

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 18 2017
Waco, Texas



Matt Rhule Press Conference

COACH RHULE: Obviously, we're disappointed about the way that game turned out. A lot of credit to Matt Campbell and his staff. They have a tough, rugged, hard-nosed football team, a team that doesn't beat itself, and they found a way to win. They found a way to make the plays down the stretch that we weren't able to quite make.

I'd be remiss if I didn't say my heart goes out to our seniors. Several of them were emotional just now in the locker room, just how much that locker room and the stadium and this university and this football program have meant to them in their lives.

I told them how much they've meant to this program and how much they've meant to me personally. Just in this first year, in this tough time, in this tough transition, in this tough year, they're the guys who have kind of locked arm in arm with us and went to battle.

I hated the seniors who played didn't have a chance to walk off the field victorious. I hated some of the other seniors didn't have a chance to play on senior day. That really bothers me.

I think some of the lessons that we're learning as a football program, I think the way so many of those guys have held this team together through injuries and adversity, you know, we'll get good fast, and we'll improve quickly.

And that's really a credit to them, and I hope that they'll look up and see us play next year and in the coming years and have a lot of pride at what they established and what they built. And I can't thank them enough.

It was a good football game in a lot of ways. At the end of the day, it came down to the turnover battle. We told our team it would. We had our chances win, two fourth quarter red zone turnovers and our inability to take the ball away from them. We certainly had chances. Our hands were on the ball a couple times and weren't quite able to catch it.

But I thought our team hung in there, I thought our team fought, I thought our team on defense played well at time. We got worn down as the game went on. We lost Taylor, then lost Deonte, and I think some of our linebacking corps got worn down, and they were able to run the ball in the fourth quarter very similar to the how I'd like to be able to do it.

But I thought we hung in there and battled and just weren't able to take the ball away and weren't able to protect the football.

With that, we'll move forward. Short week. We have one more chance to go play a football game. We've gone from a bad football team to a better football team. Unfortunately, we're still a team that beats itself, whether it's a penalty here, a missed snap here, a turnover there.

We're just going to continue to push to make sure that everyone understands that, hey, we can't win that way. Once that completely clicks, and I think they know it, they understand it. They were in the locker room talking about it. Once it becomes a way of life, then we'll be a team that's hard to beat.

With that, I'll see what questions you have.

Q. Matt, happened to Taylor? Do you know his injury?

COACH RHULE: Something with the quad. It was pretty serious. I think he's done. He won't play for us anymore, and that was certainly a big blow to our defense. Just personally a big blow. I think I've spoken about how I feel about him. And not to see him finish out playing that game was disappointing just because of everything he's meant to the program.

The extent, exactly what it was, something with a quad or something. But he won't play next week either.

Q. Mo and Taylor are guys you reference quite a bit as a senior (no microphone).

COACH RHULE: Anytime, you know, if the program's about the players and not about you, you're always sad when they lose. I know how much this meant to them, and I know how hard they've worked and how hard they've tried. Just to not be able to have them -- I really

wanted them to walk off the field and I wanted the fans to have us walk off the field victorious.

But I told the seniors, we didn't win the game, but doesn't mean we're not winners. Those young men are winners. They try to do things right. We'll hopefully continue to press forward with them for one more week. Enjoy one more week, going out there with Brian Nance and Davion Hall and being a team together.

Q. Matt, what have you seen from your (no microphone) you guys have been hit with some injuries, especially up the middle. This group has kept you in (no microphone)?

COACH RHULE: I think the defense has gotten better. It's clicked for them at some point. I'm disappointed we gave up the two big plays today, the deep balls that kind of hit on our safeties. That one was, you know, we'd hope you'd tackle them.

Played good red zone defense at times. They've kept people out of the end zone. We weren't great on third down in the first half, but we've been better. I think on defense, despite guys getting banged up, it's clicked. It's what happens when you kind of, you know, play a coach that knows defense. It takes a while.

We're still about halfway there. There will be a time next year where the guys are just sort of clicking in terms of knowing exactly what to do and the details of everything that it takes to be really good on defense.

