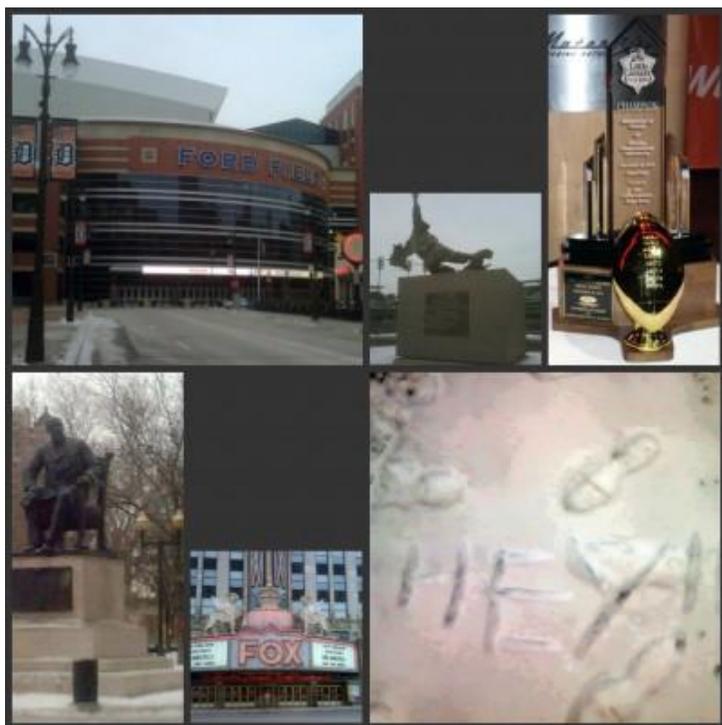


*President Mark B. Rosenberg is in Detroit for the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl on Sunday, Dec. 26. The president is sharing commentary and photos from his trip, so be sure to check out his blog on this whirlwind trip. Below is the president's latest entry. His first entry was [Dec. 23](#).*



*After learning about some individuals and places that have left indelible marks on this city (including baseball great Ty Cobb and four-time mayor and governor of Michigan Hazens Pingree) an FIU Panther left his own mark on the city -- in the snow.*

The day and night before Christmas— always a special moment in the U.S. and in Miami. In these precious hours, we slow down, think about family and friends, and make sure that we have shared greetings of love and appreciation with those who matter.

Detroit for Christmas for FIU? No doubt, an historic milestone for the FIU Athletics program and the entire university. Another sign of the coming of age of a university whose best days are still ahead. It would not have happened without the hard work, determination, and dedication of so many members of the FIU community, including our coaches, professional staff and, of course, our student athletes, who turned the impossible into the inevitable by having a championship season in the Sun Belt Conference.

So I asked a few of our players what they thought of their journey so far. Many had not ever seen snow. Few had spent any time in the North—even fewer in Detroit. They seemed to be enjoying the experience and the opportunity to be together as a team—some for the last time since they will be graduating in the Spring commencement.



Head coach Mario Cristobal addressed the crowd at the bowl luncheon.

Following team practice this morning, the FIU delegation and team joined their Toledo counterparts for a special welcoming luncheon. Officials from the Little Caesar's Bowl Committee welcomed all of us to Detroit. Little Caesars representative Stuart De Geus thanked the FIU delegation for patronizing the Little Caesars Pizza store across from the Maidique Campus. Then a special video of each team's season highlights was shown, and head coaches and athletic directors from both FIU and Toledo had the opportunity to publicly thank the sponsors and introduce their coaches and players.



Posing with the trophy reminded team members why they are in Detroit.

At the team dinner this evening, in the modestly appointed basement of the Doubletree Hotel, our players – all clad in blue and white warm-ups — gathered for a traditional dinner of turkey and ham with all the trimmings.

Coach Cristobal asked one of our student athletes to say a prayer before dinner. Around the large room, teammates clasped each other's hands or extended their arms to the shoulders of other players. It was an uncommon moment of fellowship and peace on a special night on a special occasion in a special place. All we needed was Bing Crosby or Perry Como to say the special words—Merry Christmas to you!