**Baylor Football Head Coach Matt Rhule
Weekly Press Conference
November 18, 2019**

***Opening Statement***

“It’s great to see everybody, appreciate you guys all being here, obviously disappointed at the outcome of the end of the game on Saturday, lot of credit to Oklahoma, they did what championship teams do, they found a way to win, what we’ve done most of the year and at the end of the day they made one more play than we did so I think our team learned a lot from that game, I think A, they learned No. 1, what we can be, for the first half we looked like not just a top 10, but a top five team in the country, and then secondly I think the second half showed us what we have to do and I think we’ve instilled a winning mindset, I think our guys have a winning mindset, they go out and they do whatever it takes to win the game and that was the first chance for us to see what a championship mindset looks like, when you come down in November and the game is on the line and you have to make one more play, you can’t look at the scoreboard, you can’t sit there and hope the time runs off the clock, you have to just keep playing and so Oklahoma did it, we didn’t do it but I do believe that game will drive us to take the program, it’ll drive us as players and coaches, it’ll drive all of us to take it up even another level and unfortunate that you have to go through sometimes games like that but I do think it’ll be the best thing for us in the long run as we learn from it, that being said my attention and our guys’ attention, we got here yesterday, is completely on Texas, senior day for a very special group of young men that have really, really acted and lead their lives on blind faith, believing in what we could be and here they are with a chance to go play University of Texas at home, a great team with great players, I know they’re excited and so I don’t have to talk much about the other things, it’s really just about the chance to go out and play football again and even though we were disappointed by that it was a great, great, great atmosphere, it was a great chance to play big time, big time college football with the whole world watching and we have another chance to do that this Saturday and I’m sure that we’ll be ready so with that I’ll see what questions you have.”

***On the players’ attitude after the loss…***

“Yeah, I haven’t talked a lot about what they can clinch and all that, I’m sure they know that, right, so to me this is all about, the minute we start talking about those things is when things like Saturday happen, it’s like hey there’s only 30 minutes left on the clock, to me this is just about football and Texas is a great football team, they have great football players, I think our guys came in yesterday and I wasn’t sure what to expect, you know we haven’t lost a game yet this year and they came in yesterday and we’ve always been Sundays off, Mondays going so it’s our first Sunday and we started doing a chapel this year cause coming in on Sundays it felt right to start with a chapel so we start the chapel, we sing a couple of songs and everyone sings along and it was the first time we were doing it with a loss, I wasn’t sure what to expect and I thought the energy in the room, I thought, you know no one’s happy, but I thought the way that they first and foremost stopped to honor God and then move into football, I thought was awesome but I also thought it was the way they lifted yesterday, we actually went out and practiced, we played 96 plays on defense, we still went out and practiced and I thought they had really good energy and focus so I think for our guys the chance to go out and play again and the fact that we’re playing Texas, just cause they’re a great football team, I think our guys are very, very much locked in.”

***On if it’s good to be playing Texas this week…***

“Yeah, playing TCU, Oklahoma, Texas in a row is difficult, right, you had a Thursday night game, you had two days off, then it was bang, bang, bang, we go on the road, that’s not an easy stretch and so what it does do, it does make sure you’re always focused on what’s next, I saw Teck [Sam Tecklenburg] first thing Sunday morning and Connor Galvin, they’re walking through the facility, I don’t know what time, maybe 12:30 and I said hey, no one feels sorry for me and no one feels sorry for you and they both said no one feels sorry for us coach and so I think when you live a life of what’s next we don’t spend a lot of time on what could’ve been, what’s next is Texas and we had that same feeling against Texas last year, four chances to throw the football into the endzone and couldn’t get it done so we know what kind of team they have, a lot of our players know their players and so we’ll get ourselves ready to go play.”

