



## Western Michigan Media Day



Saturday, December 31, 2016  
AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas

### QUESTIONS FOR HEAD COACH PJ FLECK

**COACH FLECK:** We've had a fabulous time here at the Goodyear Cotton Bowl. We're very honored to represent the Mid-American Conference, Western Michigan University, and all the Group of 5 here at the Goodyear Cotton Bowl in Arlington, Texas.

Everything has been incredible. The hospitality is second to none here at the Cotton Bowl. Everybody can tell you what it's really like and it's the best bowl and "trust me" and "bring an extra suitcase because of all the things you get." But when it actually happens, it is way better than even talked about. And it's a credit to everybody on staff here at the Cotton Bowl committee.

We're just very honored to be here. Our players have had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And they've taken full advantage of that. They've balanced all the fun with all the work. And that's what we've done all year going through the year. So no different here in Dallas. We're very excited to be here.

*Q. The story of Corey [Davis] is well-documented from the time that you first met him and he was working to get academically eligible, the fact that he could have gone out last year. As you reflect back to where you are now to looking at him, how much pride do you take in what he's done and his future? How bright is his future, do you believe?*

**COACH FLECK:** I think the pride has to go into him. I don't think necessarily me taking pride in that. Because for him to, one, get eligible in high school took an Army. It really took a lot of people at his high school, Wheaton Warrenville South High School, Ron Muhitch and his counselor and his family members.

But the progress he made here is a tribute to him, first and foremost, because he's got to put the work in. He's the one who has to stay 30, 40 minutes after practice. He's the one that has to continue to grow and get better. And then there's also a lot of risk involved. It says a lot about him and what he truly believes in and what he values. He values the experience. He values his teammates. He valued something bigger than just himself and the money and moving on to the National Football League.

I remember we sat down and talked about it. The biggest thing he talked about was, one, I want to be able to get a degree or at least set myself up to get closer to getting that degree. That was from Robin Graham and Dan Graham, his foster family. That was the biggest thing, and he was on board with that but. But the biggest thing was, "Coach, I think we're going to be really, really special next year."

Here's a kid convincing the head football coach how good we're going to be. I should be convincing him, but he's convincing me how good we're going to be. And he said, "I would really regret it if it's as good as I think it's going to be and I'm watching it on TV instead of experiencing it." For a 22-year-old young man to be able to say that to you with all the millions of dollars staring him in the face says a lot about his character.

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And we wouldn't be where we are today without Corey Davis. It takes an entire football team to get where we are. But Corey Davis is a major part of this football program, not just on the field but off the field. And we wouldn't be in this position without him or the decision he made to come back.

We invested a lot of time into him to get him to come back and then Daniel Braverman slipped out the back door on us. I saw one coming, but I didn't see the other one one coming but we're very proud of Daniel as well.

*Q. We've talked about in the past the fact that we really didn't have any byes per se this season. But now you've had a three-, four-week bye, if you will. You've talked about the kids practicing fast, playing fast, getting after it. Are you seeing any rust at all? Do you think that's going to be an issue, or do you think the team is going to be ready to go?*

**COACH FLECK:** No, not at all. You're only allowed 15 practices if you truly maximize all the practices with the NCAA. So every team that's either in the playoffs or is in a New Year's Six bowl has a tremendous amount of time off. How you balance that I think is very critical. We've had to reflect back to the national championship days when I was at Ohio State with Jim Tressel. We have had to reflect back to last year and the year prior, what did we like, what didn't we like, what worked, what didn't work. What days were sloppy? What days weren't sloppy?

I would say the only time we ever had a little bit of rust is when we came back from our four-to-five-day break from Christmas and it was the first practice back. It was here. We were a little sluggish. It wasn't the work ethic. It wasn't the how. It wasn't even the execution. I think it was just a little bit of stamina. You take four or five days off and you haven't had two days off all year, it kind of does a little bit of damage to you.

But other than that, we've had two back-to-back practices that have probably been the best we've had all year. The players are very mature. It doesn't take long to knock that rust right out, but I wouldn't even consider it rust. I would consider maybe just some gravel that built up as we went down the gravel road on the side under the tire. You know how that gets. You knock that off.

But other than that, that's it. I'm proud of the progress they made while we've been here in Dallas.

*Q. A lot of coaches talk about wanting to recruit close to home, and you've got some key guys within about an hour radius of Kalamazoo. How important have the western Michigan guys been to your program?*

**COACH FLECK:** Incredibly critical to our success. They really are. When we first took the job, I learned this from Joe Novak. "If you take a Midwest job, especially in the Mid-American Conference, PJ, do everything you can to keep the recruiting at home." We built a six-hour radius right around Kalamazoo. We're talking states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio. Michigan we wanted to be

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really heavy in. We wanted to surround ourselves with that.

