

# Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 6 2018  
Waco, Texas

## Matt Rhule Press Conference

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: Appreciate you guys all coming.

Proud of our guys. Thought they played really hard. Thought the first half, you know, as I told the guys at half-time, statistically dominated, but just warrant able to put all the points on the board we probably would like to. Thought our guys didn't panic. Found a way to fight it down the stretch. Found a way to win in the fourth quarter.

Happy for Connor Martin that he took advantage of his opportunity to make one more kick. Proud of a lot of guys, stepped up for us that had not played a ton, and all I told our team was: I want to win and I want to see a team that fights.

I could tell all week, that this team was going to come out and fight today. There's no better team to do that against than Kansas State, who is big and physical and tough, and we knew it was going to take all we had, and so we found a way to get it done. I'm happy for our guys.

**Q. You started out two weeks ago against Kansas -- can you comment on the dramatic improvement and what you focused on in practice?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: Penalties, obviously they get you out of whack. They get you off the chains. I think the other thing is when you're trying to play aggressively, the way we like to play, you start getting penalties, you start to slow down in tempo. That was key.

As I said on Monday, I think we're a disciplined team. I think we're playing the way everyone else is. I think our kids are playing really, really hard and maybe pressing sometimes and getting their hands outside and playing maybe a little too aggressively.

But today, I thought we had one or two false starts, I think it was, but we played within ourselves. I'd like to say it's us, but I think it's just our players, you know, just



getting a little bit more confident and I thought that was an excellent group. I thought they communicated well. The players on both teams had a chance to play.

**Q. Along those lines, you won the turnover margin and had fewer penalties. How big was that obviously at the end of the game?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: It was great to finally get some turnovers. That was the difference in the game to me, coming out of the half and knocking the ball loose. This is a game of storylines to me, of young guys going out there and playing. I mean, Jeremy (ph) then Kedric goes down and the guys get tired and Jairon is out there -- Caleb gets his first start, makes some big plays downfield. Raleigh played great. Christian Morgan, true freshman, not only true freshman, but starting safety, and Christian gets his first start. I thought a lot of those guys stepped up and getting the turnovers, that was great.

We had turnovers, as I said, the halfback pass we threw, I called that. It was ridiculous that I did that. It was pretty cool though, our defense went out there. They were almost excited, yelling, "Coach, we got you. Don't worry about it." That was the story for me today, a bunch of young guys stepped up but also a bunch of vets.

**Q. Were you thinking about going for the touchdown at the end?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: Yeah, you know, I did, and that went back and forth through my mind but I just think it's my job to believe in our players and it's my job to make sound football decisions and I think the biggest thing Connor came in at half-time, he wasn't happy. But to me it's all about the way he approaches and the way he walks out there, the way he kicks it and I saw that starting to come.

Part of it to me, we were putting him in tough positions, 45- and 50-yarders and I was trying to show him, you're my guy, I'm sticking with you until you get this all figured out. At the end I looked over, saw his body language and he was ready to go kick the ball and win the game. And if he misses it, we get to play more football, we get to play over time and we love playing the game.

I had confidence he would make it and I had

confidence we would protect, but the credit all goes to him. He stepped up and made the kick. It just seemed poetic to me, and right, when you have that kind of a day, I said to the team, it's like a movie; you deserve the right to go out there and take that last kick. Connor has done a lot of stuff for us and he's made a lot of big kicks, and probably none bigger than that.

**Q. You mentioned guys that haven't had a ton of opportunities, and you also mentioned some veterans making plays, too. Do you have to have both to win a game like this?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: I think in college football today, probably. You know, we thought about playing squarely last week and got dinged up a little bit. Wednesday we thought maybe -- he ended up being ruled out and JaMycal got ruled out the first half, the rest of the half.

You know, so we're sitting there -- he's tired. So we turned to Squirrel, and it's great when you see young guys step up and just be ready for their opportunity. Because we had all -- we had to start putting guys on special teams and B.J. who is in the middle of a redshirt year, didn't even go to the translate last night; he's like, got it, goes out and plays the rest of the game on special teams. No. 1, it's a great rule and No. 2, I just think it speaks a lot to the character of those guys that they were willing to go out there and play and fight, but I think the credit goes to our older guys and our older guys -- that last drive, I don't know how long it took, five minutes or so.

That was the fun part about it. We were able to spread out but take some time off the clock and not allow their offense to go back out there.

