



GEORGIA HEAD COACH PRESS CONFERENCE QUOTES

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Session 1

GEORGIA HEAD COACH MARK RICHT

Opening Statement: "It is good to be here. Our players are just getting the feel of New Orleans. We did practice last night and it went relatively late. We probably did not get back to the hotel until about 11:30 p.m. We did have a curfew last night – so they probably did not get to see much scenery last night. We are excited about being here and we know that it is a very important game for our football team. We do want to enjoy the bowl experience, but we are very serious about playing the University of Hawaii. We know they are a very good football team. They are undefeated and there is a lot to be said for a team that has not been beaten. We know they will be a tremendous challenge for us."

Looking back on the season what have been some of the changes on offense and some of the differences in offensive play calling? "We knew entering the season that we would have to protect our offensive line with three freshmen starting. We knew we would want to establish a running game with Thomas Brown, Kregg Lumpkin, and Knowshon Moreno. I did want Mike Bobo to do what he thought was best. With Stacy Searels coming in as our offensive line coach there were some very good ideas on how to run the football and how to pass protect. A great deal of the passing game remained the same, but we did some different things in the running game."

What do you think Thomas Brown and Kregg Lumpkin got out of the University of Georgia? "They are very good players and they have great talents. When they have been healthy they have contributed greatly to this football program since their freshman years. Injuries have plagued parts of their careers and that has always been an issue for them, but they have taken care of business. They come from beautiful families and great homes. One of the most important things on this team is to get an education. Kregg was able to have two majors and Thomas was able to get his degree in three and half years."

How much have you learned about the passing game since you have been the Head Coach at Georgia? "We are doing what we need to do to win. I wouldn't be surprised to see our passing statistics go up the next couple of years. Last season we had a true freshman quarterback and it is very difficult to be slinging the ball around when you have someone that is not ready for that. Now our quarterback is more mature, but our offensive line is young. We also had receivers that were finding there way a little bit. Now our receivers have matured, our offensive line will be better at pass protection, and our quarterback has a great grasp of what we are doing. My guess is that our passing statistics will rise, but the bottom line is that as coaches we need to find a way to win. Our best playmakers have been our running backs the last couple of years. My guess is that you will see a good balance in our offense."

How hard is it for your scout team to duplicate what Hawaii does? "You can't duplicate it. You can try to line up with the same sets and try to run the same routes, but it is very difficult to run it with the same precision as they run it and the same precision as Colt Brennan throws the ball. Plus, they have different paces. You can only hope to show the basic formation and routes that they have."

What was it that you saw in Knowshon Moreno that made you think he was going to be effective running the ball? “First of all, he plays with a tremendous amount of energy. When you watch him practice he plays with the same amount of energy he would if he was in a game. He also makes people miss and he has a tremendous burst. We knew he was a very good runner, but last year we had three very good junior running backs. Just about everyday in practice watching him work you could tell he was very special. There was one time last spring when he ran a play off to the right with a cornerback isolated on him. The defender was in a pretty good football position, but Knowshon was just able to hurdle right over him.”

There has been a trend of teams running the spread or variations of the spread, why do you think that is and how does it compare to your offense? “Well, if everyone starts using the spread and we continue to hammer the ball maybe people will start to have a tougher time defending us. Perhaps other teams around the country will recruit defensive players to stop the spread and we hammer the ball and they have a tougher time stopping us. Right now, I think we are very sound in what we do; as is Hawaii. People ask me about systems all the time and to me as long you are focused and centered on what you do, you are going to have success moving the football. Why are some systems successful? They are successful because they are focused on what they do. The coaches teach it well and the players understand what they are supposed to do.”

Much of the attention in this game has been focused on Colt Brennan, but can you talk about what you ask of Matt Stafford and how he has grown in your offense? “Matthew has a lot of responsibilities. Every time he goes to the line of scrimmage he rarely has just one play that he is focused on. There are several options available and as he looks over the defense he is faced with making decisions. We like to train our quarterbacks to have to make decisions and I know Colt does the same thing. I think that is the way it should be.”

What did you learn about playing West Virginia in the Sugar Bowl two years ago? “We went down 28-0 because they spread us out. I think what happened was we had not seen that type of offense before and we did not fully understand how fast and talented those guys were. We also turned the ball over three times to their zero. We did make some good adjustments and made it a close game.”