



Wisconsin Arrival Quotes

Tuesday, December 27, 2016
Hilton Anatole Hotel, Dallas, Texas



QUESTIONS FOR HEAD COACH PAUL CHRYST

COACH CHRYST: When we first found out that we had the opportunity to play in the Goodyear Cotton Bowl, we had a number of phone calls and coaches that had been here before and just kept talking about how great the people were and what a wonderful experience our team was going to have. And it hasn't even been 24 hours. I can see exactly what they're talking about.

Obviously, appreciate Rick [Baker] and Jay [McAuley] and everyone that works for this bowl. It doesn't just happen. We've talked with our players that our responsibility is to play as well as we can. I'm proud of what this team's done to earn this opportunity. And the best way we can thank all the people at the Cotton Bowl for having us as their guest is to play well.

I think we've already had that in the less than 24 hours. We got to go to the game last night. What a great experience. A number of players have never been to a NFL game. And then to have a chance to see some guys that you have coached, and Travis Frederick came by practice today. And, heck, last night he was playing. It was good.

We had our first practice down here. Appreciate it. I thought the kids had good energy, and it was good to get out there. It's been a great start, and looking forward to certainly many more things to come this week.

Q. How impressed have you been with P.J. Fleck, what he has been able to do with his program?

COACH CHRYST: It's impressive what he and their team has done. Any time you have an undefeated season, there's something special going on. As we started to prepare for them, you see it's a team that's really well-coached and talented players. And they play with good energy. So, obviously, it's impressive to see.

Q. You have got a couple of guys in [Vince] Biegel and [Sojourn] Shelton who are going to be playing their 54th game, I think. Honestly, you have to be talented to do that. What goes into that? What do you say to those two guys who have been there for so long and have been that productive?

COACH CHRYST: The thing you say is make sure your last game is your best game.

Just to have the opportunity to play at this level, it's impressive. And then to do it for that number, it's not only talent that allows them to do it. But there's a durability to do it. There aren't many in college football that do that.

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And then, when you look at the games they've played and the number of wins and the production that each have had, it's something that's worth talking about, quite honestly. And it's impressive.

And then when you get to know -- and those of you that don't know, Vince is here. And you can talk to him, along with Dare. You get a sense of there's a ton that goes into that. I feel lucky to be around it. It's pretty neat.

Q. Just wanted to ask you, from the standpoint of losing in the conference title game, recent history says that power conference teams that have lost their title game have struggled in bowls. I think it's 7-13 going back five years. Is that something you have to guard against to kind of refocus? And how do you do that?

COACH CHRYST: There's no doubt that game -- I thought our players put everything into it. And it didn't go the way we would have liked it to have gone.

What I like about this group is it did hurt. And, yet, for us to have this opportunity to play in the Cotton Bowl and then play against an undefeated team, that gives you -- that happened a long time ago. So you're able to transition. And then, when you start preparing for Western Michigan, it kind of changes your focus. And you have to do it in the season.

We had a couple tough losses in the season. We had to flip it in a day. You wish you had a little bit more time. But I think one of the things that I've admired about this team is the way they've kept their focus and kind of kept their mind on the matter at hand.

I've loved their response both after a disappointing loss and ever since we got going with our bowl practices. And that's what I was encouraged with today.

Now, it's another new format. We're down at the bowl. And I like the way the guys approached the day today. And so I feel good about that. This team, we're excited to be here and we've got a really good group of leaders. And we want to finish -- it's been a good season. We've done a lot of things that I'm really proud of, but we want to finish it the right way.

We know to do that we've got to play well. We're playing against a really good team.

Q. Does Western Michigan present a lot of the same challenges Penn State did as far as how balanced their offense is?

COACH CHRYST: I mean, each team is different. Certainly, they do a nice job. I have been impressed watching their quarterback. And then their running back, you look at him and there's a good player. And, obviously, we know about the receiver. So they had the balance that you're talking about. And, yet, I think each team's a little bit different.

