

Capital One Orange Bowl: Florida State vs Michigan

Tuesday, December 27, 2016

Tim Drevno

Michigan Wolverines

Q. This is Wilton's second season already.

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, he could be outstanding. There's always kinds of things he can improve on. He knows them. We've talked about them. Every day you've got to go out and get better at something, and he's done that. He does a nice job.

Q. How different are you as an offense when he's healthy and throwing the deep ball well?

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, outstanding any time. You can't just be one dimensional. You've got to be able to throw it and run it and take what the defense gives you. Any time Wilton has played at a high level we've been successful, and everyone has to play well to be successful on offense, it can't just be one guy.

Q. Has he looked differently than he did in August?

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, just being named the starter and getting those reps under him and getting confidence and guys believing in him and him believing in guys, and when you start to have success, the winning just breeds that confidence. Really does well for the football team.

Q. How big of a challenge is it going to be -- you're losing three fifth-year seniors.

TIM DREVNO: Yeah.

Q. What kind of challenge is that going to be starting Saturday, I guess, or next month?

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, that started weeks ago, and understanding that three guys are graduating. I mean, every day is a challenge. It's not easy to play in the offensive line. It's a formed habit, and just -- I love the challenge. I love the rebuild, I love to put a new line out there, and I embrace it.

Q. You've worked with a lot of young guys before. Do you tell the young guys now this is a chance --

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, every day is an opportunity to get better, and they understand it. You don't really have to say much to them. They understand that the three guys are graduating, and it's time for them to step up, and next man up.

Q. How do you turn a lineup of three fifth-year seniors --

TIM DREVNO: One is willingness to get better and it's



about work, you just outwork people and make football very, very important, that you want to be at the top of your craft and produce at a high level and be a student of the game. Really embrace it, embrace what we're coaching, teaching, and then when you step on the field that you're doing those techniques at a high level, that you can see that you're getting better.

Q. Do you feel like the depth with scholarship bodies is there? Do you feel like that's getting there?

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, you can't get enough big bodies. That's something that you want, big bodies on your football team. Our depth is getting there, absolutely. We've been here two years, and it'll just keep getting better.

Q. Are you going to have to arm wrestle somebody to keep --

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, but whatever is best for the team. He's an offensive lineman now, but Coach Harbaugh makes that final decision. He's the head football coach, but I love him there at the guard. He's a big earth-moving guy.

Q. We see Khalid Hill just kinds of pounds the ball. Is he an underrated athlete?

TIM DREVNO: Khalid Hill has unbelievable initial quickness. You see him take that ball and on those dives, he's just got great initial quickness. Very athletic, very light on his feet. He's got a really natural ability to carry the ball, that first two steps or so quick that I think helps propel him into the end zone.

Q. The guys have been saying that they're treating this very much like it's -- not a job but they try to treat it as professionally as possible. Do you feel like you guys had to earn that trust from them to get the guys to work that hard in a situation like this? How did that come around to getting all those guys getting bought into that mentality?

TIM DREVNO: I think when we first came here day one it was like, we're going to work to get better at our craft, and they just kind of understand what we need to do to be successful, and as we go, they've bought into what we're doing, the success, and they trust us and we trust them, and it's companionship. These young men on this football team, they're great young men who want to work and be better. They're team guys. You

Capital One Orange Bowl: Florida State vs Michigan

Tuesday, December 27, 2016

Wilton Speight

Michigan Wolverines



Q. What are your thoughts on being here and how are preparations going?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah, it's awesome. Miami is a great bowl location, and I remember one of the coach's first things that he said last football season is that he wanted to play anywhere around a beach, so that was his goal every year, and that's what we're doing. And yeah, the bowl prep started yesterday in terms of being here and first practice was a good one. Try and make it two today.

Q. Talk about this process and the time that you had to kind of get better and stronger since you were hurt.

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah. A couple weeks off really helped the body recover, and having more than just three or four or five days to prepare for this opponent I think has helped, not just myself but the whole team.

