

Busy day in Mobile for the Blue Raiders

No practice, but day filled with activities

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Photos: [Press Conference](#)
and [Mayor's Luncheon](#)

Photos: [Parade, Pep Rally](#)
and [Fireworks](#)

Director of Athletics Chris Massaro

It's difficult to find the words to express how grateful we are for this experience. It's a rare treat in life when you have high expectations going into an event and then those expectations get exceeded.

That is exactly what has happened here thanks to the great people at GoDaddy, the people of Mobile - Mr. Mayor, the city could not have been more hospitable to us, thank you very much. Jerry, you and your crew have made this bowl game seamless for us as a university. Brad, you and

your group just epitomize class, thank you for what you have done to help us. We are excited to be here. It should be a great football game and I know our university will represent themselves well. We are excited to be in Mobile, it feels good to be in a Sun Belt Conference city and has been a great experience for us.

Head Coach Rick Stockstill

I am very excited to be here. I have been in this profession a long time. This is the 15th bowl I have gone to in my coaching career and I can honestly say to everyone associated with this bowl, the people of Mobile, it is absolutely one of the best. Your organization, hospitality and everything has been first class. I have appreciated it, our coaches have appreciated it and our players have had a phenomenal time in your city and with this bowl. I just want to thank you guys for everything you do. We are excited to be here, it's a great opportunity for our football team and university. I am just anxious to play this game and compete against a fine university like Miami. Again, I just want to thank everybody for their hospitality and we are looking forward to tomorrow night.



Rick Stockstill on the offense

The worst thing we have done this year is we didn't protect the ball very well. The last four weeks of the season we did a much better job. One of the strengths of Miami is they have done an outstanding job of protecting the football. In bowl games, turnovers are probably magnified more so than they are during the season because you have such a long layoff between games. I think this game will come down to the team that protects the ball the best will have the best chance to win the game.

Rick Stockstill on Dwight Dasher's impact from last year's bowl to this year

All I want Dwight to do is play within himself. He didn't do that after the suspension. He tried to do too much. Consequently, he didn't play very well and turned the ball over. The last four weeks of the season he played more consistently and did a better job of protecting the ball. He just has to play within himself, the offense and take care of the ball.

Miami (OH) Head Coach Lance Guidry on Dwight Dasher

That's what scares me. He gets in the open field and can make somebody miss so that is a concern. You have to rally people to the football. One guy isn't going to be able to get him because he'll make you miss in the open field. That is why they have had success so we are going to try and get as many people to him as we can.

Rick Stockstill on Miami going from one win to nine

I'd say it's pretty difficult to do. You can maybe go from one to six or seven, but win one and then be conference champions is pretty incredible. Those guys, the coaches and players, deserve a lot of credit. Each year and each team is different. You win one game and then you get a fresh start the next year. I have a lot of respect for their coaches and team for being able to overcome what they had to overcome to get in this position. It's a great accomplishment.

Rick Stockstill on big factors to end of season success

I think Dwight has played better, we have done a better job of protecting the ball offensively and we have done a better job of creating turnovers defensively. We have had things happen in the kicking game. We returned a kick for a touchdown, blocked a field goal, blocked an extra point and have done some nice things in the kicking game to give us a chance. I think it's just a matter of Dwight playing better and us protecting the ball and getting some turnovers.

Rick Stockstill on Miami offense

They are a very balanced team. We have to be able to make them one dimensional. Every coach says that but you always have to take something away. To me it starts with the run, you have to stop the run. I think we have to be good defensively on first down where we can try to get them in some second, third and long situations. Conversely we have to be good on first down offensively where we can stay out of third and long. They have a very balanced football team and are playing with a lot of confidence right now.

Rick Stockstill on final preparations for bowl game

We weren't able to go out today because of the weather but that was just going to be more of a walk through anyway. We will get our walk throughs in tonight after the luncheon and have a couple more tomorrow morning and get ready for the game. We've had some great practices and mentally we are ready to go and play this game. We are excited about it.

Rick Stockstill on attitude of team

They are anxious to play. It's a lot like the first game of the year when you go through all of August, practice for three weeks and you get tired of going against the same guys. You get tired of seeing the same scripts and cards so they are anxious and ready to play. They are anxious to compete against Miami tomorrow night and are excited about it.

Rick Stockstill on keys for team

We would like to start fast but to me the bigger thing is to make sure you finish fast. We have to play this game 60 minutes and play it with great intensity and mental focus, and a lot of energy and toughness.

Rick Stockstill on being only game on television

It's an opportunity. Someone is going to wake up Friday morning and say hey "Did you see that No. 9 or that No. 21 or somebody" so it's a great opportunity for our football team, program and university.

Rick Stockstill on after New Year's bowl games

I think it's probably more important or a better opportunity for schools like us because the Florida States, Floridas they are on Jan. 1 and get a lot of publicity and name recognition and Middle Tennessee not a lot of people know about us now. It's a chance for us to be the only game on and a chance for us to be able to showcase our university and program. I think it's a great opportunity for us and probably more important for schools like us. It gives us a better opportunity to showcase what we have.

Rick Stockstill on playing after finals and holiday

I think for young people today most can't go home for Thanksgiving because you are playing Thanksgiving weekend so they don't get to go home for that. Then if you play that 26, 27, 28 or 29 then they are gone for Christmas and it's a little bit harder for them from an emotional standpoint. They are still 18, 19, 20-year-old kids and for most it's their first time being away from their family on Christmas or Thanksgiving. I like the time of this bowl, it's the first time we've been in it obviously. There is some time between your last game but it's not an inordinate amount of time so I like everything about it.

Rick Stockstill on number of bowls

I think so. I am a fan of the bowl system. I played in them when I was a Florida State and then coached in some and I am a fan of the bowl system. To me, it wouldn't surprise me if they continued to add bowls because it's great for college football and college football fans.

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