If you're going to do that, you've got to be able to beat some Big Ten teams in recruiting. They come late and they poach a lot of your kids really late, offer them late.

But we've been very fortunate. We've had about 80% of our recruiting done prior to the summer camps or in the middle or towards the end of summer camp, and that's really been with our six-hour radius.

From there we stemmed outside. We've gone out to New Jersey, to Florida, and we've kind of gone to different places that we have actually had a lot of familiarity with.

But the southwest Michigan kids have been absolutely critical. Michigan kids in general have been absolutely critical. I think some of the best high school football is played in the state of Michigan. They're very well-coached, very well-developed by our high school coaches throughout our state. And when you start to look at our roster when we first got there about 80% of our team was probably outside the state, and now 80% are probably inside the state. We're very proud of our Michigan roots, and we'll continue to recruit that way.

***Q. If you think back to the movie "Hoosiers" and Gene Hackman, did you guys do anything when you came into AT&T to get the kids used to that kind of thing? We talked to some players earlier this week, and they said really the first practice in here was just trying to get used to looking up for the ball and seeing the screen and all those types of things. Did you do anything to get them acclimated early on?***

**COACH FLECK:** I don't know if we would use the movie "Hoosiers" to be honest with you. You've got to teach lifetime lessons in a cultural way here with these kids in '16.

I'm not sure if any of them know the movie "Hoosiers," if we did show it to them. That's amazing, right? I would say the first thing we actually did when we first came here, didn't have anything to do with practice, we came to watch Monday Night Football with the Cowboys and Lions. We brought them here specifically for that reason.

They thought we were doing that for some fun. There's always a little bit of coaching behind everything we do. There's always a life lesson, so we wanted to get that "aha" moment and that "awe" moment out. Right away, right when we got here, the day we got here.

And to be able to see AT&T Stadium empty versus full is two different things. And that's what we wanted them to see, right away to see the full stadium, what the game-day environment is going to be come January 2nd. And I think we knocked that out of the park in day one.

And then when they were on the field, then it was just some on-the-field adjustments with the screen. But you can't really see the screen that much from when you're actually playing. It's when you're on the

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sidelines, and maybe when you're backed up catching punts at the ten-yard line, you'll be able to see the screen and the ball flying through the air plus the ball. We've done everything we can to be able to simulate those kinds of catches throughout the week.

*Q. Can you tell me something about Corey [Davis], the development of a kid from New Jersey landing on your campus from freshman year to now as a senior.*

**COACH FLECK:** He's from the Chicagoland area. What I'll say about what Corey was, I think he came like a lot of these guys. They have failed so much that they've succeeded. And we embrace our failing here. We call failing growth. If you show me a person that's really successful, I'm going to show you somebody who failed a lot. And we take pride in that. We don't run from that. I think these players are very proud of their 1-11 season to be honest with you, which might sound a little funny. But to them they understood exactly where they are and what got them there. Corey is no different.

I think the development of Corey as a person inspires me more as a player. I think Matt Simon and Luke Getsy, who is the wide receiver coach for the Packers, they both have done tremendous jobs in developing him as a player.

But Corey is one of those guys, I can't say he's just easy to coach but he's one of the easier ones because his work ethic is so high. He reminds me of Vincent Jackson when I coached at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. You gave it to him once, he might not be able to get it the first time but he's going to stay 45, 50 minutes after practice to make sure by the next time he sees you he has it. That's a credit to him.

And he hasn't always had that. When he got here as a freshman, he had to learn how to become a professional. Remember, Corey has been the guy, the dude, the bell cow from day one in this facility when he got on campus, which is very difficult for a true freshman to do.

Then he goes and he's freshman player of the year for the conference his first year on a 1-11 football team. So it's very inspiring to watch his progress because he's always had to be the guy. And when you're the guy from your freshman year on, sometimes you get that attention early. You don't appreciate what you have as you continue to move. Or you start to think that you have a right to something. Corey has never done that, and that's a credit to his upbringing, his foster family, and all the things he's been through in his life.

*Q. This is the final game of the college careers for Zach Terrell, Corey Davis, and Taylor Moton, a lot of crucial players from that 2013 1-11 season. Is there any emotion in knowing this will be the final time you'll coach them in Broncos uniforms?*

**COACH FLECK:** I'd be lying to you if I said no. Absolutely. It will be very emotional. It really will be. As a coach, when you have such a personal relationship with your players, you do everything you can not to think about it, to be honest with you, until it's finally over. Then you let the emotion go.