**Q. You tracked down Squirrel in the middle of the crowd. What was the exchange and what was it like for you to see him make that play?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: You know, probably without a bunch -- if I had a bunch of those guys -- I said to him, I told you I was going to put you in the game today. He said, I've been telling him that but I don't do it ever (Laughter). But I told him, I said, I'm going to put you in the game. You know, it's funny, Coach De Leon came back to us, he's been out, and he was part of recruiting Squirrel. I remember one time he said, you give him ten carries, he's going to bust one and I gave him two and he busted one.

I was just proud of Squirrel. He went out there and used one of his game as a redshirt for two plays. Just happy for him and happy for a lot of guys, a lot of the guys that hung in there and made plays today and fought. It wasn't perfect obviously but it was a good team win.

**Q. Talk about Trestan what he's able to do.**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: He had some physical ones, some we ran through contact and he fought for first downs. He had to be able to get in there and blitz pick up every play. His number was called and Trestan stepped up and made plays.

That's what we needed. We needed that on that second to last touchdown drive where we kept trying to hand him the ball and he kept popping some runs and keeping us on schedule. You know, we have pretty good wide outs and quarterback is pretty accurate, so we can run the ball and keep people off the balance and change things, and he was running hard.

**Q. Can you comment on, or what were your thoughts on Charlie's overall performance this afternoon, especially the game-winning drive and based on the type of game that it was, is it fitting that you ended on that field goal?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: Yeah, you know, the story of the game was we couldn't put the ball in the end zone in the first half. Had we been able to, it would have been a much different game. I thought this was some poetic justice kicking a field goal to win the game.

I thought Charlie had poise. I thought that we were able to protect him, sort of been one of our Achilles heels. He made some pressure throws, an all-out blitz. He hit Jalen on a slant and minutes on a slant and I thought those guys stepped up and made some big plays for us. They were tired but they were fighting.

**Q. How big was --**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: Yeah, it was unbelievable. You know, just kind of funny how things work, not a play we really had in this week and we were working some things in the middle of the feel, and they started to defend those and we caught it on the run and mining was ready and Charlie was ready. It was an unbelievable catch.

He practiced that way all week. He came back from the Oklahoma game, and he had a lot of yards but he also felt like he left a lot of things out there. He's become a complete receiver. You can have a lot of yards and do a lot of things, but you're not always a complete player and he's trying to become a complete player. That was as big a play as I've seen.

**Q. What was JaMycal's issue?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: He has a history of migraines, so he's got that kind of issue. Because he's having migraines, times like that, you have to make sure it's a migraine, not a concussion. You have to wait

and see how he was going to be, and I guess doctor said it wasn't a concussion so he was good.

**Q. Was the slant --**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: I think we were kind of a combination of everything. We were kind of spread them out, trying to hit that over-route and they started playing the run and taking advantage of the run and they play man and try and hit the ball to outside receivers.

I thought it was just really a combination of -- they were similar to last week. They really aren't giving us a ton of big plays, explosive plays, so we were having to kind of take what they were giving us and it was good to see that executed. I thought it was good to see our downhill physical run game, herb broke that one long run and told him it's been awhile since he played tailback.

It was good to see all those different facets of the game kind of all come together.

**Q. How much does it help to win a close game?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: Well, you know, like I told our guys, you can't fight to get this -- you work so hard and those players work so hard, and a lot of times when you win, it's like you win the first game of the year, it's 55-27 and you walk off. Today they had a chance to experience joy at the end of the game, just like that feeling of, like, we did it.

So I told them to enjoy that feeling. I think to me, before the game, I asked them, what are we here to do. A couple guys said, we're here to win. I said, no, we're here to go beat another team. There's a big difference. Sometimes you can slop your way to a win.

I want a team that wants to go out and play well and beat the other team. That's a hard team to beat, because they don't beat themselves, and they are physical and they fight back, and I thought we had a team that instead of being upset that we were down at the end, wanted to go keep playing and find a way to go win the game. Don't let them lose; let's go try to win it. It was that demeanor on the sideline that I really, really appreciated, even when there was one second left, it's like, a couple weeks ago, a lot of our guys were like, oohh -- but it was just like, keep playing, keep playing, keep playing. We did it. We hustled and found a way to hit the quarterback on the last play of the game.

**Q. You talk about the process of building Baylor back to where you want it to be, championship level. Do you see this as a significant building philosophy --**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: The comeback is important. I wouldn't want to demean anybody else by saying this is bigger than that. None of this is ever really about me, you know what I'm saying. This is all about our players. They worked hard this week, and you know, it's funny, there was a lot of, like, outside stuff going on this week, you know, and probably a lot of people saying, how are the guys going to show up.

