

Baylor University Football Media Conference

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Mike Gundy Press Conference

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: I don't even need a stats sheet to know what happened. We're not a good enough football team to have that many penalties and a special teams blunder and give up the touchdown.

What I told the team was: Even after all that, you had a chance to win the game. But I'm really disappointed in being undisciplined with all the personal fouls, the face mask, chop block, late hit. Those are things that shouldn't happen.

You know, it's interesting, we talk about it, being disciplined and we were undisciplined today, and playing smart football and we didn't play smart football. We have to do a better job of coaching it. The general rule is: The players will show you how well you're coaching them and what you're working on on Saturdays, so that's what I take out of this. Can't give up a blocked punt for a touchdown and then have 125 or however many yards.

And then we weren't good on the rush. I think we gave up maybe five, six yards of rush. I know one of them was a long one but still counts. Got to do a better job on the run. Got to do a better job minimizing penalties and give us a chance to have success. We're just not the team that can overcome that many plays, bad plays, I should say, or undisciplined plays. That will be the thing that I'll first start to work on tomorrow when we get them back for practice.

Q. Could you take us through the decision to go for it on fourth down and the play that was called?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Well, you're on the, what, 34 or something like that. You're in fourth and three. You get a chance to get a first down, the game's over. If you punt it, they are going to get it on the 20. Obviously it didn't -- those 14 yards at that time didn't make a difference, but I would have liked for Taylor to have thrown the ball away, is what I would have liked to happen on that particular play.

Q. Did he have the option to run or pass?



HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Mm-hmm.

Q. Is that something you discussed during the time-out?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Well, there's a million suggestions going on in time-outs, like all the -- every time during the game and it was no different than any other time-out.

Q. A week after you guys put the ball in Taylor's hands in some pretty significant moments, did you feel even more empowered to let him make that call in that moment on that fourth down play?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Well, I mean, that's just a base play for us. We've run that play for years, so it's not really anything different than any other play.

Q. What changed for the defense down the stretch?

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Q. What changed for your defense down the stretch?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: I think it's penalties. I think we prolonged drives, and again, I can't -- it's hard for me to recollect every drive but we are extending drives and giving them free 15-yard penalties, and that's a huge factor. It's difficult to get stops and then certainly when you're giving them 15, 20 yards a drive on penalties, that's where it would start for me, just too many undisciplined penalties.

Q. Seemed like in the second half, your running game found some lanes and some holes. Is that design stuff you switched at half-time?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: We made a couple adjustments at half but most of it was just game plan. Things that we had not got to.

But I thought we -- I thought our play calling and keeping them off balance and run/pass mix, I don't know what it is, 212 and 311 was pretty good, and we didn't turn a ball over.

So really, it comes down to what I said. We were able to balance the offense, but just too many crucial mistakes and at the wrong time.

Q. The penalties have been a common occurrence in most, if not all of your losses this season. Does

it confound you that it continues happening?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Well, it's a big factor in our losses. What worries me, or not worries me; what disappoints me is we talk about it every single day, every practice, every meeting, and I talk about it twice before we go on the field, once in the hotel and once in the locker room. But that's not getting it done for some reason.

We are going to have to come up with some plan to where we can get our guys to be a little more disciplined on some of those penalties, because that's a huge factor in these close losses.

Q. How much talk is there during the game with how tight the game is being officiated and how the players respond to that?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Not really any. That's not something we know because we can't see a lot of times. So I didn't have any problem with officiating. I thought it was fine. We just didn't play very disciplined football.

Q. On the punt, what did it look like to you? Just take a little too long back there?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: No. It's a tactical error. Nothing to do with the deal -- we were -- we didn't execute and we were lined up wrong.

Q. There were some screwy things that happened on special teams for both teams. Did that factor into the decision to have Zach just drop back and push it down inside the 20 instead of going for it? Is that part of it at all or was that a factor?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Well, one issue is it was -- that wind is a difficult thing to deal with, and I thought that we could -- that it wouldn't be as big a deal on field goals because of the scoreboard. I thought it would help. And then when I found -- when I saw how big of an issue it was on that, then the ability for a guy to gauge where he's punting the ball into wind like that is extremely difficult.

So you know, we just felt like, hey, we get three yards; worst-case scenario, we give them the ball on the 30 or 31. So if we were to gauge it wrong on the punt, they are going to get it on the 20. So it's basically -- it should have been like a ten- or 12-yard risk versus trying to finish the game.