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But any time you start thinking about losing those players, selfishly, you're going to miss them. So then you feel the absence of them and you start to really get emotional.

However, when you start to think about the legacy that they have left, it inspires you because what they've done is they put a foundation, a standard, and an expectation and put Western Michigan now on a map that this isn't just a one-and-done-type deal.

We've recruited at an extremely high level and the people that are now coming through the program have been able to watch Corey Davis, Zach Terrell, Taylor Moton and be able to learn from these guys; that now this is an expectation and what we really demand of ourselves every single year when we start the season. That a New Year's Six bowl is out there, and that's the expectation now. And that's what I think they did at Boise, and that's what I think they've done at Houston. And we want to be the same type of place.

*Q. We've talked a lot about Corey [Davis]. But obviously a lot of your success has been based on the fact that you've been very balanced with Jamauri [Bogan] and Jarvion [Franklin] and Carrington [Thompson] and Michael Henry. Corey has had a great deal of success and put up some incredible numbers. I think a lot of his success has been due to the fact that so many of those others players have drawn a lot of attention. Can you comment on that?*

**COACH FLECK:** First and foremost, we have a lot of star players. I will say that. Nobody is ever going to apologize for having great players, especially individual players, but nobody could have the accolades that they have or the yards they have or the attention they have without everybody else.

Our defense has played better than it's played in the last four years. When we talk about defense winning championships, our defense had two shutouts. The last time we had a shutout was years and years -- a decade ago or something at Western Michigan, let alone have two in a season. So you talk about all the individual performances, but our defense really put us in position to be successful on offense.

You look at guys like Michael Henry and Carrington Thompson. Both of those guys have come the farthest, I would say in terms of their development from freshman year to senior year.

Michael Henry even had a three- to four-month hiatus from our football team. He had to leave the football program. It was the best for him. We were able to get him some help and now he comes back and catches 60 some balls for us.

In the absence of Daniel Braverman, when he caught 108 balls, everybody says, "How are you going to replace him?" You replace him with what everybody thinks is two immature players who became some of our most mature players. The culture will make you grow up really fast. And if you believe in the culture and you trust the culture, it will develop you from a boy to a man.

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And I think that's what you've seen with our entire football team. We're more mature now than we've ever been in the last four years I've been there. I know that. Maturity is when doing what you have to do becomes doing what you want to do. These players love coming to our facility. They can't wait to get there.

Even though they have to do it, they can't wait to do it and they all can't wait to do it together. That's a credit to our coaching staff, a credit to our players, and really a credit to the culture at Western Michigan University in general.

Can I make one statement? I do want to make one statement because it's out there and my face is all over the place on it. I'm not really sure why. I do want to make one statement though referencing a statement that was made in the Mid-American Conference by one of the athletic directors about our Group of 5.

I do want to say this. I absolutely love the way the Group of 5 and the Power 5 coincide and mix. Just because one AD makes a statement like that doesn't mean that the whole conference feels that way because I don't feel that way at all. One person speaking for the Group of 5 or the Mid-American Conference is not how we feel whatsoever.

I think the way it is, is perfect. If you're in the Group of 5, if you can go undefeated two years in a row, you deserve to be in a national championship and you'll find your way into the national championship.

Everybody is talking Houston this year, Group of 5 team. Goes 13-1 last year, beats Florida State. They beat a top-five team to start the year. If they would have continued that and went 13-0 or 13-1, I guarantee they'd be in one of those top four spots.

The great thing we talk to recruits about and we talk to our players all the time at Western Michigan -- yes, at Western Michigan -- is you have the ability now with the playoff system to win and go to a national title.

Is it harder in the Group of 5? You bet. It's a lot harder. But you know what? There's a chance for it to happen. In the old BCS system, we didn't even have a chance. I am not just, so everybody understands, Western Michigan and I am not -- I don't speak for everybody else, but I know us, are not in favor of this Group of 5 national championship. I think that's ridiculous.

I love the way where we're at. I love the position we're in. And if we are going to feel that way about winning a national title one day, then we're in control of that. We're going to have to schedule non-conference opponents that are going to be ranked in the top 20 and play top 20 opponents. That's what we did last year with Ohio State and Michigan State.

If we did happen to beat those two teams, a 1-4 team, we deserve to be in the talk if we can run the

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table. I think that's very fair.