Everyone was at the game today -- we're not a perfect team. We're building it and they are building it and we are a team in transition and we're working, but that team has heart and that team competed, and I was proud of them to that. Everything to me is today is today, and tomorrow wake up and start watching Texas, you know, and maybe start tonight.

You know, so it was just a great week of work, a great week of guys stepping up, a great team win, and I mean, you know, gave us a couple points at the end but the second quarter the way the defense played, turn the ball over, all the sacks, all those things. I'm just proud of that, and even if we would have lost that game, that wouldn't have -- I still wouldn't have -- I would have been upset but I still would have known that hey, we are building a team that's fighting.

I'm just happy they got a chance to enjoy it. I'll turn the tape on when I get home and I'll be upset when I get home, but I'm just happy for our players that they had a chance to go in.

**Q. You fought with a lot of things this week. Do you think your players, today, fought for you?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: I don't think they fought -- I don't think they are fighting. I think -- like I really believe this, that our players believe in what we're doing, because it's what we're doing. It's not what I'm doing. It's what we're doing.

This is never, ever, ever about me. It's all about them, about them, about them, and I think in our building, our players, our young players really respect our older players. And I think they see the older guys out there every day, and they want to win for them.

I've been coaching for 19 years. I'll coach for 25 more. I'll be like one of those guys you have to push out the door somewhere. Like I'll be coaching high school football if I can -- sorry, Julie (Laughter). I'm going to coach forever and I've had all kinds of moments like this and exciting games like this. A lot of our players, this was like, they are seniors and they have six games left and they have seven games left. This is all about them and I was happy for them.

One of my former players from Temple is this big movie producer now, video director out in L.A. and he came in

town and asked if he could come to the game today. He's one of my favorite players and one of the toughest guys I've ever been around. He was like, this is living. He's out in Hollywood and making movies, but to be in that locker room and watch those guys celebrate with each other, watch people of all ages and races and places and backgrounds all celebrate together, was awesome.

I'll just say this: I'm so grateful to Mac and Dr. Livingstone, this was a Breast Cancer Awareness Day, and you know, a bunch of our players warmed up. We've seen that all across the country and nothing affects our players probably more than that, and we have several players right now whose mothers are battling various forms of our players.

So our players -- they don't, like do I have to wear the stuff I give you. They all texted me: Can we wear Monique Atkinson's shirt; she's going through what she's going through, and she's tough.

Absolutely. And my mom, who's a survivor; and Julie's mom, who battled and fought and was a survivor for many, many years. Just those are the stories to me. Me, I'm as happy as could be. We've got a good team that's fighting their tails off. They ain't fighting for they. They are fighting for themselves.

As I told them, I'm going to show up on Monday and be yelling and screaming about this play and that play.

**Q. Who is the guy in Hollywood?**

HEAD COACH MATT RHULE: I probably shouldn't say his name.

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NR/NR **BAYLOR (4-2, 2-1) 37**, NR/NR **KANSAS STATE (2-4, 0-3) 34**

MCLANE STADIUM • WACO, TEXAS

OCT. 6, 2018 • ATTENDANCE: 36,888

### **SR WR Jalen Hurd**

*On running the ball...*

"It was great, [Trestan] Ebner had a hundred-yard game, Sqwirl [Williams] came in and got a big-time touchdown. That's very important to be able to open up the passes."

*On if he likes how he is being used within the offense...*

Absolutely. Anything that I can do to help and get a win.

*On today being a team win...*

"It's actually a really good team win because a lot of times you can go back and look at stats and it might be like one or two dudes, but it literally was a team win. Everybody stepped up and made plays."

*On how much confidence the team has in Connor Martin...*

"Listen, this dude is great in practice. Last year he made tons of kicks. He's stone cold. By him missing just a few, it's not going to phase him."

*On if Sqwirl's play surprised him...*

"Oh, no. He does that in practice all the time. I knew he was going to bust one. As soon as he got out in the open, I knew he was going to make something happen."

*On how excited he was for Sqwirl...*

"I was very excited just to see it come out in the game because he does it all the time in practice. I'm very happy for him."

*On if he misses playing running back...*

"I love wide receiver, but I like running back, too. I like being used in different ways so it's a good fit."

### **SO QB Charlie Brewer**

*On the game-winning drive...*

"It felt amazing. We've been real close to doing that in a few games. By no means was it perfect, we played pretty bad offensively for a lot of the game but we battled it out and good teams find a way. We found a way today."

*On how important the win was...*

"It's crucial. The majority of your games are going to be like that. The more you can get used to that and build your confidence up late in the game in the fourth quarter, I think it's really important for the team."

