

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Sunday, October 22 2017
Waco, Texas

Matt Rhule Press Conference

MATT RHULE: Appreciate you all being here. Obviously, a disappointing night for us. Credit goes to West Virginia. I thought Will Grier was sensational. I thought David Sills, Gary Jennings were sensational, and they did a nice job making big plays. A lot of the big plays I thought we were in good coverage and good position, and they made a play that we needed to make. So I wanted to make sure I take my hat off to them, and Coach Holgorsen and the job that they did.

That being said, obviously, proud of our team the way they fought back in the fourth quarter, and had a chance to go make -- had a chance to go tie the game up with the two-point conversion there at the end. Was proud of their effort, proud of their ability to rally. I was proud of the defense. I think basically having a shutout in the fourth quarter, so a lot of young guys stepped up, a lot of new guys stepped up, and for that, I'm proud of them. We'll continue to try to work with them.

But I know that they're disappointed. And we, unfortunately, let the game get too far away before mounting that comeback. We'll continue to try to get better. We'll continue to try it to get ready for a really good Texas team next week. Hopefully we can build off some of momentum that was there in the fourth quarter. We had a couple injuries tonight, so we'll have to continue to bring guys along and have them ready when we need them.

But, again, I take my hat off to West Virginia. I hurt are for our kids, and I really hurt for our seniors. I think the thing that stood out to me tonight was those seniors who I haven't always known, but seeing them running down, seeing Taion and Taylor, Davion running down on kickoffs and doing everything they could to keep us in that game. They said a lot to me about who they are. And I'm proud of them, and proud to know them. Hopefully we can send them out on the right note. So with that, I'll see what questions you have.

Q. What were you trying to do when you brought Charlie in? At that point, are you just trying



something new or different?

MATT RHULE: No, I mean, just a couple things. I think started the night out and three guys had the stomach flu yesterday. We weren't sure if it was the same thing we had last week. We weren't sure if Mo Porter was going to play. And Zach at 3 o'clock said I don't feel good. I have the stomach flu. So we told Charlie to be ready. You look at Zach's numbers, he was 16 of 27 for 261 yards. He got sacked five times, and I didn't want him to continue to stay in there and take a beating. The one thing that Charlie brings to the table is the ability to run and to move. Sort of the guy that's going in the run game with some quarterback reads.

So we just figured why continue to let -- Zach doesn't feel well to begin with. Why continue to let him take a beating? Let's let Charlie get in there and have meaningful snaps like he did last week. I think we saw what Charlie brings to the table and the job he did. Ended up one play away from doing it. So yeah, that was sort of the thought process.

Q. Was there a quarterback controversy?

MATT RHULE: I think you would say that both quarterbacks would have an opportunity to start, but I'd have to see everything, see the film, and see who's feeling well. Charlie got beat up a little bit out there too because he was running so much. I don't want to minimize the job I thought Zach did. I don't want to minimize the job I thought Charlie did in getting in there.

Sometimes it's easier to get in there in the end when people are playing a little bit more off, and Zach was getting zero blitz and coming at him. Made some throws down the sideline that we had to come up with to help him. I'd hate to jump to any conclusions.

We've known Zach's a good quarterback, and we've known Charlie is a good quarterback. So they're freshmen and a sophomore. So we'll just continue to bring them along, and see who continues to emerge.

Q. Is it a good problem to have?

MATT RHULE: Yeah, I think at the end of the day, like you're going through a tough spurt like this, when you know that you have a quarterback, you feel good. When you know you have two quarterbacks, you feel good. And I think Charlie showed that he had moxie

out there tonight. He showed that he's going to go out there and compete. I think Zach's shown his toughness to stand in there and take all the hits he took tonight. So I definitely think it's a good problem to have.

Q. Trestan Ebner has taken a tremendous leap the last couple weeks. What have you thought about his play?

MATT RHULE: For a guy that's never played running back before, he's certainly doing a heck of a job. He's shown some toughness, some explosive plays. The ability to help fight for extra yardage. So I think you see him, you know, Lovett went out there and tried to play. After being banged up, I didn't think he was going to play, and he went in there and gave us a little changeup.

So I think all those young kids are growing up, and Ebner is certainly a guy that emerged tonight.

Q. (Indiscernible) still good enough today?

MATT RHULE: Their training staff did a great job. They tried to do a little bit on Thursday, and the plan was not to play Pooh a ton. If he felt like he could go, he could go. He looked good in warm-ups, then Sneed goes down, Trevor went down for a little bit. So already a depleted running back -- receiving corps, got hurt a couple more guy, so we played a little bit more than we were probably planning on playing on.

