk there, but with this match-up it's the truth. Some games you go in and feel like you can move it on them, but this game you have to be explosive and capitalize on opportunities.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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