Q. Do you think the offense is in better shape overall maybe than it was at the end of the regular season?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah, I think guys are definitely getting healthier, which is always a plus.

Q. Do you have any expectations?

WILTON SPEIGHT: I obviously believed in myself and thought I was going to do well, but yeah, I mean, every game I just -- my goal was to get better and better, and there was a point in the season where the trajectory was on a very upward trend. Didn't play that well in Iowa and we got banged up, and then did all I could versus Ohio State, and I think we performed well as an offense as a whole. But yeah, now it's basically year two as a starter. This bowl prep has in my mind been the start of my year two. That's where I really need to take the biggest leap.

Q. How differently are you looked at by teammates on the offense say now than at the beginning of say the fall when you were still fighting for --

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah. I think guys kind of look at me as the leader of the offense, and because of the 11 games that I was able to play in this year and start in. That's obviously good, but I've got to continue to do more and prove myself as their leader.

Q. Given that standing, do you embrace the role of

getting after guys?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah, when it needs to be done. I'm not the type of guy that does it just to do it, but if I see a window that needs to be addressed, then I will. But I like to just lead by example typically.

Q. What are the areas you want to improve the most in year two?

WILTON SPEIGHT: I think decision making at all times. I think it was sharp most of the year, but there was some mental errors that were easily avoidable on interceptions where I just could have gone somewhere else with the ball or not forced the ball into a tight window. And then I think I was okay at going through my progressions this year, but I definitely want to get even better at that. I watched so much Tom Brady and Ben Roethlisberger, Philip Rivers, film with Coach Fisch and those guys just go through all five progressions almost every play. I want to do that, too.

Q. Did you say that after a bye you had gone through and looked at every single --

WILTON SPEIGHT: Uh-huh.

Q. Did you do that during this time off?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah, in that first week.

Q. What all did you do?

WILTON SPEIGHT: That week after the Ohio State game, I watched the Ohio State game a couple of times, and then went through from the bye week to the end of the season and watched every rep and just kind of figured out the areas that I made a point of emphasis to improve on during that bye week. Could I check that off? Some I could, some I couldn't, and I need to focus on the ones that I did check off just as well as the ones I didn't check off.

Q. What were you happy about?

WILTON SPEIGHT: You know, I started driving the ball a lot more after that Rutgers game. I think Coach made that point to me, Coach Harbaugh and Coach Fisch, and I was able to do that. And just not second-guessing any throws, being able to go through the progression as soon as I see it, just let it rip.

Q. How tough is it to sit down for a game where you know that the result isn't going to be what you want, it's going to be painful to watch?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah. Yeah, no, that's a bummer to sit there and watch film. It's tough, yeah. I watched that Ohio State game a couple times that week, and then about two weeks ago I watched it again just in terms of finding little things that you maybe didn't see before going through the film, just fine-tuning. But yeah, it's a little pit in your stomach when you watch it.

Q. Can you look at it analytically without getting caught up in the result?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah, I'm not watching the TV copy where -- that's where you get caught up, but I'm just watching it on our film system where it's just cut-up after cut-up.

Q. Does that make this game all the more important to not --

WILTON SPEIGHT: I just think it's a very important game because it's the next game. It's been our mindset all year. Every week is a championship week, and this isn't the playoffs, but it's one of the closest bowls to it. That's our mindset, and that's why it's vital for us to get this win.

Q. How tough was it maybe to avoid that sense of what might have been or any lingering from that?

WILTON SPEIGHT: It was a bummer not making the playoff, but we put ourselves in that position. We put the ball in other people's court to determine if we were going or not, and you never want to do that in anything with life. But we were quickly happy, moving on to the Orange Bowl, and playing an unbelievable opponent.

