

NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING



**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** I'll go ahead and start. First of all, I'm sure Georgia State would echo this as well. It's our first time here in the NOVA Home Loan Arizona Bowl. It's been a marvelous experience thus far. Our players have had great preparation. We've enjoyed the balmy weather here in Tucson. That's not a sarcastic comment. It's warm for us.

I think our football team is galvanized. We've all gotten healthy, and they've had great focus.

Bowl games many years ago, when they first started, were really about a community coming together and having a celebration and inviting two college football teams to join them. And unfortunately, I think, in today's world of college athletics -- and there's some great things with college football -- I think we've lost sight of that a little bit.

There's no doubt in my mind the experience that we've had thus far is really grounded on a community coming together and doing things in a first-class way and celebrating these two great programs as we get ready to play.

We've got a great deal of respect for Georgia State. Although I don't know Coach Elliott well, he enjoys a great national reputation. And I understand the coaching tree that he's worked under, I know many of those men.

They have an excellent football team. I think we have an excellent football team as well. We're looking forward to the game. It should be very competitive.

**Q. Craig, have you made any decision on who will start at quarterback?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** Yes, we have. Levi Williams will be our starting quarterback. We've got a great competition. They're both team players. We'll see how the game unfolds. But we made the determination coming into this game that Levi is going to give us the best opportunity for us to win. Both of those two guys have played a lot of football. Right now we're going with Levi.



**NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING**



**Q. What did he show you in practice that gave him the nod?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** Well, I think he's continued to embrace our offense. As we looked at a lot of the elements in our offense to continue to stress the defense. He came off the scout team several weeks ago and was integrated into our game plan as to what has during that time. He's embraced our offense more. He's a bright young man.

He did have the advantage. He was an early enrollee out of high school. So he had spring football with us. He's done a great job.

I do want to be real clear on this. We really are thankful for Tyler. Tyler's done everything that we've asked him to do. He's graduated.

In today's world of quarterbacks transferring here and there, sometimes there's some bad feelings that occur one way or the other. That's really not the case with our football team and Tyler. These guys up here can echo that. We're excited about where Tyler is going to go in the future, and we've got one more game with him.

We're really excited about our future with Levi. Our starting quarterback at the beginning was injured, and Levi's progressed. So we're excited about him.

**Q. Do you think this will be a different decision if Tyler hadn't entered the transfer portal?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** No, I wouldn't say that's the case. We're just looking at that coming up, the opposing elements of our game that give our football team the best chance to win and also how those two quarterbacks complement one another.

While our offense doesn't change drastically, there are different things that each guy does well, and we feel like Levi has continued to grow within our offense. So we're able to expand the offensive play list to help us.



NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING



**Q. Austin, what do you like about Levi, what does he bring to the table, and what's it like catching passes from him?**

**AUSTIN CONWAY:** He's different. Levi is so poised and calm for us. That's exciting for us because usually with a freshman quarterback, he's just all over the place, but it's not so with Levi. He's one kid that progressively gets better. Every single time Levi takes the field, he wants to get better.

The coolest thing about Levi is he's asking the older guys for guidance as a freshman, which shows how mature he is because, once you're a quarterback, you feel like, not necessarily, but sometimes you know it all.

Levi is always looking to get better. That's what he's done. He's throwing really well. He's practicing really well, and he's emerging as a leader. That's what we really need as a football team and also an offense.

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** Austin in his own right is an outstanding quarterback.

**Q. I wondered how close he was to being put in the game.**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** We moved him around a little bit, but, you know, showing his comment is really heartfelt because he understands the unique position of playing as a quarterback.

**Q. You talked about needing to be more balanced. Do you think Levi gives you the chance for this offense to be more balanced?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** The answer is yes. I paused obviously. The ability that Levi has to run also in today's world of college football, unlike a an NFL game. And there's something you can account for when your quarterback is not a mobile quarterback, but Levi has that.

What has progressed is his ability to be more confident in the passing game, where his reach could take the football. And Austin could probably echo that. We chart that all the time.



NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING



And so while I say we need to throw the ball better, the decision for him to play and start was not necessarily on the back of a kid like Levi, who's a good passer. We just feel like we can open the playbook.

**Q. Coach mentioned the other day that a lot of guys who are in your position, pro prospects, they decide to skip the Bowl game. Did that ever cross your mind?**

**LOGAN WILSON:** No, it never crossed my mind. The first time I was asked was by him. He asked me to come to Arizona. So that's just not something I think about. I know other guys that might be in that position that want to do that kind of stuff. That's not just who I am.

**Q. Why wasn't it important for you? Obviously, you've got an NFL future to think about. So why was it important for you to play this game and finish it out?**

**LOGAN WILSON:** It's just important for me to show that I'm a team-first guy. I'm not going to be a selfish guy that wants to go out and not put my body at risk for my teammates. I owe it to Coach Bohl anyways to play for this program. He gave me an opportunity five years ago, the opportunity of a lifetime to come here early and play football at the highest level. So I owe that to him and this team to be here.

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** I'd like to make the comment, what's interesting is -- not to have disparaging remarks for some of those guys who choose to bypass their year, I've had a significant amount of dialogue with general managers throughout the National Football League.

And even though you look and some of these guys are getting information from agents and different people who say not to play, it really has proven to be a valuable asset because, whether you're playing football at the professional level or the collegiate level or on the high school level, it's a team game. So many of the general managers look at what kind of guys we're going to invest in the Draft pick and what kind of guy is going to be in our locker room.

A couple years ago, we had a quarterback, Josh Allen, who now plays with the Buffalo Bills, and that really spoke in his favor. They were looking for the right fit in their organization. There was a lot of probing questions, and there were some freshmen on the outside of Josh who opted to play just like Logan. It really has actually helped guys.



NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING



I'd like to send that message out, but when you hear all this, you might be injured, but they're looking at -- we're investing in a football player that wants to be a team player who's not afraid of taking that contact.

So I appreciate Logan's decision. There was no pressure on my part. I had a conversation with him. I think that kind of gives you an idea of what kind of locker room we have.

**Q. Cooper, after Boise, you had a chance to reset in your mind, but you've swung it really well ever since. How confident were you coming into this one? Was that a moment where you reset things?**

**COOPER ROTHE:** Yeah, I took a moment and looked back at the four years I've been here and blessed to be in a situation like I am with great teammates and Coach Bohl, my position coach, who's done a great job of that.

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** Props to me.

**COOPER ROTHE:** He's done a great job of teaching me mentally how to release it and go about your business the right way. You talk about being cowboy tough, forget about the past and move on, and I think he's done a good job of teaching me how to do that. And my teammates have supported me through this. They've done a great job of that too.

**Q. Same question for the Coach. Have you seen that out of him, the mental toughness?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** Yes, that's been consistent even when he was a freshman. One of the things we look at when we recruit a specialist, beyond the skill set they have, we really look at their background. Cooper was a three-sport athlete, ultra competitive guy in high school. And one of the things with these guys is you're not going to hit every kick. The guy that just kind of goes on a bad, negative circle is not going to respond well.

So I think the kick that he had against Colorado State, which is our rival, was a huge kick. We've seen that. It's not like - he and I are really candid. I don't know a lot about place kicking, but I do know a lot about people.



NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING



He's a marvelous athlete to work with. He'll go through, okay, why didn't I get this? What do I need to improve on? I have a great deal of confidence sending him out there, just like we did that CSU situation, and he split the uprights.

Also going to be missing him. He and I have spent a great deal of time the last four years.

**Q. When you think back to high school, this is really an opportunity. Are you amazed at all or surprised? How do you feel about the way you progressed?**

**LOGAN WILSON:** I never thought I'd be in the shoes I'm in right now, but I also wouldn't say I didn't have a chance. I just put my head down and worked. That's kind of how I was raised by my parents. Just put in the work and do all the things the right way. Like I said, I don't think it happened by chance, but I am maybe a little surprised that I'm in the position I'm in right now.