Q. Not sure you were aware. But after the two-point conversion was no good, the entire stadium stood up and gave you guys a standing ovation of their appreciation (Indiscernible). What's that say about that, and I guess, any thoughts on doing that for the fans? Like you said Tuesday, (Indiscernible) do it for the fans, and they showed an appreciation right back?

MATT RHULE: Well, I think for me, I think the people that stayed till the end and saw that effort, I'd just say thank you. We're beyond -- we're not here for moral victories. I was talking about it in the press conference last night. We want to bring honor and glory to God with the way we play and the way we handle adversity, and I think that our kids did that tonight.

Now we didn't -- there are other things I wanted to talk to them about. But they scored that touchdown right before the half, and we went into the locker room, and it was like a morgue. We were down 11 against Oklahoma at halftime, and guys were dancing in the locker room. We're down 11 right now, and we're so emotional right now. Then we come back, and get the outside kick, and to go down 11 and we're dancing on the sidelines. I said we're just down 11 again. What are you doing?

But to go back to your question, I said it to those guys in there when we said our prayer, none of those kids in that locker room are here by accident. They were all chosen to be there. And they are strong enough to go through this. Somebody has to go through this for Baylor. And somebody has to go through this tough time. I'll say the men, the doctors, the trainers, the administrators, the coaches, the players, especially, you know, they're enduring this tough time, and they did it tonight with class and toughness, and they didn't quit and they fought for their university.

So for that to be recognized, I think it's a special thing. There are not many places where you go where people value what they see over just the scoreboard, and that's what's happened twice at our university. Now, why is that important? Because there's going to be a day when the scoreboard is going to be flipped. And there is going to be a day when we win, and we win a lot. And we'll always know, though, that our value to our university, to our fans, to the Baylor line is not just the wins, but it's the way we play, and the way we do things.

And that's what these kids are learning right now. When it all comes together, I tell you what, they're going to be something else. They're going to be something else. They don't quit. So the people that stayed till the end, I'm grateful, and I know our players are grateful. Hopefully, we honored them.

Q. To get back in it, how big was the on-side kick?

MATT RHULE: You think about Jay. I think the last time he was on this team he was on the Baylor line. He's done that once in practice, and really wasn't there. I looked at Taylor and Taion said y'all want to do it, and they said, yeah, we'll find a way to go get it. I said if we don't get it -- yeah, Coach, we'll go get it. Same thing with all the fourth downs in our territory. Our kids were saying go for it, Coach.

It was a tremendous effort by Jay. I don't even know who came up with the ball. All the different names. You guys might know better than me. I just think our kids fought. Just tried to give them a chance to go win the game, and maybe I could have done a better job in the first half of giving them some chances to go win the game.

But we went after, tried to block punts. We tried to do some things, and the kids stepped up in the second half and made those plays like that one.

Q. Charlie sparking the offense the way he did, did you feel it reverberate to the whole team? Did it snow ball and get rolling?

MATT RHULE: Yeah, those kids wanted something to

happen, you know. So I think when Gavin hit that long post down to the three-yard line, I think our kids emerged, right and they answered. So it was one of those back-and-forth games. We weren't ever really able to sustain some energy.

But I think the touchdown to the on-side kick to the touchdown really gave member some hope. As I said, those guys are tough. It's hard to be optimistic when things aren't really going your way. But they're being optimistic and they continue to pound the rock. But I think, you know, I think kind of the way it started to go with the fourth down conversions, the energy, the running, seeing guys make plays, I think that was fun for everybody.

Q. You said a couple days ago that you've been noticing Gavin Holmes and saying he would play more. Other than the catch, just overall what did you think of his night?

MATT RHULE: I thought he was really good. He made some crucial catches. He played on special teams. You could see that he's got some explosiveness to him. So he started counting up and made plays by the young kids. Lynch gets the sack and I think we had one sack, and Lynch had the sack. You know, I think a bunch of those kids stepped up. Eric Ogor stepped up and made some plays.

But I think Gavin is a guy you could just see in the bye week he's starting to get it. I used the word process. And all that really means is practicing, and practicing, and practicing to get yourself better, so that you become a good player. And Gavin's done that. So I actually texted his dad this week and said you raised a winner. This kid's a winner. He went out there and played really hard, and then the production shows up.

Q. It's hard for anyone that plays 60 minutes. You have seen spurts in certain games. That's just basically the inexperience of this team not yet understanding urgency at times?