Q. The way that FSU does things defensively, does that compare to anybody that you've seen? Is it similar in respects to --

WILTON SPEIGHT: Probably similar in terms of athleticism and players, probably like Ohio State. They've got fast defensive backs, a solid defensive front, and some really talented linebackers, and you look at guys like Raekwon McMillan and Bosa and Hubbard and Webb, Damon Webb at Ohio State, that's comparable to a lot of guys at Florida State.

Q. How hard is it to play from your left side?

WILTON SPEIGHT: I mean, any time you're banged up, whether it's your non-throwing shoulder or throwing shoulder, ankle, knee, playing through an injury is not easy, but that happens. It's football, and everyone does. Everyone plays through injury. You know, I can't really probably speak on how tough it is, but it's just part of the game.

Q. Does it limit like the rotation or any part of your throw?

WILTON SPEIGHT: I don't know, I try not to think about that when I was throwing, just wanted to focus on kind

of throwing unconsciously, as weird as that is to say. Maybe consciously think about being unconscious when I'm in the pocket.

Q. Does adrenaline come into play?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Oh, for sure, yeah. Adrenaline helps with anything. But yeah, I think that's probably the best medicine.

Q. Can you offer a percentage of where you are health-wise?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Still no percentage, but I'm getting better every day.

Q. Were you told to say that?

WILTON SPEIGHT: I don't know. I'm just giving you the God-honest truth.

Q. What have you seen from the defensive front?

WILTON SPEIGHT: Yeah, No. 44 is I think one of the better defensive linemen in the country. He'd fit right in with our defensive line. But yeah, they've got speed, they've got anticipation of the snap count, and they just have a motor that doesn't really give up. You see a lot of times on film that a play looks like it might be dead or the quarterback might be getting it out of his hands, but they keep fighting, and it's going to be huge, a huge test for our offensive line in terms of blocking through the whistle.

Q. (Inaudible.)

WILTON SPEIGHT: That probably just goes with the flow of the game, adjusting to how they're getting to the backfield and stuff. But no, it shouldn't change our game plan at all, we should just go through our normal progressions at our normal speed and kind of adjust on the fly.

Q. How have the younger skill guys looked?

WILTON SPEIGHT: They look great. I know a lot of the wide receivers know that it's now their time to step up because Darboh and JU are gone. The younger tight ends, led by Ian Bunting down the board are stepping up, too, with Jake being gone next year, and Coach Drevno has got the offensive line stepping up. But Brandon Peters has looked good this bowl prep, and yeah, the guys really use this as truly a Christmas camp to get better.

Capital One Orange Bowl: Florida State vs Michigan

Tuesday, December 27, 2016



Kyle Kalis

Michigan Wolverines

Q. Is there an intentional plan to keep you guys as busy and out of harm's way?

KYLE KALIS: Yeah, that's definitely Coach's plan. I think it's a good one. It's definitely what we did last year, and I think we're trying to get the same result as we had last year. Kind of just trying to get ready like we did last year and get the same result.

Q. Are you enjoying this little different experience even though it's not what you were expecting this year?

KYLE KALIS: Yeah, last year it was kind of a shock for a lot of guys because it wasn't what we were used to for a bowl game, but we definitely knew coming into this year it was going to be pretty similar. No one was too shocked.

Q. Talk about the evolution of the line; what has been the gap from the Ohio State game until now? Last year you showed such progress in the bowl season. What have you seen here the last couple weeks?

KYLE KALIS: I think it's a big testament to the coaches. The coaches never really give us a chance to really feel comfortable or get settled down too much. They always keep us on our toes. Like yesterday we had meetings starting at 10:00 and went until like 10:45 at night just nonstop all day. They always try to prepare us for the next level, and it really feels like that. Already in college we're already at the next level, and it feels almost like a job. But that's how it should be, and it's like a job, so we go about it like that.

Q. Does it help you get prepared for the next level? I know that's one of the big things you talked about when Jim took over the program.

