

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 28 2017
Waco, Texas

Tom Herman Texas Press Conference

Texas - 38, Baylor - 7

TOM HERMAN: Really good team win. I thought we played well, save for one drive on defense the entire day. I thought the offense was a little up and down in the first half, but found a rhythm there in the second half and did their part, as well, and special teams, too.

We've got a lot of still improving to do, especially offensively. Wasn't happy with 3rd and 4th down and obviously getting a field goal blocked is unacceptable, but winning is really hard, and winning on the road is even harder. It doesn't matter where it's at or who you're playing, especially in this conference. It is really, really difficult to win on the road.

Proud of our guys, and we'll celebrate this one tonight and get to work for TCU tomorrow.

Injuries, P.J. Locke with an ankle sprain, and then there towards the end, Toneil Carter hit his head on the ground, so he's being evaluated. Won't know anything on either of those guys -- we'll know a lot more with Toneil being evaluated again and P.J. getting an MRI.

Q. How big was it for your defense to set up your offense with great field position today?

TOM HERMAN: They're carrying us right now. If there's one side of the ball that I would like to carry us, it is that side. That's number one on our plan to win is to play great defense. We're doing that pretty well right now.

The one thing I admire about this team and I'm really proud of them is even with the offense's inconsistencies there in the first half, the defense kept playing, and I think it's a bit of a badge of honor for them right now knowing that we're going to probably for the rest of the year need them to play great in order for us to have a chance to win, and they relish that, and they look forward to the challenge each and every week. I was really proud of them.



Q. How big was it for your players and frankly your offensive coaches to see something constructive in the run game happen today?

TOM HERMAN: Yeah, it was -- a lack of confidence can be really detrimental to an offense, and for us to be able to block every -- I mean, we saw four-down front, three-man front, bear defense, lots of blitz, Tampa two, cover three. We went into the week knowing that they were going to be multiple, and boy, were they. We settled down there, and I think it's really important for our guys to kind of have that confidence going into this week and the rest of the season.

Q. What did your freshman running back show you today, and is that kind of the future of this backfield going forward?

TOM HERMAN: I don't know. You know, I'll have to look at the film. I thought they broke tackles, which was encouraging to see, and they slithered around in there when things weren't blocked perfectly, they found creases and threw their bodies through the creases. I was proud of them, they protected the football, which is obviously always a concern when you're playing true freshmen running backs.

But I liked what I saw, and those guys need to continue to practice the way they have.

Q. You made no secret of your dismay for short field goals but you kicked one. What went into that decision?

TOM HERMAN: I thought it was important -- was that the one that put us up 24-7? To get a three-possession lead. We were playing great defense, and to have it at three possessions I thought was important because I was pretty certain at that point that we were going to be able to hold up defensively and wanted to make sure we came away with points and pushed that lead up to the three-possession mark.

Q. What did Shane show you today? Looked like he got in a rhythm and was really feeling things, not a lot of incompletions, one interception.

TOM HERMAN: Yeah, was really excited and happy and proud for him to have not played for as many weeks as he hadn't and stayed engaged, and credit to Tim Beck and the offensive staff and Shane, as well, for staying engaged and being there when his teammates needed him. You know, I'm sure he'd like

to have that pick back. It was the right read, just poorly underthrown. But other than that, there were still some rusty moments I saw out there, but when he's in a rhythm and seeing the defense really well, he performed well for us.

Q. He had a 90-yard drive, 31 points offensively. How close is this offense to being what you think it needs to be to compete against some of the big dogs that you have coming up?

TOM HERMAN: Yeah, I think we matched up well with Baylor. That's definitely part of it. So we've got to improve 3rd down. We've been pretty good other than the last couple weeks. So that's a concern for me, putting our defense out there too much and not extending drives.

I think we saw enough that we're confident that we can get there. Are we there yet, I would hesitate to say that, but I think we saw enough that there's some confidence on that side of the ball that we can continue to improve.

Q. When you're coming off back to back losses, facing a winless team, crazy things can happen. Talk about the mental toughness of your squad to be able to rebound like they did.

TOM HERMAN: Really proud. We had talked all week about this being the most important game of the season, and not because of what had really happened in the past or who we were playing or what their record was, but the fact that it was the next one and that we had an opportunity to go correct some of the mistakes that we made the previous couple weeks and win a conference ballgame on the road.

I was shocked. They had a 5:45 wake-up call. There was no dopey-eyed guys, there was no wipe the sleep out of their eyes, any of that stuff. They were intense and ready to go from the word jump.

Q. Does this look like a defense that different people (indiscernible) is that some sign of even more progress, that you don't need the same players to play well every week?

TOM HERMAN: I hope so. I think when you have defensive players that are in position to make plays and they make them, that's always a good thing. You know, so the plays that you run on offense, we had no control over, and what we have control over is our effort and intensity and physicality, and I think for the most part, that was on display today.

You know, you're right; different guys have made plays at critical times for us, but I think that's just a sign of maturity and great preparation, that when the play is there to be made that it doesn't matter who's in that

position to make that play, that the guy is going to make it.

Q. I remember you said when someone asked you about Buechele versus Ehlinger in terms of running, you said Ehlinger is maybe a step faster but Buechele has still got some giddy-up, is that what he showed you today?

TOM HERMAN: Yeah, he's not a statue by any stretch of the imagination. You know, he's not quite the runner, obviously, that Sam is, but he is definitely serviceable. When defenses force you by completely overloading the box, maybe playing some man coverage, you still want to keep the ball on the ground, he's an adequate, above-average option to do that.

Q. When it comes to Shane, what's the percentage of healthy that he is right now? I guess he's not 100 percent.

TOM HERMAN: No, he's not 100. I think the fact that he's just bearing that brace -- I think from a standpoint and stability standpoint, he's probably as close as he's going to be the rest of the season. But just having to wear that brace probably limits him just a hair. But I think from a pain and stability standpoint, he's pretty good.