MATT RHULE: I don't think there is any issue with urgency. I think there is some emotion at times. I think there are some times where there's a spot where we're just not quite good enough yet. Doesn't mean the kid's not good enough, it's just he's not where we need to be, and that can get exposed.

I think we make some mistakes on defense. We play defense to take people away, and you could see when it works. I mean, we play well. The guy makes a mistake or the guy gets beat, and it doesn't look really good right now, but I wouldn't say urgent. If anything, I'm telling the kids on the sideline just relax and play ball, man. Stop trying to do so much. Stop trying to win the game on one play. Just do your job and play as

hard as you can.

I think you see some of the young kids playing that way, and it shows up with the way they play.

Q. Other than the shorter field, what do you attribute the struggles in and just outside of the red zone especially earlier tonight to?

MATT RHULE: Inability to run the football. At the end of the day we thought we had a really good run play coming in. We thought we were going to be able to run the football and just here and there. But not really to the level we wanted. I said on the radio, that opened up some of the RPOs where we were hitting the seam ball to Gavin and to Mims, so there were some big plays that were run calls. But they put an extra guy down in the box and said, hey, you're not going to run it. That was kind of unfortunate. Then the game got away.

I said, hey, play differently. Let's go after them. Throw the football. So in the second half one of the reasons we got the run game going a little bit was Charlie's ability to do some of the zone-read stuff and the quarterback-read stuff, so that accounted for one extra defender.

But until we can run the football in, we're losing those four-point plays. We're taking field goals instead of touchdowns, and that's really the difference in the football game.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

MATT RHULE: Well, it's not really weird to me. It's, you know, I don't like it, but I appreciate it. I don't ever want our kids to like losing. I don't want them to like any of this. But I appreciate what we're trying to get done. I appreciate how much better they're playing. I appreciate you can see when we don't play well, we can get down 37-13, and we start playing well. So that's really it.

I mean, you know, my job just to coach them. My job is not -- I just have to keep coaching them, keep coaching them, keep coaching them. I brought up being down by 11 and the different emotions in the game, but really at the end of the day you're just down by 11. All you can do is score a touchdown, get a two-point conversion and kick a field goal. That's really where it is.

All I want to see is down the stretch I want to make sure we honor our seniors who are out there fighting with us. Send them off on the right note and continue to build momentum for the guys on the football team where they learn how to win.

That was a team that was trying to go win. We put the

ball in the hands of Charlie on the two-point conversion, and thinking he could run it. They made one more play than we made. He'll come back from that, and he didn't make that play, but they made a great play. We'll just continue to coach, and coach and coach. Not like what's happening, but appreciate the effort and the coaching and the dedication, and the work that's going on to go from a team that lost to Liberty and lost to UTSA, to a team that at the very least, they don't quit and they don't fight.

drives, we gave up 3rd and 15, or 3rd and 17. Even on the first drive, we gave up that first third down, the player had the sack and they just threw the ball up and the kid made the play. That was the difference to me in the fourth quarter.

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Q. Does Charlie Brewer's ability to open up the running game, because they have to account for him?

MATT RHULE: Yep, very much so, Yep. That's why I think some of the runs, you know, and his ability to throw the RPOs, but in college football, if you want to lineup and put nine guys in the box, you know, you're going to be able to stop the run. You have to be able to throw and catch the football, or you have to be able to read somebody and have a quarterback that can run. Charlie brought some of those plays.

Even when some of the plays today where we took some drop back shots and when they weren't there he ran around and made a big play. That mobility opened up the field and kept drives going.

Q. Any early word on R.J. Sneed and any other injuries that might have an effect next week?

MATT RHULE: When I was out there with R.J., it didn't sound like it was good, but I'll wait to hear. I haven't seen the doctors yet, but it sounded like it was an injury. It wasn't a knee or anything. I it was a bone, but I don't know. I haven't gotten the official word yet.

Q. Was that a run pass option on that?

MATT RHULE: It was a sprint out, he keeps running, not there, turns and throws the ball back to the tight end who runs the wide alley, and there is a back-side in cut. So there are four options on that play, and their kid made a play. I haven't seen it. He was turning to throw the ball back to the backer in the outside corner when their guy made the play. So credit to them. They made the play, and I really thought we were going to make that play.

Q. You talked a little bit about you've been wanting that fourth quarter shut out. The defense shut them out in the fourth quarter and gave you a chance?