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Q. T.J. Watt, the impact he has had on the defense and the Watt family in general at Wisconsin, and does he have any little brothers you're hoping to come?

COACH CHRYST: Nope. T.J. is the little brother. And I feel fortunate to be with T.J. now and last year Derek. And, when I was coordinating with J.J. So you get to know the family a little bit. And each one's a little bit different. And, yet, they have some of those same characteristics that I think make -- give them a chance to be successful. And there's no doubt that T.J.'s had a heck of a year. And our defense has got a lot of guys that have contributed, and certainly T.J. is one of them.

But that's what I like about that unit is there's a lot of guys that kind of own it. And Vince, like I said, is here and T.J. When you go down the list, we're talking about Sojourn Shelton at corner has played a lot.

But it's been fun seeing T.J.'s growth this past year. He played last year some and before that was a tight end. So it's been fun to see him grow and evolve into the player that he is now.

Q. Excuse me for a little parochial question here. Just going down memory lane a little bit, I remember Mack Brown back in 2010 after he was trying to revamp the Texas offense told us that he had talked to you very seriously about the offensive coordinator job and said that his recollection of it was that you really wanted to be a head coach instead of just make another move to coordinator. That was your coaching path at that time. And it's, obviously, worked out for you. But what do you remember about that decision at the time and kind of the way that your career has gone since?

COACH CHRYST: I remember having some conversations with Coach Brown and was impressed. I knew of him more than knew him. And I remember when I was with the Chargers, went out and watched Texas was playing in the Holiday Bowl. Went out and watched practice and kind of started to build a relationship.

As far as me and my coaching career or path, I felt really lucky every job I've had, quite honestly, to be coaching football. That's how you made your living, that was pretty good. And loved every stop that I've had. And I have been fortunate that way.

I think there's a point where you were wondering about being a head coach and is that something you would like to do. And I've been lucky in the however many years I have been doing it -- four, five years I've been doing it, been around some really great players and guys that have been fun to be with and work with and coach every day.

And this team I have enjoyed as much as any team because of the personalities and their approach. It's been fun.

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Q. Have you decided on a starting quarterback for this game yet?

COACH CHRYST: Not yet.

Q. On a lighter note, how do you feel about Vince's new haircut? (Laughter.)

COACH CHRYST: Are we going full disclosure or just partial?

Q. Partial.

COACH CHRYST: I have always enjoyed seeing what was next. So it's taken a little bit of getting used to. You can see the growth and maturity in Vince right now (smiling.)

You know what? Every one of them -- even my wife commented yesterday on the plane. And Vince was sitting right next to us. She looked, and she was wanting to see the design. And there was no design in there. So we got a group that we're going to try to lobby and see if we can get one last attempt to get a carving in there.

Vince is here. You can probably talk to him about it, and Dare is here.

I'm proud to be here with our two captains, Dare Ogunbowale and Vince Biegel. Both obviously really good football players. But guys that have made a huge impact on this team and really on the program. Pretty neat for me to see. Their stories are very different.

Dare walked on and played defense and now is, obviously, a running back for us that's so, so important to our team.

And Vince has had kind of a little bit more of the traditional approach. I remember being part of the whole staff was trying to be part of Vince's recruitment. So for me to be able to come back to Wisconsin and be around Vince and Dare, two guys that honestly as a coach they make and have made an impact on me personally. And I know they've had a huge impact on so many players in our locker room. And I think, when you get a chance, those of you that know him I think know this. And those of you that get to know them today and even through the week, you'll see I think a big part of why we have the team we have is not just Dare and Vince, but they're the leaders of it. And you can see what makes this team special. So I'm excited for those of you who haven't met Dare and Vince to get to know them. Thank you.

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QUESTIONS FOR RB DARE OGUNBOWALE

Q. (On being consistent.)

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: Coach talks about being great, being consistent. And so I try to make sure I'm very consistent with my approach to everything. And I think the guys in the locker room appreciate that, and I have been able to kind of lift us up in that way.