KYLE KALIS: Coach Harbaugh personally I don't think has done that much for my game. I think he's kind of like the figurehead. He's not really a position coach. Coach Drevno has really done that. I give all the credit to him for the way he coaches me. He never lets anyone take a day off, and that's been huge.

Capital One Orange Bowl: Florida State vs Michigan

Tuesday, December 27, 2016

Khalid Hill

Michigan Wolverines



Q. Going back to the season, we talked about the efficiency and everything, and this might be a game where you get heavy usage. They have a decent defense, as well, and this might be one of those games where you can kind of show your goal line. How much thought have you put into that kind of going into this week?

KHALID HILL: You know, just this week I've been thinking about what I can do to help the team win. It's going to be a tough opponent, one of the top defenses in the country, and I want to be able to help the team win.

Q. How much film have you guys -- how much have you paid attention to DeMarcus Walker?

KHALID HILL: He's a great player, big, athletic. Some people compare him to Chris Wormley, the physicalness of Chris Wormley with the speed of Taco Charlton. But he's a great defender, leads the team in sacks. They're No. 1 in sacks in the country, so it's a great defense, we're just ready to compete against them.

Q. You see Taco and Chris every day in practice, so does that kind of give maybe not like a sense of relief but kind of make you feel a little bit more prepared?

KHALID HILL: Yeah, somewhat. You're going against guys -- our defense is one of the top defenses in the country. We're going to have a better chance of beating our opponents in games.

Q. How have you guys settled in? Of course there will be nerves going into the game, but tell me a little bit about getting settled in and what you guys have done so far.

KHALID HILL: Just preparation. The more you prepare, the easier it is for you, the more we practice, the better we get used to their defense, looking at blitzes, understanding their schemes and whatnot, so the more we prepare, the easier it will be on us come game time to have more fun and play faster. We won't have to worry about making checks and calls because we already know what's coming.

Q. As opposed to last year going into the Citrus Bowl against Florida and you guys were a good team last year, this year playoff-caliber kind of

team. Has the mood changed a little bit as far as goal-wise going into this? Is there any different feeling than last year?

KHALID HILL: I mean, no, we just kind of take every game the same. We want to win. Coach Harbaugh has said we're in it for the win. We're going to work as hard as we can to make sure we get that win. We don't look at any team different or any game different. We look at this might be a bowl game, but we take it just as a regular game in the regular season.

Q. You guys have a potent offense; as a fullback you can kind of appreciate the way they run the ball. Have you seen much film on those guys?

KHALID HILL: Oh, we've watched games them guys played in before. They're great guys. Cook is a great running back, probably first-round talent, and they have great running backs, as well, also a good fullback, as well. We're going to see who's the best come this weekend.

Q. What kind of bowl swag have you gotten, what kind of gifts?

KHALID HILL: Just like jump suits and shirts.

Q. Are they bowl committee or Michigan --

KHALID HILL: Michigan and bowl committee, just mixed up.

Q. You guys have a gift suite, as well. How does that work?

KHALID HILL: So a gift suite is basically a gift setup for the bowl or your school that they give to you that you get like a point system, you get to pick which bowl gifts you want to have. You get up to like eight points. Some gifts are eight points total, some gifts are one point. So you can just go through and see which ones you want, what are best for you basically.

Q. Have you gone in yet and seen it?

KHALID HILL: Yeah, it ranges from TVs to headphones to generators. You can find it all. It's actually cool. A lot of people use it for like Christmastime for people in your family you can get gifts for, and you kind of use that to your advantage to help with gifts, as well.

Q. What is worth eight points?

KHALID HILL: Like a TV.

Q. Is it a big TV?

KHALID HILL: Yeah, like a 50-inch. You've got Dre Beats, wireless headphones. I don't remember what else was out there.

Q. How do you get a 50-inch TV back home?

KHALID HILL: They deliver it to Michigan and they sort it out from there.