MATT RHULE: Yeah, and they didn't have the ball a ton, but we got the key stops when they needed them. And really got off the field on third down when we needed them. That was the biggest key, you have to get off the field on third down if you want to have a chance. We were able to do that. Those big long

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Charlie Brewer Press Conference

Q. Charlie, your coach said he told you to be ready because Zach had been sick. Were you ready when you came in there? Did you feel like you were ready?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, every week I tried to be as ready as possible. You never know when it's my time to step in and my number was called tonight, and I thought the offensive line battled incredibly well and helped us get back in it.

Q. What was working for you, and at what point did you say, hey, we can do this?

CHARLIE BREWER: I mean, we just kind of all got together, and you know, said let's come back. It starts with the offensive line. They battled all night. They reel put us in the position where we were.

Q. Did you feel like the on-side kick kind of gave you guys a chance too?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, we got the ball back quick. Great kick by our kicker.

Q. Knowing you, you're looking at as much the fact that you guys didn't tie it and go overtime as you are all the things you did that brought it back in the game. Is that the mentality of Charlie Brewer?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, everybody wants a win. You know, it's disappointing. You know, it's not okay to come up short like that. We need to regroup, and have the best week of practice we've had so far.

Q. You've had some early snaps this year. There was a lot of talk about did you waste a couple plays in your red-shirt and now you have a chance to go full-throttle. What do those plays mean to you?

CHARLIE BREWER: I thought they were helpful. I trust Coach Rhule 100% of what he was doing. 100% I'm a team player whether I'm on the field or on the sideline.

Q. Talk about what Trestan was able to do tonight? He hasn't really had a breakout night like that?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, I just knew it was a matter

of time. He's an incredible athlete and worked really hard. Not surprised he did that tonight.

Q. You want to start against Texas?

CHARLIE BREWER: Of course. I'd probably think you're crazy if someone says they don't want to start. Of course I do. That's Coach Rhule, and I trust him 100%.

Q. Was Trestan an option on that play that he scored on, the pass? Was that always the play or was that just what was open? The pass down the sideline?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, he was my second guy I was reading. And I just saw him above the sideline and I got him the ball and he did the rest.

Q. What happened on the two-point conversion? What didn't go right?

CHARLIE BREWER: I guess just about everything. We thought we had to get the play to convert. I need to do a better job of getting rid of the ball in that situation.

Q. Charlie, first home game, obviously, for you to play at McLane. You walked off the field, I know, disappointed. But standing ovation from the crowd. Just kind of take us through what it was like to play at McLane?

CHARLIE BREWER: Oh, it's awesome. Dreamed of this for a while. You know, our fans are awesome. They're the best of the best. We just need to, you know, help them out and get a win for them.

Q. Charlie, what's it like for you on the possibility of facing Sam again, and reuniting that Lake Travis and Austin Westlake rivalry?

CHARLIE BREWER: I'm not really worried about that. I'm more focused on my team and what we can do to get better each day by next Saturday.

Q. What is it when you have an ability to extend the play, athleticism, quickness, whatever it might be? What are you thinking, and is it just instinctive rather than anything else?

CHARLIE BREWER: I mean, I'm just thinking try to help my team make the play. Like I said though, without the offensive line I can't do any of that. They deserve all the credit tonight.



Q. I know that you're upset because you lost, but are you proud of what you did?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, I thought we did some good things. Battled back, showed some mental toughness on our side, but we need to take the next step and be able to finish a game.

Q. How has this season been for you waiting for your opportunity?

CHARLIE BREWER: You know, it's been different being the back-up. But I'm a team player, so I feel like every week I've come out with 100% effort in practice, and my attitude has been good. I've just been a team player.

Q. Coach Rhule has said that you and Zach both spend a lot of time together. That you're both helping each other a lot. Did he say anything to you today?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, Zach's one of my best friends. You know, when he's in there, I'm rooting for him. And when I'm out there, he's rooting for me. You know, I thought he did great things tonight.

Q. So he had to then sick this afternoon?

CHARLIE BREWER: I'm not really sure.

Q. What's next? I know you've got a game week, and who knows, the competition ramps it up this week, what do you expect this week?

CHARLIE BREWER: I expect for us to amp it up in practice and just focus in on the little things and correct some stuff.

Q. Have you talked to your dad yet?

CHARLIE BREWER: No.

Q. I'm assuming he was in the stands?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yes.

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Trestan Ebner Press Conference

TRESTAN EBNER: We're not going to give up. We didn't give up last week at Oklahoma State. We're not going to give up this week or next week.

Q. How big was the on-side kick just to get you guys back within range, I guess?

TRESTAN EBNER: It was really good, especially for him, like just to be --

Q. He tipped the ball, right?

TRESTAN EBNER: Yeah, just to be like, this is really good. Oh, you're talking about the last one?