Q. The Big Ten championship, that loss, how long did it take you to kind of flush that? Was that a pretty tough loss?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: It actually was. It was probably longer than any other loss that I've had. I mean, it was a real tough loss. Definitely wanted to win the Big Ten championship. But, as Coach said, now it's out of our system. And now we're focused on what's the mission here. But it did sting for a while.

Q. You guys could easily be undefeated. You could be playing in the College Football Playoff. Has that been difficult to get over the fact you had so many close games against good teams that were a possession away, three losses?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: No, we wouldn't say that. Obviously, we know that football is a game with a lot of plays. And, sure, our games we lost by one touchdown, things like that. But there's a lot that went into them. And there were times when we weren't ourselves in those games, and we got beat. So I wouldn't say that kind of has a sour taste of not being in the playoff or anything like that. But we left a lot of plays on the field.

Q. In terms of regrouping after a championship game loss, you have experience. You went through that in 2014 after that Ohio State game. What's the key to doing something like that?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: Just kind of remembering what the goal is, and that's to win a bowl game. We, obviously, played in the championship. We didn't win that. But we've won games after a loss before. So, I mean, sure, that was a Big Ten championship. And that's why we play in the Big Ten is to win the championship. But now we're shifting gears. You get a lot of time. And that's the good thing about that, you get a lot of time to get it out of your system. And now we can move forward and worry about the Cotton Bowl.

Q. You realize, when you look at Michigan, those are kids that probably dreamed of playing in the Big Ten and didn't get the opportunity to. They have a bigger chip on their shoulder, too.

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: There's always ways you can find to have a chip on your shoulder. But this is two good teams playing against each other. On film they look very good.

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They move around very well. And, obviously, their record shows it.

Q. For those of us that don't know, what's the story with Vince's hair?

COACH CHRYST: He usually keeps a mullet with different logos. He keeps a mullet with different logos on the sides. He just recently cut it and tried to look like a normal person. That's the story behind that.

Q. Does he have any job interviews? What's the reason?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: I have no idea why he cut it. You will have to ask him. We really don't care as much as he thinks we do.

Q. Were you in the room when head Coach put the cowboy hat on?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: He put it on for a sec. I guess it's a tradition. He didn't think he was going to put it on, but he did. It was funny to see.

Q. This game for this team, what you faced this year and the program overall, what's at stake in this game?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: The Cotton Bowl. I wouldn't try to make the game bigger than it is. It's a big bowl game. We're very proud to play in a bowl like this. Throughout the bowl prep, we've learned how special a bowl it is. So I wouldn't try to make it bigger than what it is. It's a good team we're playing against in a great bowl. We're excited to get the opportunity to go out there and win.

Q. I know you have been wearing that knee brace. How close are you to being fully healthy, as much as you can be this time of year?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: I will be fine by the bowl game. I have been practicing. And the knee brace is just there to make sure I feel more comfortable, kind of the same way that quarterbacks wear the knee brace. Just making sure that I feel better.

I made sure I played in all the games playing through it, stuff like that. With the time we've had off since the championship, I think that was good for me. I think I'll be back full go.

Q. How long have you been battling whatever it is? All year?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: Pretty much. About midway, maybe a little bit before that. Like I said, nothing that was too alarming that they wanted to shut me down fully. Just tweaks here and there and things like that that you get from playing football.

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Q. (Question about trust with Corey Clement.)

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: I'm sure there's guys with different relationships in the locker room with him. That relationship might have wavered a bit. Me and Corey, I never had any doubt on what type of person he was, and I never lost trust in him as a person or as a teammate.

Q. Paul said something interesting. He said Corey had to learn Corey's trust again.

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: I would say definitely. His mind wasn't where it needed to be, and I think he realized that. And, once he started kind of acknowledging the fact that he needed to get back on track and worrying about the right things, worrying about winning games and being in the now. So I think that's what Coach means is that he realized that he was only hurting himself. And once he was being beneficial to himself, that he could start worrying about being a good teammate.

