

**December 28, 2012**



An Interview with:

**LSU  
COACH LES MILES  
JOSH DWORACZYK  
ERIC REID**

THE MODERATOR: At this time we'll go ahead and begin the LSU press conference with Coach Les Miles, Josh Dworaczyk and Eric Reid.

Coach, an opening comment and talk about what your Bowl week experience has been thus far and how preparations are going.

COACH MILES: I'd like to thank the Chick-fil-A committee, Gary Stoken, the hospitality has been great. The city of Atlanta is a little cool, but there's a lot to do here and it's an enjoyable event. I think our guys are having fun. I only say I think because you never really know.

But our guys are practicing hard. We're enjoying the facility in Atlanta, the Falcon's facility, and I think our preparation's good. I think we're looking forward to playing. Anytime you have two quality football teams and an opportunity to play for some significant -- our football team looks forward to that style of game.

**Q. Eric, what's been your favorite Bowl week experience so far as far as player events?**

ERIC REID: So far we got to spend our first night at Dave and Busters, got unlimited game cards. That was pretty fun. We got to watch some of our teammates do a basketball competition, free throw sort of thing.

It was just fun getting to play all the games for free.

**Q. Josh, what about you, what event are you looking forward to the most the rest of the week?**

JOSH DWORACZYK: Definitely have to agree with Eric about Dave and Busters. But just this morning we had a FCA breakfast, real powerful message. Got an opportunity to give a closing prayer, which is special to me. An opportunity to be around fellow Christian athletes. And Coach Miles and other guys to be there and the support you have, it's special.

**Q. Eric and Coach, Eric, talk about what you saw out of Clemson's receivers on film, your thoughts on them, do they remind you of anyone you played, specifically DeAndre Hopkins and Sammie Watkins. And Coach talk about the matchup between the secondary that you have and those speedy wide receivers?**

ERIC REID: They have an explosive group of core receivers. I can venture to say they're up there with one of the best we've faced all year. And they have a great quarterback who does a great job of putting the ball where they can catch it.

It's a challenge to our secondary and defense as a whole to stay tight in coverage and make sure we can bring them some passes.

COACH MILES: Yeah, it's a great challenge anytime you play that kind of attack. A quarterback that can throw and very, very explosive receivers, you have to handle it in a variety of ways. Certainly coverage, changing coverage and an opportunity to rush the passer.

So, again, great challenge. We enjoy the matchup.

**Q. Eric, talk about how Kevin has kind of blossomed as a leader a little bit more. I know he doesn't talk much and make a lot of noise. But what he's done for you on defense and as a team?**

ERIC REID: He does exactly what you want a leader to do. He's not a vocal guy as you say. But he leads by example. He does everything right. He does everything the coaches ask him to do. He doesn't backtalk. He's a great

example setter for the young guys, somebody they can look up to and somebody they can count on if they have a question, they can go to him and he'll answer it and not embarrass them.

JOSH DWORACZYK: Just my experience with Kevin, I blocked the guy a lot, especially during camp and spring when there's a lot of contact a lot of things going on, when I was at guard.

I had a lot of interactions with Kevin. I saw him developing, I saw the way he was becoming a student of the game, I think he was trying to follow in the footsteps of Kelvin and some of the other linebackers we had that really took him under their wing.

I think Kevin took it to another level. Certainly had that kind of season. And watching Kevin and our defense, a lot of guys that are seniors now that I watched grow up, and Kevin's one of those guys that I'm proud of him because he's such a great guy. Off the field, he's always doing the right thing.

And I think that says a lot for what he does on the field, too, because he's going to make sure that he's in the right spot the right time and he's making tackles. Being a sure tackle at linebacker is all you can ask out of a guy and that's what Kevin does for our team.

**Q. Eric, I think you told the story about the Florida game that I guess about halfway through you guys all started to realize what was going on. He said you went and said something to Kevin in the huddle and it kind of motivated him a little bit more. Do you remember that, can you talk about it?**

ERIC REID: Florida, their game plan we figured out it was to run the ball, I think it was something crazy, running 50 some times. I told him you gotta be our leader, because you gotta direct the front seven, because they weren't throwing the ball much so there wasn't much I could do, wasn't much the secondary could do.

He stepped up. He played big. We all know he came close to setting a school record. He did exactly what we needed him to do that game. It's just unfortunate that the outcome wasn't what we wanted. But it was a huge game for him in his career.

COACH MILES: There were two series in that game that Kevin Minter wasn't in and both series were scoring drives for Florida.