Q. No, the one you actually recovered.

TRESTAN EBNER: That was really big because we recovered it. But even the last one, that was a heck of a kick, yeah. We've just got to get it back. I mean, they tried, so there were no complaints. It was just a good catch by West Virginia.

Q. What about the crowd reaction there at the end? I'm sure you guys were disappointed losing, but they kind of showed you some love there at the end.

TRESTAN EBNER: It's always great, you know, just being patient and just noticing the changes that we're making. You know, I mean, your fans, you have a good fan base, you tend to be like really good. You hear about the Alabamas, the Ohio State fans, we saw the fans like that just come out and support. The teams usually do good. So we want to do good for them.

Q. Where do you go from here? Where does this team go from here?

TRESTAN EBNER: Up, we're going to keep going up. We're going to keep going up the next week, the week after that, off-season, the year after that, the year after that. As long as Coach Rhule's here, we're going to keep going up. The man knows what he's doing, and we're 100% behind him.

Q. How much did Charlie's ability to use his feet and run open things up for you guys in the running



game?

TRESTAN EBNER: It did really good, because the defense had to keep an eye on him the. I think it surprised the defense because it's a look they haven't gotten. Like they didn't watch film over him, so I think it was really good. He made good plays for us.

Q. You said you guys never really lost faith at one point at all during this game. Was there a time in the third quarter where you were thinking what in the world is going on?

TRESTAN EBNER: I mean, you know, when they come out and score quick like that, it makes you upset, but you've got to stay positive and just keep fighting. Nobody ever did anything goodbye being negative. So we've got to stay positive.

Q. What's that mean to you that you, Charlie, Gavin, you guys are making some big plays down the stretch, and you guys all came to this class together and you're going to be a part of his future?

TRESTAN EBNER: It's big because we talk about it. We talk about it almost every day. We're just always trying to build this program. James Lynch came in and stepped in. So it's just great seeing the younger guys learning from the older guys.

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Denzel Mims Press Conference

Q. Talk about the two-point conversion, what changed?

DENZEL MIMS: We never try to look at the scoreboard, and we always had a mindset that we always could come back. We just kept fighting and kept fighting. We wanted the win so bad, and that's what changed it.

Q. A lot of losing streaks would kind of crush a young team. This one doesn't seem to be that way. Do you guys feel like you get stronger every week, emotionally even still?

DENZEL MIMS: Of course, of course. Every day. Every day after a loss we all come in and just try to look at our mistakes. We're all hungry and we all want to win so bad, so we're going to keep doing what we've got to do and even do more to try to get the win.

Q. Along those same lines, what's it going to take to get three points better and be on that winning side?

DENZEL MIMS: You know what I'm saying, just knowing our assignments more and just do what we're coached to do. Even if it doesn't matter what the situation is, just do what we're coached to do. I feel like that will make us better.

Q. How much of a score did Charlie give to the offense, not only with his hands, but with his arm, but able to extend plays with his feet?

DENZEL MIMS: He gave us a big spark. It hurts because Zach went out, but it's good to see that he came in, he stepped up, and knows what he had to do as a quarterback.

Q. Is that a good problem to have, to have two quarterbacks that if one goes down, you can rely on the other one to jump in?

DENZEL MIMS: Of course, of course. We always don't want to be second-guessing the back-up quarterback. But I've always been confident in Charlie, and I know what he can do. So when he came in, I was like let's go. Let's keep it going.

Q. Did you feel the emotion throughout the team when Charlie came in and you guys started getting things going your own way?

DENZEL MIMS: Yes, because we all know what Charlie can do. We know that he's going to do his job.

Q. Because there are so many young guys on this team that are contributing freshmen and sophomores. Is it not one of those things where you don't have to build trust in a freshmen, you guys start and trust each other already?

DENZEL MIMS: I don't think it's an excuse for our freshmen saying not to trust them. I feel like you can trust anybody that showed what they can do, and Charlie shows it every day. So everybody trusts him, and we trust every freshman because they show it every day at practice.

Q. What's the feeling like whenever you walk off -- well, after the missed two-point conversion, and the fans gave you guys a standing ovation after the game. They gave you guys a standing ovation and their appreciation to you guys, what's that mean to you guys?

DENZEL MIMS: It means a lot. It means a lot to know that they're not going to give up on us. Even though we lose and they're still going to come to the games to support and be there every step of the way. So it feels good to know that they're still there and they still support us.