Q. Have you picked out what you want yet?

KHALID HILL: Maybe the TV because my TV is pretty small. I want to make sure I've got a TV.

Q. Are you going to the beach this afternoon?

KHALID HILL: No, we're not. I think the families are going. We're going to be practicing.

Capital One Orange Bowl: Florida State vs Michigan

Tuesday, December 27, 2016

De'Veon Smith

Michigan Wolverines



Q. This could be a game where you could prove a lot for yourself. You've had a long road, and especially this past year, probably your best year at Michigan. Do you look at this as a game where you can prove something to yourself personally?

DE'VEON SMITH: You know, any game you can prove something to yourself when the game is important, but this being my last game, I definitely want to go out with a bang. I know me and my teammates want to get the win. It's not really about me or my personal goals. As long as we get that win, that's all that matters.

Q. How much do you think about it, the final game for a lot of you guys, final collegiate game, maybe final high-level football game for some other guys.

DE'VEON SMITH: It's kind of scary to think about. Not scary, but it's kind of bittersweet in a way because you don't know what's going to happen next. You'll never play with the same guys ever again. You basically grew up with them. They're basically your best friends for life. It's really going to be an emotional day. I don't know how I'm going to take it. You know, I'm just going to enjoy it while it's here and enjoy each other's company.

Q. What makes Khalid Hill so effective down at the goal line?

DE'VEON SMITH: You know, I don't know. Khalid is a very explosive guy. A lot of people don't know that. And he's really fast. Khalid is very fast for his size. I think a lot of teams don't expect that initial burst from him coming out of the stance when he gets the ball in his hand, so that's why I think he's really effective.

Q. Do you ever give him any grief for stealing your touchdowns?

DE'VEON SMITH: Oh, we talk about it all the time. We actually were competing in the running back room who can get the most touchdowns. He beat me from the last Ohio State game, but hopefully I can get a couple touchdowns this game.

Q. What's behind the new look?

DE'VEON SMITH: No, it's just a ponytail. It was down in my eyes now. The hair is growing, so I just had to pull it up.

Q. Is that your beach look?

DE'VEON SMITH: Yeah. It's just a beach look. I mean, I like to be different with my hair anyway. Whatever helps me stick out, I guess.

Q. The bowl game last year you felt the healthiest of the year --

DE'VEON SMITH: Same way. For sure the same way. No bumps or bruises.

Q. Are there raised expectations when you're feeling this good?

DE'VEON SMITH: No, there's no expectations other than get the win basically.

Q. In the backfield, yourself and Khalid and obviously they have Dalvin and Jacques. What are your thoughts on that?

DE'VEON SMITH: Those are great running backs. I know -- I mean, I know our running back room doesn't want to get out-rushed by any other running back room. We're going to come and compete because we know Cook is a talented guy in my opinion. You know, we're just going to compete and do what we can do.

Q. Is that something that -- how much do you guys focus on that?

DE'VEON SMITH: You don't really focus on it. It's more so of kind of like our own little secret. Coach Wheatley probably doesn't even know about it, we just don't want to get out-rushed by any other room. It's just something guys within just the running backs, it's just us, the players.

Q. How much have you talked to the younger guys, especially a guy like Chris who might end up being a bigger part next season? How much have you talked to the younger players as far as how to approach this game, what they need to get out of this and that sort of thing, what they need to retain from it?

DE'VEON SMITH: These practices are basically the beginning of their spring ball next year. So I just tell them stay in your playbook, and you've got to -- you have to just understand how fast this is going to go. You don't understand -- this game is very important, like very, very important, but if you want to put your name in the NCAA, you want to make a household name, this is the game to do it, and this is the game to know what you can actually do. Every tool in the bag,

you've got a year under your belt now basically being on the field, so that's exactly what I have told Chris, and I think he's doing it right now.

