

Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic



Trojans Visit Texas Scottish Rite Hospital
Football

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DALLAS – The Southern California Trojans took a break from their preparations for the 87th Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic on Wednesday morning to visit patients and their families at Scottish Rite for Children Hospital in Dallas.

The visit began with a welcoming from Scottish Rite President and Chief Executive Officer, Robert L. Walker, who briefed the team about the pediatric orthopedic hospital. USC head coach Lincoln Riley then presented honorary captain Keegan Ratliff with a custom USC Trojans jersey.

The team then walked over to the atrium where nine-year old Scottish Rite patient Azariah gave Riley a Cotton Bowl-themed artwork that he created.

After the presentation, the players and coaches spent some time with patients, playing an assortment of games and signing autographs. Riley and his team were able to hear some of the stories from the families.

"This is the best part of the entire bowl experience," Riley said. "It's a hospital here that's been so influential for so many families. The chance for us to bring our guys over here and spend time with them and give back – it's very special. We're lucky. We've got a team that really appreciates the opportunity that they have to put a smile on somebody's face or use their platform in a positive way. It's a very cool day."

USC offensive lineman Justin Dedich echoed Riley's sentiments and visited some patients in their rooms. The redshirt senior enjoyed the opportunity to branch out from football and being able to meet some of the patients.

"It's awesome to come to events like this and come to a local children's hospital," Dedich said. "People think we just play football, so I feel like it's cool for us to come and branch out. It's cool to meet these kids who motivate us day in and day out."

Senior linebacker Shane Lee really enjoyed sharing positive energy with the patients and being able to play various games with them.

"Today's about getting in the community and giving back," Lee said. "It's great to get around the patients and giving them some positive energy. It's great to be around kids, and for them to be around us. It's a wonderful experience. It's a great opportunity for us to be around each other."

"It's extremely important for the Cotton Bowl to engage the community," said Dave Brown, Chair, Cotton Bowl Athletic Association. "The community has been good to us for 87 years. This community is important to us and has provided us a platform to be a New Year's Six bowl game. It's incumbent upon us to get back out into the community and give back, and that's what today's visit is all about."

Brown also discussed the Cotton Bowl Foundation's efforts from this year's North Texas Giving Day to raise funds to buy Hero Wagons for children's hospitals in the community, with the support of Radio Flyer and the Starlight Children's Foundation. Wagons are used to reduce anxiety of patients being transported from treatments and operations.

Each patient received a Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic goodie bag filled with items representing the big game. The bag included an 87th Classic t-shirt and poster provided by the CBAA, along with inflatable blimps provided by Goodyear.

The 87th Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic is Monday, Jan. 2 at Noon CT on ESPN and ESPN Radio. Kickoff is slated for 12:10 p.m.

This year's Classic is a part of the ESPN bowl lineup for the ninth straight year. Mark Jones and Robert Griffin III are set to call the action from the booth with Quint Kessenich reporting from the sidelines. ESPN Radio returns as the Classic's national radio partner for the ninth consecutive year with Brad Sham and Dusty Dvoracek in the booth and Taylor McGregor on the sidelines to describe all the action from AT&T Stadium.

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