**Q. Coach, you talked about covering and containing Boyd, I guess. Just talk about -- you faced a number of quarterbacks that have an ability to break and contain. You handle it relatively well. Is it a similar situation you feel this game, or are you more concerned about pressuring him so he doesn't have time to make those deep plays down the field?**

COACH MILES: It has to be the combination of both. There has to be a point in time where you keep him in the pocket and you play coverage and there's an opportunity to rush the passer with four guys. I think anytime a quarterback can pull it down and go get yards, there's an added responsibility to those guys that are rushing the ball, rushing the passer.

And so, again, it's something that you have to do with more than one strategy. You must rush the passer. You must contain him when you step back and let him throw it and to have coverage.

And, yeah, he does pose a nice threat.

**Q. Coach, Eric, can you both address ways in which you have seen the two Jalens mature and develop over the course of this season?**

ERIC REID: We have a saying when the freshman come in: Young guys play like tigers. That's what was told me when I got here. When Brandon Taylor got hurt, I had to step up and play. That's what we expected them to do when they got here. We told them the minute they walked on campus we needed them to step up and play big for us. They're young players but very talented. I have seen them develop and tried to help coach them. They've come a long ways to the beginning of the season. They're two guys we'll rely heavily in the game, they'll play some very good receivers.

I'm confident in them. I think they're going to do their job very well. And hopefully they can get some turnovers for us.

COACH MILES: I agree exactly with Eric. We've kind of -- really Patrick Peterson put it on our wall before he left. He said, basically, that we expect the young guys that come into this program to step on to the field and play like tigers.

And it's a part of us. And so young guys that we're recruiting, we're recruiting a brand of guy like Eric Reid, true freshman, started the Cotton Bowl, we expect those guys to step in and play. And both Mills and Collins have demonstrated they have that ability. And, frankly, they're getting to the

back end of their freshman year. They should be playing like sophomores or juniors by now.

**Q. The two players, when you play in these non-conference games, do you get a sense that the opposition has a chip on their shoulder about beating the SEC and what the SEC represents and what you guys, being a power from that conference?**

JOSH DWORACZYK: I think for our team, for the conference in general, we have a lot of rivalries, we have a lot of teams in our conference, that we step up to the challenge. And you always look forward and excited to play against those teams.

When you get to a Bowl week, you get to a Bowl game, and especially during the selection process and you get an opportunity to see these different teams from these different conferences and a chance to really see what they have to offer and what kind of matchup you're going to have, I think that those teams do look at the SEC and have an opportunity to go there, play against a team from the SEC and show that they could compete with it.

And for us it's the same thing. We want to represent our conference. We want to represent our team as best as possible. And we're trying to play our best game, too. If there's an SEC chant going on after the game, it would be nice.

ERIC REID: I basically agree with Josh, I could see how a team outside the SEC could play with a chip on their shoulder because a lot of people say we're the best conference.

I know they're going to come out with that sort of intensity from the jump and we're going to have to match it. We want to represent our conference well and hopefully we can get a victory.

**Q. Players and Coach, this is a follow-up to the previous question, but a lot of people believe when you're a team like LSU and you've played for national championships and BCS Bowls and you're not in the BCS, you're not in the national championship game, that you don't give -- you won't give your best effort. You won't prepare your best for a non-BCS non-championship Bowl type game. For the players and Coach, are you convinced that this team has focused and prepared its best for this game, like it is a national championship type of game, though it's not the national championship?**

JOSH DWORACZYK: For me, I've been doing a lot of thinking about this, that's a question I've gotten a couple of times. And just being a senior, being a guy this is my last game, no matter what happens after this, I can't get a seventh year. So this is it.

And I'm excited about this game. But we always talk about how do you want to be remembered. That's something we have put on T-shirts before. It's something we've talked about in the summer times and in the off-season, something that we talk about in our conditioning programs. And I never really got to the point of it, I guess, until this year, when I realized this is my chance to leave, how I want to be remembered. But for a guy like Eric, our underclassmen, the other guys on this team, their opportunity to be remembered by me.

And that's how I guess I should have been looking at it these last few years and throughout the season in the last games is that at the end of the season no matter what game you're playing in, that's the last chance that senior or that guy leading the team is going to remember that's, how he's going to remember you. All the guys on our team, I think they've accepted that challenge: How do you want to be remembered? And how do you want to play in this game, do you want to be in the top five whenever this is all said and done?

And that's something that we're excited about. And I think our team has been preparing just like we prepare every single year. Bowl games are exciting times for us. We really get after it. And I think that's what's going to push us forward in this game.