Capital One Orange Bowl: Florida State vs Michigan

Tuesday, December 27, 2016



Amara Darboh

Michigan Wolverines

AMARA DARBOH: Coach Harbaugh knows what he's doing. He knows what works and what doesn't I feel like, and as a result of the last bowl, I think the players trust what he has planned for us.

Q. What's a typical day been like? What was yesterday like?

AMARA DARBOH: Yeah, we had breakfast in the morning, then we had meetings, and then we had lunch, a little downtime, and then we had practice. After practice Dave & Buster's, then came back and spent a little more time in some meetings, and then we had curfew.

Q. Do you guys have a schedule, like on paper?

AMARA DARBOH: Yeah, it's really organized, yeah.

Q. What have you seen from the Florida State defense?

AMARA DARBOH: They're a very athletic defense. They're athletic and fast, and they have a very, very good football team. There are some characteristics about them that stood out to me.

Q. I guess the defensive backs especially, what challenges does that present?

AMARA DARBOH: Yeah, as a receiver you want to go against good DBs, and hopefully it brings the best out of you. I think for me going against a DB like that helps you focus more on the game. It helps you to be more precise on your routes because the DBs, they're like the indicators for wide receivers, and then as a wide receiver you want to (inaudible).

Q. Do you think their defense is comparable to any defense you've faced this year?

AMARA DARBOH: I'd say maybe the Ohio State defense, but you don't really know until you play them. I think Florida State is kind of similar to theirs.

Q. You guys have been working hard from what guys were saying?

AMARA DARBOH: Yeah, I think the first day of practice is usually the toughest, especially in a different climate. I think the first practice went well.

Q. Sounds like they turned the heat up on you a little bit, too?

AMARA DARBOH: Yeah, they turned the heat up and we could definitely tell the first day that they did that. I think it does help coming down here.

Q. Was it like a morning conditioning session they had it up?

AMARA DARBOH: Yeah, and then I think at practice, too.

Q. I want to ask you about Khalid. Some of the guys were talking about his hands and how maybe most people see him as a bowling ball dude. Is he a better athlete than we might notice?

AMARA DARBOH: Yeah, he's a great athlete. I think not only his hands but his feet and route running. He's a guy that's very quick on his feet, and then yeah, his hands are -- I think he has one of the best hands on the team.

don't find guys that are just about me. It's about the team.

Q. (Inaudible.)

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, Kareem is really hitting the hole well. He's using his vision. He's getting north and south. He's making some nice cuts out there. He's really getting a good feel. Exciting to see Kareem do that.

Q. Talk about the way he's finished the season.

TIM DREVNO: I always knew Kareem had it in there. It's just a process. Everybody has different processes when they come to college. It just moves faster. It takes time to settle in, and he's the guy that we think he is. He's going to produce at a high level here at Michigan. Our strength program has done well with him, so it's exciting to see what his future holds.

Q. During the year you guys would line up in wacky formations. How much fun is it with this group?

TIM DREVNO: It's a lot of fun. It's a lot of fun. I think that these guys can obtain a lot of football and process quickly, and I think it's always neat when you do things like that, it keeps people engaged. It doesn't get boring, makes you have an edge, and it's part of the game plan that guys get excited about, you know? It's not just do something different.

Q. What do you think Wilton's ceiling is?

TIM DREVNO: Very high. Very high.

Q. Where is he now?

TIM DREVNO: He's right on task. He's right where he needs to be, and he'll keep getting better, but his ceiling is very high. He's a very talented football player, and what makes Wilton is that there's guys that are very talented out there, but there's guys that maybe lack the attentiveness, the maturity level that you're looking for, and he's got that maturity level that I've seen at the National Football League that guys produce at a high level. They'll have successful, successful careers because they do the right thing off the field and then do the right thing on the field, and they're intelligent.

Q. The fact that Wilton is playing through some stuff, not that you want that, but does that show you something?

TIM DREVNO: Yeah, I think just that he's a competitor. He's a tough guy. It's important for him to produce at a high level in the first team. That's special.