Q. Did you do more listening or more talking to him?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: Definitely more listening. He had a lot of people in his ear which was already one of the sources of the problem, just having a lot of people trying to give him advice and tell him what to do and things like that. So I think just being somebody he could talk to and someone that would listen to him was real helpful for him and helpful for our relationship.

Q. How fulfilling is it for you, how happy are you to see some redemption coming his way?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: Very happy. He's had a great season, reaching a thousand yards, which I know is a big goal of his since he got to Wisconsin. He's been real happy. And I have been real happy to see how successful he has been this year. And, just as a teammate, he's put us in great situations to win. But also a friend also, him having the success and setting himself up to be successful next year as well.

Q. How do you guys come off a tough loss against Penn State, prepare for a team that probably wasn't on your radar all yearlong?

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: The same way we have done in the past. The game stung, the loss stung. At the same time, we got to turn the page and move forward and watch film and gameplan against Western Michigan.

Q. You were at AT&T Stadium last night. You just came out of Lucas Oil, which is a pretty big place. What's it like walking in there? What will this game be like for you?

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RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: It's going to be awesome. I was here when we played against Alabama a couple of years ago. And I remember how loud it was, how big it was and just how the atmosphere was. I'm definitely looking forward to that again. And I'm really excited to have one more game in a venue like this.

Q. Do you think that will be an advantage? Western has only played one indoor game.

RB DARE OGUNBOWALE: I wouldn't say that's an advantage. Yeah, I don't really think about that stuff while I'm playing, so I'm sure those guys don't either.

QUESTIONS FOR OLB VINCE BIEGEL

Q. Why did you change up your hairdo?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: The mullet was fun. But moving forward, I got some serious things coming up and some business opportunities. I thought what better way to sport a new beginning, new haircut.

Q. Any superstitions cutting it?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: I'm not a superstitious person. Never felt that way. Just excited about a new haircut. More importantly, I'm more excited about the week we're having down here, being able to play in the bowl game. Very awesome bowl game. We have had just an amazing experience. Hospitality has been first class. The type of people we have had down here is first class. We are excited about the remainder of the week.

Q. You and Sojourn [Shelton], it would be your 54th game. What all goes into being able to play that long, in addition to, obviously, having some talent?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: I think there's a lot of variables that really go into playing that much. I think Coach Chryst kind of hit on it earlier with being durable. I think there's an aspect he didn't say that I'll make sure to say, there's an aspect of luck involved as well, okay? There's times when injuries are out of your control, right? And, personally, I got to thank the big man upstairs for keeping me safe. Being able to play in this many games has truly been a blessing for me. I have always dreamed about playing for the University of Wisconsin. And to finally be able to play here and play in this many games has been truly something special and something I'll take with me for the rest of my life.

Q. What's at stake with this bowl game?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: What's at stake for us is being able to finish. We put together a great

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season. What a better way to cap off a season with your last exclamation mark, your last stamp on the 2016 season. And we have a great opportunity in the Cotton Bowl, a great venue, first class. We couldn't be more excited to play Western Michigan and put our final mark on the Wisconsin Badger 2016 season.

Q. This Western Michigan team has turned over less often than anybody other team in the country and have you been forcing a lot lately. What's the key to make sure you can get a couple on Monday?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: It is going to be a fun matchup. Western Michigan is actually ranked number one in the country when it comes to turnovers. I think that's a credit to the type of players they have on offense, very reliable. I think it starts at a quarterback position, a guy who makes smart decisions and puts his offense in great positions.

So we've been able to create turnovers all season. It's been a big focal point for us, creating turnovers all week in practice. I continue to see that the rest of the week in practices, being conscious of the ball and providing opportunities for offense.

Q. Is getting pressure on the quarterback kind of the main key to that, to making sure you get turnovers?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: I think there's a lot of variables to creating turnovers. Obviously, the pass rush is a big part of it. Secondary coverage. Just our defense working in whole together is going to be extremely important.

We're looking forward to the opportunity.

I think it would be our playmakers doing our 1/11th. When our opportunities arise, take advantage of it and make those plays for our team.