*On how many guys contributed...*

"I'm not sure how many different guys touched the ball today, but from what I can recall, quite a few did. I think that's good, it keeps the defense honest. I was excited to see Skwirl get in there, he's an explosive guy."

*On how big today's game was for Trestan...*

"It was huge. He ran the ball really hard. He really had a complete game from my point of view. I'm really proud of him."

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*On why today's running game was so good...*

"I think we still had a few penalties, but we were able to on some drives stay ahead of the change. I think it's really important but we still gotta limit those. Offensive line played great."

*On Mims' TD catch...*

"Yes. I saw him one-on-one, threw it up to him. He's a great player so I'm not surprised he came down with it, but it was a heck of a catch."

*On Mims' focus over the last few weeks...*

"He's put on and stacked up a few good weeks here. It's good to have a target like that with a lot of confidence in the middle of your Big 12 play. I'm excited for him. I'm proud of him."

*On if this is the epitome of a team win...*

"There's a lot to do better but the way we finished makes it sweet. We'll enjoy this one the rest of the day, but then we're back to work tomorrow."

*On if this win feels different...*

"I was just excited by the way it ended. Tough, close games-- Kansas State is a really tough team with a lot of tradition. I have a lot of respect for them, so to be able to run the ball like that against them was huge."

### **JR K Connor Martin**

*On the feeling of hitting that final field goal...*

"I felt like I owed everybody, it's the job as a specialist. Your job really is to help the offense when they're not able to get things going. I feel like our offense and defense bailed me out a lot. I left a lot of points on the field and I really wanted it for them. I was like, I got to make it for these guys. They've saved my butt all night."

*On his confidence throughout the game...*

"It's hard. I came in at half time and took a breath and went back out. You just got to put your head down and focus on what's next."

*On wanting the last KSU touchdown for a chance to win the game with a field goal...*

"I'll be honest, I'd be lying if I said I didn't want to kick a game winner. It's pretty selfish, but I'll be honest and admit that, just after the day I had, I felt like I really owed it to these guys. I want to be the one to give it to them. I want to be the one to make it happen for those guys after the day I had and how many times they bailed me out."

*On his nerves on the last kick...*

"On the last one, no. This is one of those games where you just kind of have one of those feelings that it is going to come down to something like that, and I really did like all week. The guys kept telling me throughout the week and throughout the day, it's going to come down to you. I felt calm and excited for the opportunity."

### **FR RB Sqwirl Williams**

*On his want for more after his first touchdown...*

"That first college touchdown feels great, but like I said I'm going to remain humble, stay patient, and when I get called again, I'll be ready."

*On getting put in the game and coach continually telling him he'd be in...*

"It was pretty cool, you know. He told me that this week, and I was like 'Coach, I'm going to be ready,' He trusts me, he put me in the game, and I made the best opportunity that I could."

*On working for a win as compared to a blowout...*

"This is a special win. It showed us that we are a team, that we have each other's back. For us to go out and play like that, felt great."



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## 2018 POSTGAME QUOTES - BU

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### **SO RB Trestan Ebner...**

*On the team "going in the right direction" after a game like today...*

"It's eye-opening. Especially coming off the loss last week, and seeing how we answered as a team, to come together and get this victory- it's really eye-opening. We worked hard, we really work harder than anybody, and just to see it pay off is really good."

*On penalty totals decline...*

"Once you turn on the field and you see that Oklahoma could not stop our offense, only we can stop our offense. It's really big to see the offensive line be disciplined guys, get their hands inside receivers, it's really good to see cause we believe we have one of the top offenses in the country. If we don't beat ourselves, then we don't think anybody can stop us."

### **FR S Christian Morgan**

*On last year compared to this year...*

"Last year is really not who we are. We're a completely different team, we play different, we act different, we carry ourselves different. Even with me coming in and the new year, I can immediately see a difference in the team and how the seniors carry us now. It's just who we are, just a different team."

*On the feeling of winning a close game...*

"It feels great. Each win to us feels the same. All we try to do is continue to build on each other throughout the game, align throughout the game, so we can keep on playing hard."

*On the team growing up today...*

"Most definitely. We grew up a lot. Just being able to get punched in the mouth and seeing how we responded, I feel like we responded really well."

*On the importance of coming back after losing tough plays...*

"It's just in our DNA, we are just a different team. We can respond to adversity better. That really what we're doing, focusing on playing football just next play, next play, we don't dwell on the past."

*On importance of offense and special teams in the last minutes of games...*

"Rhule told us that it would be a complete effort. Whenever something negative happened, we knew we could count on the offense and the special teams to get us back in the game. At the end of the day, we're a team."