Q. You mentioned the defense has been carrying you all season. How much better can they get in your opinion?

TOM HERMAN: Oh, I think the sky's the limit to be honest with you. I think if we can play as well as we have in the pass game the last couple weeks and still be able to defeat blocks and get off blocks and stop the run, I don't know how much better, but I think the sky is the limit, and these kids are more and more confidence. I mean, one of the things I was proud of was one of our captains goes out in P.J. Locke and there was no drop-off that I saw putting Antwan Davis in there at nickel. Even the key backups are performing for us right now.

I'm excited to watch them progress.

Q. At 4-4 here at the end of October, which way does this thing break?

TOM HERMAN: Oh, I don't know. I just want to go win another one this week. The big picture is irrelevant right now. I really was happy and proud of our guys' approach this week and that 1-0 mentality, and I think the fact that we were able to do what we did, having that approach, again, lends confidence to -- that's the approach we're going to need to take each and every week.

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Shane Buechele Texas Press Conference

Texas - 38, Baylor - 7

Q. You've been dying to show off that running ability, haven't you?

SHANE BUECHELE: No. I don't like pulling it out, but when you have to, you have to.

Q. That's what everybody is wondering; that 28-yarder, you ran up the tunnel.

SHANE BUECHELE: Yeah, shoot. You know, it was just good to be back out there. My body feels good, and it was just exciting to go out there with my guys and go get a win.

Q. What have the last few weeks been like for you where you get hurt and then you're not out there as much as you want to be? What's that emotional situation been like for you?

SHANE BUECHELE: You know, it's been tough. I'm not going to lie. But you know, you just have to stay focused. I think that's just the main thing, the players and the coaches around me, you know, I think helped a lot just keeping me focused. Like I said, it was good to be back out on the field and being able to go compete with my guys.

Q. What was your mindset coming into this week once you knew that you were the guy?

SHANE BUECHELE: You know, just go 1-0, like Coach says. Every practice is the most important one, and just getting back in the swing of things, just get timing down with the receivers and running backs and just stuff like that, just go back and just go try to get a win.

Q. How much do you think that every person on this offense needed to see some positivity with the running game? How much do you think that helps with confidence?

SHANE BUECHELE: Yeah, I think it helps a lot. I think it helps confidence, one, and just getting our team rolling. You know, when we can go fast and call plays and throw it out there and they'll get five yards, it helps a lot with our offense, especially just keeping the

defense off the field. They played us tough today. They played unbelievable. But it was really good to see our running backs and O-line do what they did.

Q. It seemed like you were really rushing to get to the line of scrimmage to keep it going. How big was that?

SHANE BUECHELE: Yeah, you know, it was a big thing going in practice, but we didn't think we'd use it this much. But when it's working, you've got to keep going. Once you get in that little roll, it's hard to stop.

Q. You mentioned the defense; how big was it for them for you guys on offense for them to give you short fields and such great starting spots?

SHANE BUECHELE: Yeah, they did a great job, just creating turnovers and just helping us with field position. You know, I can't say it enough, they're pretty fun to watch from the sideline.

Q. What was your impression of your freshmen running backs and how they performed today, Danny and Toneil?

SHANE BUECHELE: You know, they were really good. They run the ball hard, which is really good to see, and you know, they're fast. They're quick guys, and they can hit it and bounce it off side, whatever they want to do. But it was good to see Danny and Toneil do what they did.

Q. Did they add any wrinkles to the offense this week?

SHANE BUECHELE: No, you know, that's just part of our offense, part of that going fast mentality, either hand it off or get it up there quick. It's just what the defense is giving you, and you take what they give you.

Q. How long did it take before you knew you were going to be in a rhythm and that you were going to be on today?

SHANE BUECHELE: You know, I'd say whatever we were going fast and we were completing balls, just going fast, it helped. It always helps, it's always really good when you can get quick completions like that and just keep rolling, and like I said, get five yards here on the run game and then throw a stop. It helps a lot, just with our tempo and getting in a rhythm.

Q. Did Sam text you before the game and say good



luck?

SHANE BUECHELE: Yeah, he texted me last night, and he was just like, hey, just good luck, have a lot of fun out there, and I'll see you when you get back from getting that win.

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Charles Omenihu Texas Press Conference

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Q. It seems like every week different guys are making big plays. Is that the sign that this defense is really evolving into something special?

CHARLES OMENIHU: Oh, yeah, I mean, we have playmakers all over the field, like from the first group to the second group to the backups to the starters. Everyone is making plays, and that's what's been so good this year. We're a deep team on defense, and it's lovely to see that. One play you're in, you come out, you ain't got to worry about the guy coming in because you know he's just as good, so it's a good feeling.

Q. How big was the pick six early just for you guys?

CHARLES OMENIHU: Oh, yeah, DeShon is a bother, man. That's a dude right there. That's a real guy. It was good. It was like a jump start kind of deal where we just, all right, now it's pedal to the metal, full go.

Q. I saw you leave the field at the end of the game. Are you all right?

CHARLES OMENIHU: Yeah, I'm good. I'll be good.

Q. Is that the formula for this team is strong defense and kind of set up the offense with short fields, things like that?

CHARLES OMENIHU: I mean, we just -- both sides just go out there and try to do their thing. I don't necessarily think we have a formula, just going out there, both sides playing hard, pedal to the metal, and that's what both sides are coached to do.

Q. You guys have been working so hard the last couple weeks, finally got this win. How good does it feel?

CHARLES OMENIHU: It feels good. Winning feels good. It's always good to win. We need to continue this feeling, so we'll get back to work and go on for the next opponent.