But if they want a Group of 5 team to play in the national title, it can happen. It should happen. But it's got to be set up the right way. If you don't play Power 5 teams and you don't play top 25 teams and you win out, you shouldn't be in the national title conversation, including us.

But if we do it again next year or you do to twice in a row as a Group of 5 team, I think you deserve to be in a national title race. That's all I'll say about that. I just wanted to be make that very clear because my face gets attached to somebody else's quotes from a different school within our league that I completely disagree with. So I at least wanted to make my comment about that situation in case you were waiting to ask me that Tomorrow. You at least have a statement on that now. Okay. Row the boat, everybody. Thanks a lot.

### QUESTIONS FOR QB ZACH TERRELL

*Q. Now you're winding down, the game plan is in place, probably been in place for a while. How do you feel as a team?*

**QB ZACH TERRELL:** For us now it's time to focus on what we're here for, and that's to play in a football game and to play against an elite opponent in Wisconsin. We've had our fun, gotten to do a lot of really special things and different events and gotten to spend a lot of time together. And for us seniors, this is probably the last chance we're all going to get to be together. So we're all just kind of soaking up those moments. But now it's really -- the focus has shifted. It's on Wisconsin. It's getting ourselves prepared and ready to be ready to play on January 2nd.

*Q. You are carrying more than just Western Michigan. You are carrying the Group of 5.*

**QB ZACH TERRELL:** Exactly. We're honored and blessed to be here at the Cotton Bowl and to represent not only our amazing university, our amazing community and city but also the Group of 5, the non-Power 5. So for us it's just another opportunity for us to represent a lot of people, and we take great pride in that. And we're very excited and honored to be here. And to do that and we're going to do everything in our power to make sure that we honor all those that are looking to us to represent them in a first-class fashion. And that's what we're going to do.

### QUESTIONS FOR WR COREY DAVIS

*Q. (On Wisconsin's defense.)*

**WR COREY DAVIS:** Secondary is good. They're really good. They don't really let up on that many big plays. They're very sound on the back end. We've got some playmakers back there. We're going to have to play some sound football to beat these guys, and we're capable of doing that.

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*Q. In these bowl games it often comes down to who wants it more. Are you confident you guys are going to want this more from a motivational factor?*

**WR COREY DAVIS:** We've had that chip on our shoulder ever since our first season, my freshman year. We want this more than anything. And, you know, these guys are really hungry. And it shows each day in practice when we go out there and prepare the best way that we can. We're ready for it.

*Q. This game flying under the radar nationally a little bit far as these big bowl games go?*

**WR COREY DAVIS:** A little bit. Just because we're a MAC school playing a Big Ten opponent. And a lot of people overlook us. That's kind of how we want it. We want it that way. We want to be the underdog. That kind of makes that chip on our shoulder a little bit bigger. We're excited for it. We like that. We like the challenge.

### QUESTIONS FOR RB JAMAURI BOGAN

*Q. How's the week going?*

**RB JAMAURI BOGAN:** A week to remember, a week full of memories, a week I'll never forget. It's been awesome last five to six days. And as I said already, it's going to be a week I'll probably never forget the rest of my life.

*Q. Bowl season is kind of like preseason.*

**RB JAMAURI BOGAN:** It's been about three weeks of preparation now. So we've been away from competing against another team for a long time besides ours. So it's kind of exciting to get back on the field on Monday. It's going to be a tough test. But it's definitely going to be an exciting experience.

*Q. You guys beat two Big Ten teams this year. Not many people can say that.*

**RB JAMAURI BOGAN:** We've had an incredible season. Coach [Fleck] insisted on us buying into this year and us growing higher. And we have done that week in and week out, and that led to us being 13-0.

I don't think those two Big Ten games are a product of us showing up for one particular game but a product of us working consistently since January and led us to these very moments. It's amazing.

*Q. PJ Fleck obviously is a central figure as head coach but just talk about his personality, his energy.*

**RB JAMAURI BOGAN:** The best thing he's done since he's been here is remain consistent. His energy, his passion, his excitement for the game, for the people here has never wavered, has never

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changed. And players and people always feed off consistency. Because if a person is high and low, it's hard to feed off that person because you never know what you're going to get.

But week in and week out we know what we're going to get, day in and day out, minute by minute we know what we're going to get. And it's easy to be motivated by him and also feed off of his energy and continue to do what he insists on us to do.

