



MEDIA RELEASE

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UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PREVAILS IN 2009 INTERNATIONAL BOWL

Running back Donald Brown shines with another stellar performance

TORONTO, ONTARIO – The University of Connecticut Huskies overcame a 20-17 halftime deficit to beat the University of Buffalo Bulls 38-20 in the 2009 International Bowl at Rogers Centre on January 3.

The Huskies were led by star running back Donald Brown, who racked up 264 yards, second highest in the game's three-year history, and one touchdown on 29 carries, one of them for 75 yards. Brown indicated after the game he would forego his final year of college eligibility and declare himself for the National Football League Draft.

The game attracted an audience of 40,184, the highest in International Bowl history. The Huskies totalled 358 yards on the ground and three touchdowns. Quarterback Tyler Lorenzen had touchdowns on two of his 12 carries and totalled 56 yards. Kicker Dave Teggart made one of two field goals and added four converts. Linebacker Dahna Deleston scored a touchdown on a thrilling 100-yard interception in the fourth quarter. Quarterback Drew Willy led the Bulls' offence with 29 completions on 43 passes for 213 yards. A.J. Principe had two field goals on two attempts and two converts.

UConn led 24-20 after three quarters and then broke the game open with 14 points on back-to-back touchdowns, the second on the interception by Deleston.

The loss spoiled a Cinderella season for UB, which placed first in the Mid-American Conference in the third year under head coach Turner Gill and then took it one step further by winning the MAC Championship against previously-undefeated Ball State. UConn head coach Randy Edsall described the game as "very interesting to say the least. It was a tale of two halves."

He added he was impressed by his team's heart and character.

"They never say die and they're going to play all the way to the very end," he said. He praised Brown for his effort, totalling more than 2,000 rushing yards on the season.

“There are not enough superlatives that I can say about his performance, about his year,” Edsall said. “It’s just a darn shame that he didn’t get more recognition for what he did. Rushing for over 2,000 yards in a season is just incredible. The offensive line did a great job. We had some blunders on special teams, but we ended up making some plays on special teams.

“All I know is we won eight games, we’re 8-5, we’re International Bowl champions. Our kids had a great here in the city of Toronto and we thank the International Bowl committee for inviting us and the hospitality we received. We’ll be great ambassadors for the International Bowl when we talk to anybody, because I think this is a Bowl that is going to continue to get better. We just had a great, great time.”

Brown acknowledged he had already made his mind up about declaring for the NFL Draft and had told Edsall well in advance, but didn’t want to say it publicly because it would have been a distraction for his team.

“I told you guys (in the media) earlier that I was coming back, but that was to eliminate the distractions to my team,” he said. “I apologize for lying, but I did it to protect my team.”

Commenting on his interception, Deleston said: “I think it was an incredible way to end a career. As soon as I caught the ball I was thinking, ‘What do I do with it?’ I was just really shocked that I caught it. Thirty yards from the end zone, all I was thinking to myself was, ‘Wow, I’m really going to make it in. As soon as I got to the end zone, that’s when I realized how tired I was and just collapsed. It was a great feeling.”

Gill said despite the loss, he still planned to have a smile on his face reflecting on the season overall.

“I’m so proud of this football team,” he said. “They played very, very hard and that’s all you can ask people to do. Obviously we didn’t execute as well as we had hoped for, but a lot of that had to do with Connecticut. Today they were the best football team and I give them credit, but again it still doesn’t take away what I feel about this football program and what our staff feel about these players.

“Buffalo, this is not going to be a one-year wonder. We’re going to be challenging for championships every year. I look forward to that and I know our players look forward to that. I’m proud (of the seniors). They have started a legacy and that’s what I talked to them about three years ago when I got here. These guys have left a legacy of expectation now of winning and that’s what it’s all about. They have set the tone. They have set the program nationally-known – internationally known – and I’m proud of these young men. They’re going to be better men for our society and that’s what it’s all about through football.”

Willy said the end result was a little frustrating.

“I wish we could have done more on offence, make bigger plays,” he said. “They’re a good defence...but we left some points on the table. Field goals aren’t going to beat a good team like that. I’m a little frustrated, but I look back on the season. We did have a great season, but definitely wanted to get the Bowl win.”

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL BOWL:

The International Bowl is the only NCAA Division I football game played outside the U.S. It is annually played at Rogers Centre in Toronto.

For further information, please visit the official International Bowl website at www.internationalbowl.org.

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