***On what it will take to sustain the first half performance…***

“I think everyone just kind of continuing to do their job, one of the things that happened in that game was because Grayland [Arnold] picks that pass and runs it all the way back to the 10, it’s two plays and a touchdown so we scored really quickly so the defense was on the field a lot even in the first half, even though we were scoring, we go down the 2 minute, we score but then we come out in the second half, they have a long drive then we have one play, we had a 40 yard run, right, or whatever it was, 30 yard run and we fumble, we get the ball back it’s third down, we don’t quite convert, they have another long drive, we go three and out so it’s a dropped pass here, it’s a missed block there, but a lot of it was, honestly, there’s not a lot of reps in the second half, offense, defense, special teams, of us playing Baylor football, it’s guys all out there doing wild, wild things and that starts with me, that’s not me saying hey you guys, all of us got in that moment and guys just started trying to go out and make plays instead of just doing their job, we have a really good team, we have really good players, all our players have to do is go out there and do their job and play really, really hard and we’ll be fine, that’s what happened in the first half, there was no major change in the second half, it was just, we just kind of got out of wack and so we’ll learn from that and hopefully come back, it wasn’t, it was the same general plays, same general defenses, same things from them, we just didn’t quite go out there and play the way I think we all know we can play.”

***On Texas’ defense…***

“Well, a lot of those guys were out, they’ve had a rash of injuries and all those guys are back now so I think, they only held Iowa State to what 23 last week, the numbers escape me but they might’ve been giving up some whatever early in the year because they were playing a bunch of guys, making safeties and moving them to corner, I think Todd Orlando’s one of the best defensive coordinators in college football and I’ve believed that for a long time since he was at Houston and we had to play him and he’s now got his pieces back, you know he’s got Caden Sterns back who’s an all American safety, he’s got Demarvion Overshown, this kid’s a safety and they’re paying him at linebacker and d end, they’re moving him around, Keondre Coburn so the numbers might say hey they’ve given up some yards passing but all those safeties and corners are back now so I think for us the tale over the last two years against them has been our inability to run the ball versus their pressure and protect the quarterback, we’ve gotten open at times but we haven’t really been able to get much going so I think we’ve got to find a way to run the football and we’ve got to find a way to protect the quarterback cause that hasn’t happened versus this package over the last two years.”

***On the changes on the offensive line…***

Well, I thought Connor [Galvin] came and played really well, thought Khalil [Keith] played really well, we have a lot of confidence in Jake [Fruhmorgen], he’s been banged up and so Teck [Sam Tecklenburg] just some snap issues and stuff, Teck played a lot but I think Casey’s [Phillips] going to play some at right tackle now too which is his more natural position so I think Connor’s been a starter since right after this game, last year, he didn’t play against Texas last year, we started, you know, he’s a starter and he’s finally back and healthy so I thought our ability to protect the quarterback was the best it’s been in quite some time.”

***On the growth of cornerback Jameson Houston…***

“He has made growth in leaps and bounds as a, just maturing as a man, I don’t want to embarrass him but I remember one of my first games here I suspended him because he missed practice on Friday before a game, I suspended him for the game and now he’s a captain, he’s a guy that’s as mature, as trustworthy, as accountable as anyone we have and he’s developed into one of the best corners in the Big 12, he can play off man, he can play bump and run, he’s held some of the best receivers to career lows and I think for me, it’s just a matter of his confidence growing, he’s now a really confident player and I know for him, being from Austin, this game always means a lot to him, he played really well in this game last year, but I think Jameson [Houston], he’s a guy that went from scouts not even talking to him to he’s a draftable player, his best football’s ahead of him and I think it has all stemmed from his growth, confidence and maturity.”

***On Saturday’s crowd…***

“I thought the crowd, from the Bear Walk, to before the Baylor Line, the student section above them was rocking, I thought it was awesome. I thought it was big time college football. Just the impact it had on recruiting was great. Recruits left there obviously disappointed at the final score, but knowing that this is a big-time place. I am very appreciative that everyone came out and had that kind of energy. We will certainly need it again this Saturday.”