Their effort and their passion and their energy and their physicality show up. We got a little bit out-physicaled at times in the fourth quarter, but that was more a factor of just being worn down.

I just think that playing a couple seniors on defense, and they've taught the young guys how important it is. I think a lot of our young players are getting better and better and better. Our defensive line has gotten a lot better. So if we continue to improve and continue to recruit and continue to develop, I think the defensive structure will continue to take off.

Q. Matt, you've talked about injuries (no microphone). As you play one more game and then go into the off-season, start building for next year, what will you take out of all the injuries that you've gone through? What have you learned from that, I guess.

COACH RHULE: I think injuries, number one, they're never good, but you do build depth. Like Lenoy was the third team mike, you know, four games ago. He was running down a kickoff and then he was the starting mike today.

As we move into next season, Lenoy has played, and he's made good plays and made bad plays. He'll continue to move forward. We also recognize that we're just not a big and strong enough team yet so there's a lot of growth and development that has to happen. I'm not saying all the injuries are a result of being young and not being strong enough, but some of them are.

Even today, to have two guys -- guys just continually kind of going down. So I think it builds the depth. It builds the importance of being the stronger, more physical team. It builds sort of the whole way of life that we would like to have of guys coming in and doing extra, continually taking care of their body.

But that's really it. At the end of the day, we just played a lot of guys. So a lot of guys will come into the off-season knowing this is what it takes. The one thing is our guys understand this is what it takes.

As I said in there, when I get up and give my boring PowerPoint in the preseason about turnover margin, that will be very real to us. That will be very tangible moving forward. It won't be oh, my goodness, Coach. It will be, this is real and this is serious.

None of it really feels good right now, but I do think the depth will benefit us in the long run.

Q. Any chance that these young players shouldn't be playing now (no microphone) brains fried, or is this all good experience no matter if they're performing well or not.

COACH RHULE: Coach Paterno used to always say better a play too late than a play too early. His whole point was if you played a kid too early, it could ruin him. It could beat him up.

Sometimes when you're really good, you know, and everyone is counting on you to be really good and you play a freshman and he lets everybody down, that's hard. Sometimes when you're struggling through a season, you're playing everyone, everyone's making mistakes, you're playing so many freshmen.

I haven't seen a guy I worry about, how is he going to respond. Even Lovett, I pulled him over. After that fumble, I said, hey, time to figure it out, brother. You're going to be a really good back. Just put it away and don't let them take it from you.

I think he's got the character that he's not going to let that break him. He's going to let that make him even tougher and tougher and tougher.

Q. Will that beat him all off-season, that somebody

stole his lunch money?

COACH RHULE: I think he's fed a lot by that. He's a very, very, you know, intrinsically hard-working young man anyway. But I do think, you know, it's like anything. Until you've been beaten by something and burned by something and stung by something, you know how important it is, but you really don't know how important it is.

And we know how important it is. That's five fumbles in the red zone in the last two weeks. Five fumbles in the red zone. Or five turnovers, I should say, in the red zone the last two weeks. So figure it out. Let's go.

So I think what you'll see is those are two freshmen doing a lot of great things. But as they grow, that will be experience they'll pass on to everybody else.

Q. Matt, you still had chances after that, but how tough was that when you're two yards away?

COACH RHULE: Well, it was tough, but I was pleased that our defense went right out and got the stop. It was like, hey, let's get back in this. And then we just weren't able to capitalize on it.

But, you know, obviously, you have four chances. It's first and goal. It's not like it's fourth down, and you have the fourth down stop like last week. So we had four chances to take a crack at it. We were very aggressive today on fourth down, going for it sort of all over the field.

You like to think, hey, four cracks, we'll get it in there. But happy to move forward.

I was really pleased with the way the defense responded. That's the biggest thing about the defense is their brains are, like, changing in terms of it doesn't matter what just happened. Let's go out and play.

So we just have not defensively been able to take the ball away. You can talk about turning the ball over. You also have to take it away. We haven't been able to do that.

Q. What did Charlie tell you about the interception?

COACH RHULE: I didn't even talk to him about it. I went right to defense. We went four verticals, the linebacker got underneath it. They're playing eight drop so the guy from the front side came back. You'd like him just to, you know, either not make the throw or check the ball down like he'd been doing so religiously to JaMykal, just played a great game in terms of that game. Check the ball down, kick the field goal, we're down seven, go play defense, try to get the ball back, go get a chance to win the game.