**Q. To you three guys, have you thought this is it? You're going to play your last game? Has it set in at all?**

**AUSTIN CONWAY:** No. I was at practice the other day, and after practice, Coach allows every senior to speak to the team and express how they feel and just talk about the team, guidance, anything you can offer the young guys. I think that's when it hit me that I'm not going to be here. It's going to be different because I love these guys. I love Coach. I'm grateful for the opportunity he gave us and I'm truly, truly blessed to be here. So it's going to be hard.

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** They're going to speak today. Cooper already spoke. I always have a hard time because these guys, you see them when they first come in, they're young guys trying to find their way. They don't have whiskers. (Laughter). And the next thing you know, they're gone. And the words that they say to our younger players are really powerful.

So like Austin said, he has a great deal of emotion. College football is special, and these guys are special for our program.



**NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING**



**Q. This is the third bowl game you guys have come to. It's a heck of a schedule with the bull riding yesterday. With it being your last one, did you kind of cherish those things a little bit more?**

**COOPER ROTHE:** I think so, yeah. One last time with the teammates, that's pretty special to us. Some of the guys were upset how late it was because they get a longer break. For us, we're grateful for it. We've been with these guys for our years. They're our family. It's another two weeks to stay with family. In my speech, I said I came in with one brother, and I'm leaving with 100-plus brothers. So it was great to spend more time with them.

**Q. For anybody, what role do you think special teams might end up playing in the game tomorrow?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** We've got our punt returner. Are you on special teams? You're not good enough to play special teams [indicating Logan].  
(Laughter)

**AUSTIN CONWAY:** It's funny. The more you learn about football, you don't realize how critical special teams are and how important it is to the game. Special teams is always a deciding factor. Coach says it all the time. He's a detail kind of guy. You've got to be right everywhere. He always harps on special teams. I think special teams will have a huge impact in the game, which it always does.

You can swing momentum, lose momentum. It's going to be super important. I guarantee you Coop and all the other specialists, they understand that, and that's why they're always working to put us in position to win.

**Q. Logan, now that you guys have had a chance to watch a bunch of film and prepare for these guys, what is it about Barnett and his rushing attack that will offer you guys a challenge, and how are you going to go about trying to stop him?**

**LOGAN WILSON:** Our coaches have put in the time and effort to give us a great game plan. Ultimately, it comes down to how we execute it. I think we've had good practices up to this point. They're a challenge. They're good up front. They have a good running back and quarterback.



**NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING**



Their running back seems to always fall forward for extra yardage, which is hard. We have to be sure we tackle and wrap up and hope the rest of the squad comes in and helps tackle him down. So it just depends on how well we execute it, but we trust in our coaches and know we have a great team.

**Q. For anybody, most of the time when you go 6-6 like you guys did last year, you make a Bowl game, what was the reaction among the team when you found out that you didn't, and how has that served as motivational fuel for you throughout this year?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** I think these guys are probably in better position to answer that. I had some pretty heartfelt comments for the players.

I do say this, though. College football is a unique time and a great experience, and Bowl games are sometimes, when you hear maybe a national writer or commentator say that they're meaningless games, that's a bunch of malarkey.

All of these games are really important, so we value that. I think these guys can give you that because they're the ones putting out the sweat and blood. So anybody got an answer to that?

**AUSTIN CONWAY:** I think it's the custom for our team. I remember last year around this time a lot of guys were kind of upset about the fact we weren't going to a Bowl game, but I guarantee you every single guy came into January working out with a chip on their shoulder, and it shows.

We worked really hard this off-season. We've had many times as a team and many sessions about how we didn't want to go down that road again. I think that really helped us get through the summer because guys worked out really hard. Guys prepared really hard. Guys have an edge. It was just different.

You can tell by the way the season went. You can tell by the way we played for each other. And I know with my two teammates our locker room is tighter than it's ever been, and that's a testament of guys coming together and having the same motivation going out there to work. Obviously, being here is evidence of that because we didn't want to miss another Bowl game.



NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING



**Q. Austin, how far has Levi evolved even from when he came in early up until now?**

**AUSTIN CONWAY:** It's night and day, to be honest with you. I just remember there were times when we were looking, and we said, Levi can make some plays. Then now he's in that position, and we're like, this guy has really come a long way.