***On the seniors celebrating Senior Day on Saturday…***

“They are a special, special group. They have come so far. When I first got here, that group of seniors Brian Nance, Taylor Young, Taion Sells, that was their senior year, so they were going to do what we asked. That next group, the Iras [Ira Lewis], the Gregs [Greg Roberts] and all those guys, they really came on because they wanted to get to bowl eligibility. It was this group that was always sorta in between. They weren’t the older guys, so they were still getting treated as young guys and then it was always, ‘Well, Coach Rhule prefers the guys he recruited.’ So, I have worked hard, our coaches have worked hard and they’ve worked hard to make sure we all came together. And I think you can tell based on the results of this season that we have come together. And coming together, that is not an easy thing. It’s not saying what people want to hear because you are a sophomore. Sophomores are not supposed to have a lot of success. When you are a sophomore in college you are supposed to be an average player, trying to fight to become a good player. Through that adversity we were having as a team, through the adversity they were having as players, they’ve just continued to battle and fight through. They have had three head coaches, which means they have had a lot of different staff members, position coaches, but my challenge to that group, all the groups since I have been here is be a 30 for 30 someday. Someday they should write a 30 for 30 about you, what you guys did and the opportunities you guys had to leave and you chose not to leave. And for them to be sitting here at 9-1, I don’t like to reflect too much on ‘here is what we have done,’ but we were once 1-9, not too long ago. And they had won 2-of-18 games. I had to remind all the young guys of that yesterday. All the young players were sitting there and I had to remind them, these seniors, at one point they were 2-16 through the course of the end of 2016 and through 2017 and all they have done is just shut up and work and work and work. So, they have given so much to me personally and to my family, they have given so much to our coaching staff, to this university, that it’s not just about one game honoring them, I asked all our young guys when I said that, ‘please give them 14 of the best days that you have.’ Give the next 7 days and the next 7 days after that, these next 2 regular season games, give the absolute best you have, because that is the only way I know how to honor what they have done, because they have given us a lot of days where it didn’t look too bright and they didn’t know if they could trust us and they switched positions, and listened to us and a lot of them are playing their best, best football. I hope I can do my part this Saturday to send them off as winners because I haven’t had a senior day win yet here and that really bothers me. Not many things bother me, but that bothers me. And so, I want to see these guys walk off the field winners because they deserve that, they have been winners.”

***On the comparisons between Sam Ehlinger and Charlie Brewer…***

“They are both really good quarterbacks, they both can run. They both are accurate. Obviously being from rival high schools there is some story lines there, but I think when you watch Texas’ offense, Sam drives it and I think when you watch our offense, obviously Charlie drives it. I think they are both just really, really good players. They are both fearless. I don’t know Sam very well, but when I see him at things I always make sure I say hellos to him. The guy is courageous, he throws his body around, he runs the football, he does whatever his team needs to move it and I don’t know what the stats are right now, but a lot of the time he is their leading rusher and that’s really who Charlie is as well.”

***On the development of Blake Lynch…***

“I think over the last couple of games, Blake has really become a presence getting to the quarterback, something we thought maybe, skills that he had. Blake is one of those guys I was just talking about, to move all those positions and to be out there doing whatever it takes to go play. The impact he has had the last two weeks in getting to the quarterback has really affected the other team. It won the TCU game for us in many ways and it kept us in that game on Saturday. I think he is a great young man, he is a graduate, he is a great player and I think he has a bright future ahead at the next level. I think his impact here, he is a quiet guy, but his actions have spoken really loudly since he got here.”

***On Texas’ special teams…***

“They are always explosive on kickoff returns, always explosive on punt returns. We missed some opportunities last year, we had a big penalty on kickoff return and we had a chance at a block and missed it. I think one of the things we need to improve on is our punt game has been kinda a 20 yarder and then a longer one, so against this offense, they go tempo sometimes, but at the end of the day, at their heart, they are a run the football, power team. And so, we have got to flip the field and make them drive the length of the field. That is really a challenge more on our end. How to A, not give up big returns on their end and B, punting the ball far enough to pin them down there.”