Q. Do you guys emphasize that any more recently than you did early in the season or maybe last year since you have been making so much lately? Or is it coincidence you have been racking them up?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: It's no coincidence. I think that mindset started back in fall camp. Coach Wilcox is obviously -- he is huge on turnovers and has done a great job on different types of drills. Our practices revolve around creating take-aways. I think that foundation we set in camp has kind of paid dividends throughout the rest of the season.

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Q. How do you see T.J. Watt develop? He started at tight end. When he first went over to defense, did he have any clue what he was doing?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: Myself and Joe Shobert are two guys that took him under our wing. It has been really fun to watch T.J. Watt's progression and his development as a player.

T.J. Watt, I remember a couple of years ago playing against him, he was on the other side of the ball. He was the tight end. I was a linebacker. And we were butting heads on opposite sides. And for him to come into our room and the energy he has brought has been really fun to see. He's a great player for us. He has made plays for us all season.

Last year he was more of a role-player coming in on third down. And for him to kind of step up and make the type of plays he has done this season, the type of development he has done in the off-season has been fun to see.

Q. He's kind of handled being a legacy guy with his older brothers going through Wisconsin. That's a big deal to be a Watt playing for the Badgers, right?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: It is a big deal. I think T.J. has handled the pressure well. I was good friends with Derek Watt when he was in college. He's a year older than me, and T.J. is a year younger than me. It has been fun. Each one of the Watt brothers are different.

I haven't had a chance to meet J.J., the oldest one. But with Derek and T.J., they are both great guys. Great teammates, and we're happy to have them on the team.

Q. Being in this neck of the woods, we have Mike Gundy and the mullet. Tell us the story of your hair.

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: Some of the fun things started back in the 2014 season, I had the mullet. I ramped it up my sophomore season. It started with the mullet. And all of a sudden I thought it would be cool to have a design. And it turned into designs every other week. Me and Joe Shobert, we cut our hair for -- the children's hospital came in and cut our hair. It was an awesome event. We raised a bunch of money.

Next year I went with a mohawk. Same deal. Different logos, different designs each side of the head. Should I go clean cut this year? What should I do? What better way than to cap off my senior season than to bring back the mullet. So we brought back the mullet. Same deal, stuff on the sides of the head.

For me it was a new beginning, new chapter of my life, right? I'm flipping the page and going more business, more professional haircut. I have had crazy haircuts for three years now. I thought it's a fun way to flip the page and kind of start new.

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I got job interviews coming up that I really got to take care of.

Q. You mentioned Shobert texted you after you cut the mullet. Have you talked to him since the Browns got their first win? Was he excited?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: I haven't texted him since that. I probably should text him congratulations on their first win.

Any time you have a friend, a person who is playing in the NFL, it's fun to watch that. It's fun to watch Shobert be able to contribute to the Browns team. Joe in Cleveland. T.J. Watt in Chargers. All over the NFL. It's not the team I'm cheering for; it's the players I'm cheering for. Regardless of the team, I'm going to root for Badgers in the NFL. In Wisconsin, we are a brotherhood. And it's fun to see that, and it's fun to have that support from our brothers here.

Q. From the defense, was the Penn State game tough to flush?

OLB VINCE BIEGEL: The Penn State game, I would say we put so much into the season, it was really a storybook season and the things we have overcome with the schedule. The outside noise that really played, that really made the season special. We kind of overcame adversity and injuries. Myself. We had Jack Cichy, Chris Ore, guys on our offense. This group has gone through a lot of adversity. And we really want to cap it off with a big win against Penn State.

Obviously, we weren't able to do that. They made more plays than we did. Penn State is a very talented team. They're in the Big Ten championship for a reason. It's a credit to them, and it's a credit to their coaches and players.

For us moving forward now, the best thing for us to flush out that loss is to get back to work. That's what we did two weeks ago. Starting back up, bowl prep, getting in the swing of things, getting back to what we do which is playing football. That's been rejuvenating for me to just flush out that game and getting back to work and us playing football. That's beating Western Michigan on January 2nd.

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