I should also mention he's a lot more accurate and a lot more confident. I think confidence is key as a quarterback, or any position, but especially that position because he knows his guys are good, but now he plays like him. He plays like he knows we have his back.

He's just gone a long way. He's making more decisions a lot quicker in the decision-making. He's commanding the huddle, and that's huge. I think that's it.

**Q. Did you see the improvement from the practices until 0 now?**

**AUSTIN CONWAY:** Yeah, every day he's better. That's what you want. Every day you get better, and Levi's really done that.

**Q. Will Titus still be available for the game?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** Titus is available, but he's not going to be in the rotation unless there's injury. That happens at times with running backs. We didn't feel like he's progressed with his movement and change of direction. He's cleared to play but just hasn't progressed.

A lot of times, maybe you have another position or skill player, and you need to have that change of direction and explosion. He's not progressed to where we want him to be. He will suit up. He has taken some reps, but we've had him on the scout team the last couple of days.

**Q. Over the last month, have any younger guys kind of stepped up in your eyes that we might see tomorrow?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** You could see a couple defensive ends, a certain rotation depending on if you get a lengthy drive. That could be it. Outside of that, I don't know. There could be a



**NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING**



couple of wide receivers. That's not any knock on A.C., but sometimes you rotate some guys in there.

And we've got some really, I think, excellent potential guys at wide receiver. They don't know how to play wide receiver yet. They're not as skilled as Austin, but they've proven their worth over these Bowl game practices that they could come in and operate, just not with the deep route. So those are some options.

**Q. Logan, obviously, you can't hit Levi in practice, but you face him, you're across the line from him. What does he bring in your eyes?**

**LOGAN WILSON:** I think he's got a lot of the same -- we don't practice against each other. We double rep, but from what I've seen from afar, he's got a lot of the same leadership qualities as Shawn does, just the it factor.

When you have a quarterback like that, especially as a freshman, you're lucky to have two that have that. It's something to get behind and play hard for. Quarterback is obviously a position that's a big position role, so when you have a freshman stepping in like that to do that, that's very important and very key for our offense.

**Q. Coach, you have a very robust walk-on program. How have you developed that, and why is it important?**

**COACH CRAIG BOHL:** Well, I was a walk-on player at the University of Nebraska, and Coach Osborne had a profound effect on me as far as philosophy, understanding that football is a developmental game.

There was a lot of places in the country that that program would not flourish, but when you look at our nature and our culture in this state and the people that we have, we're a hard working -- the people in Wyoming are made up of people that are resilient, they're hard working, and want to overcome and achieve.

To have a program like that, you need to have things in place for guys that come in on a non-scholarship role to understand they have a place on the team.



NOVA HOME LOANS ARIZONA BOWL  
WYOMING VS. GEORGIA STATE  
PRE-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 - WYOMING



And then also to acknowledge that we've given 33 scholarships, full scholarships to walk-ons since I've been a head coach. So that's a pretty significant number, and it sends a message beyond the rhetoric, okay, we want you to walk on and be a scout team guy. It means that you're valued, it's important.

I say to these guys, when you're on the team, you're on the team. Other than who's writing the tuition check, we really don't care. If you ask a lot of people, they wouldn't know who's on scholarship and who's not.

So we don't do the deal where somebody gets a scholarship and they stage it and everybody jumps up and down and it looks great. It's always been one of the neatest things for me to pull a guy aside and say, hey, we're in a position to give you a scholarship.

Then beyond the guys that are scholarship, the other guys who are not scholarship, they have a role to play also. So it comes down to a culture and value system. One of the reasons why, in the conference we're in, I think the Mountain West, if you look at our conference and how it has competed nationally against other, quote, Power Five leagues, a big part of that is because of the depth that we have. And as you get later on in the year, there are guys that are playing meaningful reps, and many of those guys are either not scholarship or came as a non-scholarship player.

So we're a developmental program, and that's been somewhat of a hallmark for us.

[ End transcript ]