ERIC REID: I agree completely with Josh. Every team wants to be in the national championship, but that wasn't our outcome this year. But I'm sitting next to a guy that I look up to.

He's sacrificed his body for six years for this program. He's led me. He's helped me develop as a football player. And it's guys like him that motivate me to play my best. Because, like he said, either way it goes, this is the last football game. And I have to do my best -- I have to lead my defense to help him get a victory in his last game because I want to send him out on a high note.

And I want this team to start next year on a high note. That's with a victory.

COACH MILES: It's an interesting piece that you just heard. You heard two teammates talk

about the reason that you play well for each other.

And I really think that this team has that identity. They recognize it's a team outcome that we have an opportunity to be remembered as an elite football team, one of those teams that really, frankly, when playing their best can line up against any.

And, frankly, Clemson is a team that's worthy of that respect, and the opportunity to play a very, very talented, capable Clemson in the back end of a season in my opinion is every motivation that we'll need to play well.

And we would expect that we might play our best in this last one.

**Q. Coach, a little bit of a follow-up to the last question. Can you talk about the process of hitting the restart button for this team after the Alabama loss, just to get you refocused and back on track considering what you lost, not only the game, but the circumstance?**

COACH MILES: I didn't feel like there was much refocus. I think that our football team realized that, frankly, minus a minute and 30 that the opportunity to do everything that they want to is really there and they finally started playing, in my opinion, at a very high level.

And I think our team went to the next week with the opportunity to do that yet again. And that there was not a real issue with refocus. It was really where we're catching our speed and let's continue that. And irrespective of how things may work out, we're fundamentally the goal at the end of the week, with a game to play, is victory.

And it's pretty established in this program. And these guys right here, they find reasons to play for each other.

**Q. Eric and Coach. Eric, everybody knows Clemson I think is a passing team. They talk about the wide receivers, but what do you see out of the running game and can you forget about that, just pay attention to those guys as a safety, or do you have to come up and help in the running game? And Coach can you talk about Andre Ellington and what you see out of him on film?**

ERIC REID: I'm given the difficult task of defending both the pass and the run, and they have a very explosive running back. Extremely quick. Before you know it he'll be around the edge and running up the sidelines. So for me and as far as the secondary, we have to play both roles. The

safeties have to trust their keys if the line is blocking down, you have to field the run, you have to field the alley. But if there's pass protection you have to get back and help the corners out.

Clemson is blessed with a bunch of players that are very fast. So we just gotta stay on top of our game, be just as fast as they are and make quick decisions and make the right decisions.

COACH MILES: Anytime you have a quarterback that has mobility that they have and a thousand-yard back, the running game is a key piece to it. And there will be a significant piece of that game plan that will be devoted to stopping the run.

**Q. Coach, you guys have played in BCS games recently. And this year you're at the Chick-fil-A Bowl playing another 10-win game. How does this experience match up to the BCS type experience?**

COACH MILES: Very similar. First of all, the opponent. I think the opponent here in this game is as quality as many BCS games that there is. As an example of others that you look at.

And the week is orchestrated in such a manner that it has the earmarks of every well-organized, very to-the-minute detailed opportunity that BCS games give those teams that play in them.

**Q. Clemson in their press conference talked about being more physical. And I guess their coach has put an emphasis on physical practices, maybe more so than they had in the past. I guess maybe that's a compliment to the way you all play. Knowing that, does that surprise you that a team will try to be more physical in a game against you all? And, Eric, I think you touched on it, I think the speed that their skill player, it might be the adjustment for you all?**

JOSH DWORACZYK: I think it's a respect thing. I think it also goes along the lines of the way that we prepare and the way that we practice.

If you want to go up against LSU and you want to make sure that you can control maybe the line of scrimmage or make sure you control the pace of the game, you're going to have to be physical. And I think Clemson understands that.

Now I'm sure they're going to come out there with everything they've got. I'm looking



forward to it. I know they have a great defensive line. And it's going to be a great matchup there for us up front.

ERIC REID: Just what Josh said, they know coming in we're a very physical team. That's something we pride ourselves on. Us knowing that they know that, we know they're going to come out, match the intensity. Like I said earlier, it's going to be a very exciting game. Great way to end the season.

COACH MILES: Again, how we practice and the things that we do really hasn't changed. And we recognize that teams that play us certainly must have that characteristic. And Clemson does.

