

**NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2019 - GEORGIA STATE**



**INTERVIEW OF COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** First of all, I'm very proud of our football program and our football team. Certainly coming out here having the experience in the week we've had and ultimately not pulling out this win tonight is very disappointing, but I'm so proud of our players and our staff and everybody involved.

It didn't go our way. Football and all games in general, there's a winner and loser, and you've got to make plays to be one or the other. We didn't make the plays tonight. We made some bonehead mistakes amongst us as coaches and some plays that we didn't make from the players.

And it falls on everybody's shoulders, the disappointment and the loss. It's just unfortunate because we had a really -- what I thought was a program-changing season. I know a lot of you say, you finished 7-6, how can the program have changed. I saw a lot of grit and toughness and tremendous fight. I saw great leadership.

I saw the program really starting to, I guess you use the word blossom, and the excitement generated from the course of the season from the opening game against Tennessee the homestands, going 5-1 at home. And we just were unable to finish.

But, like I said, I'm proud of these guys, very, very proud. And this is not going to be just an ever-other-year occurrence. This is something we're going to strive for, and we're going to win that eighth game for the first time.

And those seniors sitting in our locker room crying their eyes out are the ones that put us in position to go and do that, to be successful in the future. We will certainly be successful in the future.

Tonight we fell on the short end. Hats off to Wyoming. They did the things necessary to pull out that victory right there. Coach Bohl, staff and players, they played hard and came out with the win tonight.

**Q. What legacy can you talk about Dan leaving?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** Are you kidding me? You can talk about courage. You talk about leadership. You talk about heart and effort and enthusiasm. You talk about putting a program on your back. And all those guys. Ed Curney, he's sitting over there. He's got a torn ACL, Remy Lazarus knee surgery. You could go on and on. Those guys (indiscernible), it's hard. We went through a season, you have four captains, we've got three knee injuries. We have one who plays through an ACL tear. And our left tackle comes out, last man standing, I guess you would say.

What legacy? It's amazing. I can write a book on each and every one of them and what they meant to the program -- great leaders. I saw it firsthand from this spring. Back a year ago, throughout the summer, into this fall and they stayed and they did everything in their power to



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lead this football team to be very successful. I'm very proud of those guys. I'll never forget what they've done for us.

**Q. How crucial was the roughing the punter call?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** You really want to ask that question? Honestly. We're sitting there in a fourth-and-16. And that's on me. That's on me. It was called a block for whatever reason. I should have overridden that call. I really should have. You're not going for the block on the fourth-and-16. But we did, and roughed the punter right there.

Gave them that crazy touchdown right before the half. And I think we had eight guys almost run into each other when they scored on that throw.

So, yeah, and you look at it from a momentum standpoint, here you are, you're in a seven-point ballgame. You're going to go in there and you are feeling good. We're in striking distance. We feel like we can move the ball and put some points on the board and then that happened. And so that was a critical moment.

**Q. You talked briefly about the injuries. Do you go back and look at what would have been if they were healthy throughout the season?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** If you want me to give you coach-speak and say, oh, you don't ever look back and say that. But you know, you certainly do. And I think even to the point when we lost Ed and Remy, those are leaders that are taken off the field during the course of the game. And Dan goes down at ULM.

And it's hard to keep the morale up, to tell you the truth, when all those things continually happen to you. But they stood strong.

And to see the way Dan finished the way he did. It's real easy to look back and say this could have been a 9-, 10-win year. But that's the game of football. It's physical. Things happen.

We're going to develop our football program. We have people in place that can step in there and when I say step in there, you can't replace the leadership that those guys have, the talent level, the communication that's going to be there, and it's coming.

**Q. When Dan seemed to bang up that leg in the second quarter, were you concerned that maybe he wouldn't be able to continue?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** Dan and I have a real good relationship. I told Dan, I said, you can look at me at any time and let me know that, hey, it's not going to happen. And never once did he give me that look saying, you know, I'm done. And people probably don't understand that. They really don't. They probably said, oh, how can you put a guy out there with a torn ACL.



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But if he ever thought there was something that was going to happen where he thought he was forcing the injury, he was going to give me that look and I would give him the thumbs up. He would have known it.

