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## Campus Confidential Talking with Coach Lou Holtz

*By Adam Abramson*

Lou Holtz doesn't really need much of an introduction. He played for Kent State in 1956 and has been a college football fixture since. His first job as a head coach was 40 years ago at William and Mary.

Holtz retired from coaching in 2004, but has not distanced himself from the sport. The 72-year-old is on ESPN several days a week and has his hand in many groups and circles, including the **Allstate AFCA Good Works Team**.

Coach Holtz, who was at home for a few days in Florida, took some time to chat with me before he went off to Boise, Idaho for tonight's Boise State-Tulsa game. The guy travels more than Sully -- pretty amazing.

Anyway, I'll turn it over to the legend:

### **Can Boise State make the national title game if it goes undefeated?**

I don't know if they can get in the national title game, even if they go undefeated, and it's because of their schedule. As a football coach, I think Boise is a legitimate Top 10 team. 20 of 22 starters are underclassmen, including quarterback Kellen Moore. They are well coached, they're disciplined and play together as a team. They do the things they have to do in order to win. Chris Petersen has 40 wins 4 losses ... But I think a 1-loss team would get in [to the title game], and it's because they don't play in the toughest conference.

### **It's been tumultuous season thus far -- What's been your favorite part of such a crazy year?**

Everybody said this year has been crazy. But last year was crazy. The last five years have been bonkers. Don't forget LSU won a national title with two losses! ... I only have 3 top 10 teams: Alabama, Florida, Texas. Everybody else is [hanging around]. Those three are in a class by themselves. And it'll get crazier. ... That makes football great, though. You don't know what's gonna happen.

### **We saw Florida State lose on Saturday night, only adding to Bobby Bowden's worries. Do you think Coach Bowden is having a hard time with this?**

I spent some time with him this summer and talked to him last week. I think it's a crime what some people are trying to do to Bobby Bowden. Here's a guy who took a program that was nothing and we know what he's done ... He's alert. Smart. He's in good health and has good energy. I think he deserves the right to bring [FSU] back to where he had

it. He has the vision and energy. I don't like a head coach in waiting more than one year. It breaks your staff up. Florida State's decline started when they lost Mark Richt ... [Bowden is] a chairman of the board. He has an offensive coordinator and a defensive coordinator and he ties the whole thing together. ... I don't wanna be a chairman of the board, but Bobby Bowden does and is. Their problems don't have to do with Bobby Bowden's leadership. One week they play poor defense and good offense, and next week they play good defense and poor offense ... I said when we did the Miami-Florida State game: FSU can no longer get pressure from the four-man rush, and their secondary just can't hold up.

**Do you think it changes the working environment around the football offices?**

I think there's definitely a rift. Particularly among the alum and news media. When you're winning everything is going good around that offense. When you're losing ... everyone wants to jump ship.

**If the season ended today, who would be your Heisman winner?**

I would give to Tim Tebow just because of the leadership and toughness he's displayed. Colt McCoy would be a strong number two. But he hasn't had any big games. I think he's had more interceptions this year than last. He has his chance on Saturday against Oklahoma. Another guy is Jimmy Clausen. His stats are unbelievable and his schedule is tougher. But I would give it to Tebow right now.

**What's one of the biggest ways you've seen the game change this decade?**

I think the conference realignments changed a lot. All of a sudden Cincinnati is a major player and could be in the national championship game. ... All of a sudden a team like South Florida can come out of nowhere. The ACC adding BC, Virginia Tech, Miami -- you consider the ACC if they hadn't added those 3 teams, it'd be struggling right now. The other thing is the spread offense, it's made it so much more difficult. If you have a quarterback than can run and you're sound on the offensive line, nobody can stop you. There's not enough people. All of those defenses are geared to played a 10-man offense. That's what the pros have found out, and that's why you see the Wildcat offense. Also, up until around 1982, maybe 1984, there were never more than eight men in the NFL that weighed more than 300 pounds. Now you have [hundreds]. Players are just bigger, faster, stronger.

**It looks like you have a blast with the guys in the studio, but I imagine the competitive part of you misses the sideline. What do you miss most about leading a team on Saturdays?**

When you see me doing Dr. Lou or mixing it up with Mark May, I am having fun. If I'm not having fun, nobody's having fun watching me. The first thing i said when I walked out on the field to coach was 'Boy, what a great day to work.' Sure you miss the competitiveness. You can play the game, make money, do television, be successful, but when you die that ends. When you coach, you can be significant. You can help other people be successful ... I really wanted to achieve something and prove I can coach. But the most important thing is making a difference in players' lives. That's the thing I miss most about coaching.

**I know you are on the panel that selects the AFCA Good Works Team that includes 22 players from a wide range of schools. Can you talk about the selection process?**

Allstate has really been a great promoter of college football over the years. For the past 18 years, Allstate and AFCA have sponsored the Good Works Team. You never hear headlines saying 25 players go and do great things. We want to put a spotlight on that type of thing. I read the bios and recommendations sent in. I think we had 106 of them this year. It's hard to say this guy did this and that [better than someone else]. But it's so heartwarming to see this. When you think of the people that have been on it. Colt McCoy and Gerald McCoy, the great defensive lineman, Peyton Manning, Eli Manning, Daunte Culpepper, Trent Dilfer. What I say to them is when you write on your resume that you made 2009 Good Works Team, it's more important than saying you created a game winning turnover.

These people are ambassadors. In the media, they say if it bleeds, it leads. What you're interested in reporting is the unusual. When people do good things, you don't hear about it because that's how you're supposed to act. ... I learned more on the football field than I did in the classroom. These are young men helping refugees from Afghanistan and working with Big Brothers ... it's a special thing.