

Jesse Watters ([00:00](#)):

Football is back and so is the state of Florida. Governor Ron DeSantis is next.

Jesse Watters ([00:11](#)):

It's been nine days since the deadly category five Hurricane Ian made landfall in Florida and residents are already starting to rebound. Take for example, the Pine Island Bridge in Lee County. The vital artery for the town completely decimated with entire sections just breaking off and washing away into the ocean. And in a matter of just three days, a replacement bridge is already up and running. Look at that. So maybe somebody should tell the Associated Press that yesterday, put out a old article criticizing the governor for leaving the residents of Pine Island, Isolated & alone, but the new bridge was already up and it's just a remarkable turnaround in such a short amount of time. And the best way to tell that Florida is coming back high school football. Tonight, Naples High School is hosting their first game since the town was seriously flooded last week and Ron DeSantis is there for the coin toss. Take a look.

Football Officials ([01:07](#)):

You flip it up and let it fall to the ground. Tails. Guys, relax it's heads. So you want the ball. You're gonna defer. They're gonna defer. So you want the ball. Okay, which way do you want to kick?

Jesse Watters ([01:24](#)):

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis joins us now live from Naples High School. So Governor, what's the energy in the crowd like?

Gov. DeSantis ([01:33](#)):

Well, I think it's fantastic, Jesse. I mean, you know, we had 10 feet of storm surge not too far from here, uh, just nine days ago and more than they've ever had in this county, yet schools are back open. We're here for high school football and people I think have really united, uh, we took a blow on this storm, but we are gonna bounce back and I look forward to seeing something similar in Lee County, hopefully in the not too distant future as well as some of the surrounding counties. Um, you know, people have really pitched in together where we've made tremendous progress so far. But we know we got a lot of work to do, but I think everyone's in really good spirits considering the circumstances.

Jesse Watters ([02:11](#)):

I love hearing the drums, the whistle in the background, the crowd behind you in the stands. It's just a great feel. That must just feel so good knowing what you guys have been through over the last week.

Gov. DeSantis ([02:25](#)):

No, for sure. Uh, but it's also a testament, Jesse. I mean, we had 42,000 linemen and utility workers staged in Florida before the storm. And so we had millions of people without power. Were now 99 plus. You know, we got 2,500 search and rescue missions and I think because we had our ducks in a row, uh, that has cleared the way to be able, uh, to recover and bounce back quicker than if people were toiling, you know, without these essential services for weeks.

Jesse Watters ([02:56](#)):

What did you think when your staff handed you this AP article that knocked you for not having a bridge to this pine island and you actually had the bridge back up and running?

Gov. DeSantis ([03:08](#)):

I literally had done a press conference earlier that day and I noticed the reporter filed the report from Minneapolis. So I don't know too many people in Minneapolis that got a beat on the pulse of Pine Island, but I can tell you this, Jesse, they were initially advised those residents to get off the island because of the bridge that they were gonna be isolated. So they reached out to me and said, Is there anything the state can do? It's not our, it's not our road. But I was like, yeah, we're gonna do it. We're gonna get it done. So we did it ahead of schedule and now we're doing the same thing on Sanibel. I've got crews working on the Sanibel Causeway to reconnect Santa Bell Island to the mainland, and that will happen in the relatively near future. We're still trying to figure out exactly when, but it'll be in October.

Jesse Watters ([03:50](#)):

That's great to hear. And those bridges are so critical, but they're symbolically critical and that's very important visually for the rest of the country to understand. When Joe Biden was down there visiting with you, how were things with the president?

Gov. DeSantis ([04:07](#)):

Well, I'll tell you what I mean, What I told him, because the media was making a big deal that, that he, he wasn't talking to me or whatever, and I told him, I was like, Look, I wanna work together for these people because these people are from all walks of life, republicans, democrats, they expect us to be able to put our differences aside. And nobody has done more to stand up to the administration than me in Florida over the last year and a half, as you know. Uh, but you gotta be willing to work together to help folks. And so I think the response from local, state, and federal, uh, has been pretty seamless. And I think that's a testament that, you know what, we as a country can actually get things done, uh, when it counts.

Jesse Watters ([04:44](#)):

Yeah, that was very inspirational to see. No one was monkeying around and and screwing things up. Now I think everybody would agree that your wife Casey, really is the secret weapon.

Gov. DeSantis ([04:57](#)):

Well, so not only that, she, her Floridadisasterfund.org, which she launched last week, has now raised over \$40 million. And if you go to that website, you can contribute. So that money, she negotiated no transaction fees from Visa, and MasterCard, a hundred percent of your donation is going to these organizations. We've got great organizations on the ground that'll use that funding to help the people who've been displaced from this storm.

Jesse Watters ([05:25](#)):

So if our audience right now wants to donate, where should they go?

Gov. DeSantis ([05:30](#)):

Floridadisasterfund.org.

Jesse Watters ([05:33](#)):

All right. Thank you Governor. And let's go watch some football. It's good. It's back.

Gov. DeSantis ([05:38](#)):

Thanks. Thanks a lot.