**Q. It was 9 of 12 on third downs in the third quarter, what were some of the issues to get them off the field?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** I'll tell you, it was the coverage. A lot of times we placed them outside levers and they beat us inside on the routes. We weren't getting -- we were getting pressure on the quarterback, but he was releasing at the right time and getting those throws in there.

We should have been a little bit tighter in coverage. We should have doggone pressed them a little bit. Press them, and then bang them up on the line of scrimmage, reroute them in the routes. And I didn't see us rerouting at times. They were just running free and breaking on inside slants, or running that seam route. And they weren't taking off their track. And that's critical. You can't let a timing throw beat you. You've got to reroute those guys. You've got to put some hands on them.

**Q. With a freshman quarterback, they went to a more balanced offense than they had all year, is that a problem for you in preparation?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** I don't think so. Not at all. They did exactly what I thought they would do. I didn't think they would be 9-of-12 on third down and have the ability to run like they did, but they did.

**Q. When you look at third and fourth downs, what were some of the issues?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** Well, you know, we were going to take some chances. And so that first fourth down right there, I can't remember, the 33-, 34-yard line, on our own, probably some eye-opening, going for it. But we had the fumbled snap right there or the fumbled pitch, I should say, that didn't work for us.

And like I said, we lost a lot of receivers this year. For whatever reason we didn't have the open looks that we typically have. I thought we were holding up pretty well in protection. I didn't think they were giving us any unnecessary looks from a blitz scheme.

I think they played well defensively and took some things away from us. And credit to them and their staff.

**Q. Beyond this game how the program changed with the guys, how much has it meant to lead and coach these guys over the season?**



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**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** When you get to know Dan Ellington, Remy Lazarus, Ed Curney and Hunter Atkinson, I could name every senior, it's amazing, when you go through some of the things that we go through, especially when you're trying to build a program, it's not always -- you don't see the tough, tough times.

You watch 60 minutes of a ballgame. You make your opinions based off whether we won or lost, but you have no idea the closed-door meetings that we have, the tough times in the weight room, the 6.00 a.m. runs, the academic meetings, the laughs, the talks about life; you don't get all that.

I wish you could see it. I wish somebody could document that. And then it's just gone. It's taken away from the senior class. When I say it ends, and this football team, it's amazing, just who those guys are in that room. And really walked in that locker room and really ticked off, and, like I say, I hate losing, everybody does.

But those men laid it on the line. You have a quarterback with a torn ACL. You've got two other captains who may need knee surgeries, a bunch of other guys who just laid it on the line for you. It means the world to me to coach guys like that.

That's men. Coaching men. It's not like they were just a bunch of goof-offs. Those are men. They're doing great things. I'm extremely proud of this football team. I'm extremely proud of everyone involved.

**Q. What's your message to the guys going into 2020?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** Learned from the leaders that we had this year. I told them I hoped they all took notes because we've got to establish new leaders. New guys that have got to step up, new commitments from young guys that just don't have the sense of urgency. I said I hope you paid attention to the guys who led us this year because they led us in the right way, the right way.

If you did take notice, and if you can take anything away from them, then we're going to be okay, we'll move forward and be just fine.

We have a hell of an offseason to go through. And you are going to have a bad taste in your mouth losing the last one, and they understand that. I told them we've got to have new leaders emerge and have new focus and evaluate everything from the start. So I told them just get ready.

**Q. Can you tell a season like this has helped you recruiting-wise?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** I thought we signed an exceptional recruiting class. You have some of the biggest wins in school history. Go 5-1 at home. There's a lot of firsts that we've done here.



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So certainly, people have taken notice of Georgia State University football, and they'll continue to take notice. And as long as they're doing that, the recruiting will be good. Certainly.

Here we are playing football on national TV. People were watching us today. A lot of teams that weren't playing today or that didn't have an opportunity to go play, so yes, this season has done a world, makes a big difference for us.

**Q. (Inaudible)?**

**COACH SHAWN ELLIOTT:** (Laughter.) No, I have not. I have not. Maybe if I win, 13, 14, 15 games.

[End transcript.]