**Q. Coach, Dabo was talking a few minutes ago talking about how they enjoyed being able to practice in the facility where the game will be held. You talked about mentioning enjoying the Falcons' facility, I know they have an indoor facility there. But how did you weigh those two things, and what did you like about choosing the Falcons' facility?**

COACH MILES: Anytime you play on the field that you're going to play on in the game, anytime you're allowed to practice on that facility, it gives landmarks and the ability to recognize the style of play, and you get used to the backdrop and the facility. The turf is the same turf we have in Baton Rouge that we practice on, we practice inside for that matter and we practice outside.

And there's a comfort to that. We go into that facility. It's a -- I know that there's some plans to change that facility out here in the upcoming years. I can tell you that we sure have enjoyed our time there.

**Q. Coach, how do you foster up the physicality we hear so much about in the SEC and at LSU? Do you do more live tackling in practice? How do you create that culture that we hear about and see on the field?**

COACH MILES: It's interesting. We practice a significant portion of every day against LSU. And I think that that kind of tunes us best as we can.

And I don't know that live tackling is the answer. I think it's a small piece of that. But a quality competitive practice that would require going against the best that you have. And I don't know that that's any special -- I don't know that there's not a number of schools that don't do exactly that way. I can only tell you that it seems

to be consistent with the guys that we recruit that that is a physical characteristic of our team.

**Q. This is for Coach. There have been a couple of questions here already about representing the ACC and the SEC. And earlier Coach Swinney says he never thinks about bringing conference affiliation. Is that any different for you when you're in a major matchup like this against a storied program from another Big Six conference, or is it only about your program and your program only?**

COACH MILES: I think there's some -- anytime that you're a sports fan, I think there's some perimeter that our players responded to. Yeah, it is kind of nice to be an SEC school and to uphold the traditions of our conference. But I agree with Coach Swinney. It never crosses my mind what conference somebody is in that we're playing. It's all about the matchup and how we would prepare. And, frankly, after the game, as a sports fan, you'll talk about a number of things, one of which will be the conference affiliations.

But going in, the preparation is that guy's big and fast and how are we going to handle him. And this guy here's somebody we want to attack. It's all specific to our opponent.

**Q. Eric, to the team's credit, you guys won all three games after the Alabama loss, but the pass defense I think gave up 300 yards in each of those games. Can you talk about that? Do you look at that and how much improvement do you guys need to make in that aspect?**

ERIC REID: I've been focused going into each week to improve on the mistakes we made in the past weeks. It's a running thing for us to always be improving. So we find out what we did wrong in the previous game to try to get it corrected for the next game.

So Chief does a great job of that. We have a corrections period to where we try to correct those mistakes, and we just try to move forward.

**Q. Coach, something else Kevin said is he said John Chavis told him I guess before the season he was his kind of linebacker. In four years around Chief, do you feel like that's true and why do you think Kevin has fit that mold?**

COACH MILES: I think Kevin has really

taking coaching. I think he's a guy that really plays with the same style of mentality as the defensive coordinator. You say a very physical player, he understands what's being called and what the formations options are.

And he's not only a bright player, plays with emotion and has a very, very physical component to his tackling. So I kind of understand how John Chavis could say that.

I could also say that they have a similar height comparison, and I suspect that John Chavis was a dynamic tackler in his day. So I think there's more than just player/coach. I think he's a little bit like John Chavis was as a player.

**Q. Sticking with John Chavis, Dabo said a few years ago that he thought he had him, he was about to hire him, and he joked that you came in and stole him at the last minute. Can you recall how you sealed the deal to get Chief to come to LSU?**

COACH MILES: As I recall, we visited very early in the process in an interview and then during a really -- I believe it was a Chick-fil-A experience, I think it was the Georgia Tech game that we were playing and preparing for, and frankly I can remember visiting with him by phone from this very Holt.

But I didn't remember any other schools. I can only tell you that John's a very, he's a team guy. He's defensive through and through. And he's a great assistance to me as the head coach. So we're glad that we have him.

**Q. We certainly see Zach on the field and we've talked to him once in a while. What are some intangibles, maybe things that we don't see on the field on Saturdays that you've seen over the course of the season that have improved or have made him a good leader for your team, during the season and going forward to next season?**

COACH MILES: I don't know that you really or anybody could see all the things that Josh does for us. And he's that guy that -- talking about Dworaczyk -- I was going to say something nice about you anyway, Josh -- Zach. I thought you looked at Josh when you said that.

I think Zach's a very bright student of the game. I think he's very competitive. I think he enjoys stepping back and letting it rip. And he's making quality decisions. He's a little bit of a perfectionist, he wants it to work and work well. I think it's helped the chemistry of the passing game.