### QUESTIONS FOR LB JARVION FRANKLIN

*Q. These bowl games often come down to who wants it more? Who's more motivated? Are you confident that's you guys?*

**LB JARVION FRANKLIN:** Certainly. We had a couple days off. But ever since we've been back -- I've been around this team all year and I can tell there's definitely a new sense of confidence, a new sense of focus.

*Q. What do you think of their defense?*

**LB JARVION FRANKLIN:** Yeah, their defense -- I don't know where to start. I know they're ranked number two for stopping the run. As a running back, that's not what you want to hear. At the same time, that's a tremendous opportunity. And I'm absolutely blessed to be running behind the offensive linemen I have because I know they received a couple accolades throughout the season, and I know I'm extremely confident. And I know we're going to go out there and just execute every single play.

*Q. This game is kind of flying under the radar nationally. Why do you think that is?*

**LB JARVION FRANKLIN:** It might be just because of the playoff system and all that stuff, but it certainly isn't to us. We treat this game as the most important game on our schedule. Not just because it's the Cotton Bowl but because it's the next game up.

*Q. As far as the matchup goes, how do you think this plays out? What do you think this game is going to look like?*

**LB JARVION FRANKLIN:** This game is going to be a dog fight. We're two totally different teams. We're pretty unique offensively and defensively. I can't speak to how the game is going to play out, but I know both teams are going to go out there and give it their all, and it's going to be a battle.

### QUESTIONS LB ASANTAY BROWN

*Q. Talk about how big of a motivation it is to send the seniors off on a good note.*

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**LB ASANTAY BROWN:** I would say a big motivation. This is their last year, and I think with anybody, if you're playing your last game, you want it to be your best game. And they're going to do everything they can to prepare for the game as well as bring the younger guys up and help them prepare for the game as well.

Some seniors may not get another chance at the next level. Some may. But you always want to leave your mark. You want to leave something for everybody to remember, not just as a football player but as a person as well. So it's a big motivation to play with the seniors that we have because, I mean, they participate in everything that we do and we participate in everything they do. And to send them out on a good note would be unbelievable.

*Q. Let's talk about the season. Every team wants to win every game, but let's just talk about from spring ball to fall camp. Did you think you would be undefeated at this point?*

**LB ASANTAY BROWN:** We took it one game at a time. We can't say we would go undefeated or we'd lose one. We didn't focus on the games ahead. We focused on the game we had in front of us. And each game comes, with the preparation the coach gave us, we followed it, followed the plan that they had and we played.

And then when it came to game time, we actually performed. And after the game we looked up and we seen the result, we're like, okay, this is going good.

And then as the weeks went and then the games kept going, we kept winning. We end up 13-0. When you look at that, you look back at it like, man, we really did it. And that just shows the belief that we have in each other and in the coaches and the trust that the coach has in us.

### QUESTIONS FOR DE KEION ADAMS

*Q. How is your week going?*

**DE KEION ADAMS:** We're just blessed. We're here to enjoy ourselves, but we know we still have a game to play. It's a great opportunity for the university, the team, and our community. We're just enjoying it. And the hospitality that the Cotton Bowl has shown is unlike any other, and we're just blessed and thankful to be here.

*Q. You practiced out here. Can you describe the scale of it.*

**DE KEION ADAMS:** It hasn't really hit me yet, the magnitude of it. But just to be here and just to see everything, I mean, you watch it on TV and you see it on TV, everything is bigger at least in person. So it's definitely more than what I expected. It's definitely brought more insight like, hey, this is the big

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stage. And we're just excited to be here. And it's everything and more we could have expected.

*Q. Can you just talk about the whole transformation of the program? 1-11 one year and going undefeated this year thus far. Talk about that a little bit.*

**DL KEION ADAMS:** 1-11 was the foundation. Just something we had to build. We had to go through growing pains to get where we are today. And if it wasn't for that 1-11 season, we wouldn't be where we are today because it put us through adversity. And we went through so much adversity through the season it might not seem like it, but it allowed us to mature. It made us become wiser. And, like I said, we wouldn't change it for the world. It built us into the men that we are today.

*Q. A lot of hospitality during the week. When was the transition to this is the game? What day would you say it hit, or was it business since you stepped off the plane?*

**DE KEION ADAMS:** It was business since we stepped off the plane. This is a big opportunity for our university, for our school, and for our team, and obviously the MAC conference.

Making it to this bowl game out of the Group of 5 conferences is a blessing for us. And we knew, yeah, it's the Cotton Bowl and we'd have festivities and we're down here to have fun. But January 2nd is the main thing, and we're focused on it. And we prepared for it and we trust in the process.

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