

Saban Speaks Again

Written by Christian McCollum
Sunday, 06 January 2013 10:59



FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. – Alabama head coach Nick Saban met with the media for the second time in two days on Sunday morning, a day before tomorrow's BCS National Championship Game here against Notre Dame.

“There's not a lot that's happened in the last 24 hours since I talked to you yesterday, so there's not a whole lot that has changed,” he opened. “As a team we embrace the challenges that we have. We certainly honor the opportunity that we have to play in a National Championship game against a very good Notre Dame team.

“We're always striving for our players to develop an internal excellence that's going to allow them to be all that they can be, and I think the things that are probably most important in that right now is, number one, stay focused on the moment, stay focused on what you can control, the things that you can do to affect the outcome of what you're trying to accomplish, and I think great preparation is certainly the thing that gives you the confidence to be able to do that.”

Saban said the mental approach to the game is important.

“What's your passion, what's your understanding of the situation that you're in, what's your ability, because you understand the opportunity that you have and the magnitude of that opportunity and how long-lasting the effect and outcome of that opportunity can be,” he said. “How can you stay focused on the things that are going to help you execute and be

Saban Speaks Again

Written by Christian McCollum
Sunday, 06 January 2013 10:59

successful?"

The Crimson Tide watched a video of New York Yankees relief pitcher Mariano Rivera.

"He talked about he struggled at some time in his career because he was trying to be a perfectionist, and that when he's in the bullpen, he sees the crowd, he hears the crowd, he knows sometimes that he's being -- getting a lot of positive self-gratification for what he does and sometimes getting a lot of negative self-gratification for what he does," Saban said.

"But when he runs out and they hand him the ball, he's got one focus; he's not worried about the crowd, he's not worried about any of the external factors. One focus: Three outs; how am I going to get three outs."

"I think a team's ability to do that, to stay focused on the things that are going to affect the outcome of the game, are critical in games like this. And you know, you could say, 'Well, that's nothing.' Well, believe me, being around young people, being in games like this, that's something, and it's something big."

Saban said his current squad has exceeded his own expectations after losing a lot of key players and leaders from last season's championship team.

"I never really ever sit down and say, 'OK, I expect this team to win this many games or this many games or whatever,'" he said. "I just knew there were a lot of challenges for this team in terms of the players that we lost, the things that needed to be overcome, certainly sort of what you're always trying to overcome, which is I call it the entitlement factor when you have success."

Saban has liked the way his team has handled that challenge to this point.

"And now it's about can you finish that?" he said. "Can you finish that? We have 24 more hours

Saban Speaks Again

Written by Christian McCollum
Sunday, 06 January 2013 10:59

as a team; can you finish that?"

Whether the Crimson Tide will finish or the Irish will finish will be determined by handful of plays, according to Saban.

"There's always sort of a turning point in the game," he said. "First of all, you expect two good teams playing, it's going to be a close game. There's going to be some situation in the game where you need to make a play or they might need to make a play that's going to make the difference in the game. And your ability to rise up in those situations and be able to do that, whether it's critical third down to maintain possession of the ball on a scoring drive, or whether it's a defensive stop, whatever it might be, you know, you have to be ready to execute in those kinds of situations in the game.

"And there's going to be some point in the game where that particular circumstance and situation probably will have an impact on the outcome of the game. And your ability to successfully execute in those kinds of situations I think is critical when you play in games like this."