I think it marries comfortably with the receiving corps. And I think he's done that very effectively. He was named and voted for by his teammates as a team captain.

But Dworaczyk, your other question, Dworaczyk, let me tell you about Dworaczyk. Dworaczyk came in here his sixth year. And as every guy on our team, they had the year as it might play out. And the variances are all really different, right?

And the idea that Josh Dworaczyk is our starting left tackle and has played virtually in every game, and the idea that he has provided leadership on and off the field, that he has a very, very strong perspective of who our team is and who he is within it, has given us great guidance.

The key piece to teams is them taking, a player taking team ownership. I think both these guys have done that extremely well. It's really -- it's their team. I appreciate you asking that question about Dworaczyk, though.

**Q. Coach, in South Carolina, we followed Sam Montgomery in his high school career and of course we had Jadeveon Clowney to follow. And you've coached him and you've prepared for Jadeveon. I wonder if you could talk about those two and if you see Sam along the same lines as Jadeveon, just from your knowledge of the two?**

COACH MILES: Well, first of all, I think Mr. Clowney's a very talented defensive end and will certainly play for years in the next league. I think he has a tremendous contribution to South Carolina.

I really don't compare other players, if you don't mind. I can only tell you that Sam Montgomery was having a great year and he got hurt.

Guys get hurt. Suddenly it makes a decision, a situation where you must make the decision of who you're going to be there after.

And he came back really bigger, faster and stronger and really has played since that injury, in my opinion, with a little chip on his shoulder.

In other words, I want to get the most out of these snaps. And he's been a tremendous leader for us. And it gives us a very physical yet athletic end that frankly you want him on the field when the game is to be decided.

**Q. Eric and Josh, I know you have a**

game to play. Part of our job is looking towards next year. Josh, you won't be there, could you talk about what the offense will look like next year, what you expect of those players? Eric, I know your future is still undecided as are many of your teammates on the defensive side, but could you also touch on what you think on what the defense will bring to the field next year?

JOSH DWORACZYK: I'm excited about the offense next year. I've had an great opportunity to lead and mentor the guys on this offensive line. And this opportunity to see these guys grow up and the way they've been playing throughout this year. I know we've touched on this throughout the past few weeks about Vadal and Tre'. And others don't get talked about as much, because seems like he's above the class. But he's in the same class as Tre'. They're both redshirts. He's a sophomore. But just the way that they've developed and the way they've grown up.

So the offensive line is going to be exciting. Throw Falk back into the mix who I have a lot of respect for him playing this position this year. It sure has been ups and downs. And I know Falk makes it look easy.

The offensive line, that's going to be a great asset. You've got Zach, got all the guys back on the receiving corps, the backs, and throwing it all into the mix, I think our offense, the way the coaching staff has been able to develop and really start to mold this offense around Zach and his arm, I think they're going to have a great opportunity next year to be one of the best in the nation.

COACH MILES: Let me say this, too, how do you know he won't be with us? Are you saying he won't go into coaching? Are you saying I won't have an opportunity for him? In other words, you suppose that frankly he wouldn't be here. But he answered the question extremely well. Josh, you may give thought to if, you know, if you don't decide to go out and make millions of dollars if you'd like to kind of just be a football coach, that we keep you around here as a GA.

You can break that news right now if you want to, that the opportunity for you to stick around here and you have to shave, though. (Laughter).

ERIC REID: I'm excited about the defense as well. There are a lot of guys who are making the decision whether or not to stay or go to the next level, myself included.

But regardless of whatever, it's an exciting time, because we have a bunch of young guys anxious to play and anxious to get their

opportunity. And there are a lot of older guys willing to coach those guys, we're willing to see each other succeed. So, first of all, we'd like to end the season on a victory on a high note. And then we're looking forward to getting right back at it with the off-season program.

COACH MILES: It's an interesting piece, too. I'm glad you guys asked this question. We have a number of juniors that will consider the NFL. And here's the piece: One, it's their decision. It's certainly not the coach's decision.

Two, what the coach would give them is every piece of information that he could give them to help them make a quality decision. I can say this that the agent perspective is diminished because currently the NFL has slots. And there's really nothing that an agent can do for any of our guys that get drafted. It's really he's going to fit into a slot and it will be based on how they play.

And the only thing that we would ask is that they not give them a deal. But, again, this is something that is their view and certain guys, if you would look at Patrick Peterson and Mo Claiborne, it was exactly right for those guys to go out. Thanks for asking that question.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you.

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