Q. How would you evaluate Taylor's passing today?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: I thought he threw pretty good. It was not an easy day to throw, going this way or that way. It's difficult. We had some guys open down the field that I wish we would have hit but they had the same thing, if you watch them, they had guys a couple times open and the ball is going over their head.

It was not an easy day to throw the football or kick or punt it.

Q. The carries on the last offensive drive went to JD -- was he not 100 percent or was he tired at that point in the game when you had JD in near the end?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: I would have to ask Woz. He might have been, got a little tired there and JD in, which is fine, we were still getting some whacks at it. So I don't think any of that was a factor.

Q. Taylor was pitching it out to Tyron and Tylan regularly throughout the day, real short stuff. They were laying off. I think Tylan, especially, I thought that maybe -- just go back to that on the fourth down calls, as opposed to rolling Taylor out.

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Well, they pressed it, so now you're going to be throwing a 25-yard ball down the field. The fourth down call is one call. We lost the game because we had 130 yards in penalties and got a blocked punt for a touchdown, I mean --

Q. How did you feel about your offensive line? Different look out there.

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: In the first quarter, I didn't think we were very good, and then from that point on, I thought they played pretty good. 76 looked like he held up okay. Without watching the tape, it would be hard for me to say. There's some times that he got beat, but overall, he seemed like he played okay.

Q. AJ Green was a guy who got penalized a lot today and then got beat on the last touchdown play. How is he doing right now, from what you've seen? He obviously didn't look great walking off the field.

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: I haven't seen him. I mean, I'm sure he probably doesn't feel good about, you know, again, it was a five-yard fade. That's not -- that had to be the last play. That wasn't the issue. I keep going back to: We're not far enough along as a team to overcome 125 yards in penalties and blocked punt for touchdowns. That's really the biggest part; the extension of drives, shortening the field for them like that.

So that will be the first thing that we need to correct, come up with a way to be a smarter, more disciplined team.

Q. You've continually had problems with penalties. Last week was one of the few times you haven't. This recurring theme, is that an issue of youth or is that an issue of something not making a connection in the brain? I don't know, at this point it sort of has become a trend for you guys.

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: You know, like the face mask and lay hits were all on their sidelines, so I couldn't see it. It's hard for me to comment.

Sometimes when you're going to tackle a guy, if he moves down -- but you've got to open your hand and let it brush off. The chop blocks on offense, I mean, that's just ridiculous. We shouldn't even be chop blocking. And that's a critical error and that has to start with our staff and our approach to it, and then if that's not something we can fix, then we need to quit cut blocking. Because we had a chop, like the last three or four weeks in a row, 15 yards.

Now, we overcame it. I think we hit a guy down the middle and actually scored a touchdown on the drive but we can't win games with those many crucial errors. And so we'll have to try to work hard to come up with a plan to minimize it.

Q. The 41 throws for Taylor, you said you like how he's throwing it. Is that a high element with the wind?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: 90-plus -- same thing. An additional 18 plays from what we've been this year. Let's just say it's seven extra, is it 32 or 33, whatever, that's about right. Pretty balanced. You had 40 passes and 47 rushes, pretty common for us.

Q. You mentioned telling your team you saw a chance to win this game. Did you bring up the future of what's to come the next game, the next three games, when you were talking to them in the locker room?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: No, no. We'll talk about all that tomorrow and the next game. You know, when you lose a game, you try to talk to them about things that we could have done better and then it's important to shower up and get on the plane, get home, get some rest, comeback to work and be ready to go to work tomorrow. Not necessarily look ahead in a post game locker room.

Q. Seemed like 31 and 20, some of your young safeties had one of their better games. Did you notice that?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: It's really hard for me on defense to watch because they are generally not in location of the ball, and I'm watching the ball, and so I don't see a lot of what they do.

Without watching tape and hearing that side of it, be difficult for me to really comment on any of that.

Q. Did you guys prepare for both quarterbacks coming into this game or did you just focus on one or the other?

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: We didn't know enough about the other guy to not prepare for what they had done. So I mean, it was basically the schemes we got ready on is what they had done this year.

Q. So it doesn't catch you off guard when he comes into the game --

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: Yeah, I asked him about that -- but I can't imagine it would be anything that would have caught us off guard because most of all their tape was him playing in the game.

Q. On the blocked punt, you started out and shifted -- did that have anything to do --

HEAD COACH MIKE GUNDY: No, we didn't have a guy in there. Didn't have anything to do with the players. That was a coaching error.