But, you know, I don't mind -- I shouldn't say I don't

mind. You're playing ball, guy comes from the other side, makes a great play. So be it. You need kind of that clock in your head to say, I'm hanging on to the ball a little too long. Let me check it down and continue to play.

Q. You made a lot of safe throws (no microphone)?

COACH RHULE: It's kind of the defense they play. They're playing eight drop; three-man rush, eight drop. They're saying you're not going to beat us deep. That's why they give up yards, but they're second in the conference in scoring defense, 18 points a game. They just defend. They give you all the underneath stuff and defend it.

Took a couple shots to Mims and got some pass interference calls. And even after that, they played even deeper on him. Just said, hey, don't let him get behind you.

What they do is smart. They force you to run the football or take what's underneath. And for a while there, we had like 90 yards rushing in the first half so we had some improvement.

But, you know, that's kind of -- they just kind of dictated. I thought he was being really good about being a pro, take away the deep stuff, throw the underneath stuff, and kind of came back and got us on that one.

Q. What's Charlie's progression (no microphone).

COACH RHULE: I think he's progressing at a high level. You think he's not even in the first couple games. He's not even, like, on the offensive field for practice. It's not like he's developing. He's over there playing the scout team quarterback.

All those reps compound, and so if he's a starter from day one until now, then he has all those reps, or even if he's the backup. But with Anu getting hurt and Zach getting hurt, he's thrust into duty. I've been pleased. Obviously, you know, continue to try not to turn the ball over.

But with a freshman quarterback, you're trying to run the ball, to manage the game. We're kind of putting the ball in Charlie's hands and saying, run it, throw it, find a way to get in the end zone for us, buddy. So he'll continue to get better and better.

Q. One game left, I know you want to win the last game. Other than that, what is the message with you guys one week left to go?

COACH RHULE: I've told them all along, you know, that I think we're going to be really good next year, but we can't worry about next year. That's the light at the end of the tunnel.

Two things. Number one, try to send the seniors off the right way. Number two, you want to build momentum for the off-season. Part of the momentum for me is just continuing to learn how to win.

Baylor was last in the country last year in penalties, and I think now we're like first or second, doing better in the conference, in conference games. Early on, we were terrible. In the conference games, us and Iowa State are first and second. So we're improving in some areas. But win the turnover battle, you have a chance.

We're talented enough that if we took the ball away from other people and didn't turn the ball over, we'd win the games. So I just think a couple more things like that, getting corrected.

Playing TCU, they're a great team. Who knows, you know, but I do know this. We can control how we play, and we can certainly protect the football, and we don't have to just give it to them. I thought we got better at -- the things I was upset with last week, I thought we got better on kickoff today. Early on, our specialists were struggling a little bit, but I thought we improved a little bit.

I want to send the seniors out the right way, and I want to certainly continue to try to learn what it takes to win. We know how to avoid losing, and now have you have to make the turn where you say start saying, okay, let's go take the ball away. Let's block a punt. These are the things, let's jump up and catch the ball. Let's make the plays that it takes to be a great team. So that's just the next step in the progression to me.

Q. Can you take us through the thought process there at the end, kicking it away as opposed to (no microphone).

COACH RHULE: Which one?

Q. Fourth down, late in the game, give the ball back (no microphone) decided not to go for it there.

COACH RHULE: I'm sorry. I don't remember. Down seven? On our own 38? On their 38? I'm with you. I exactly remember. It was third and like eight, fourth and eight. It was a one-score game. I thought we were going to be able to stop them, and I felt like, hey, we're playing decent on defense so I thought let's pin them.

You know, they're going into the wind. Let's pin them, play defense, and try to get the ball back. I think that's what we did get -- oh, they went down and kicked a field goal, that's right.

I thought we'd have a chance to pin them. So as opposed to giving them the ball fourth and seven -- if it

had been fourth and four or less, I probably would have gone for it. Fourth and seven, if we don't get it there, they're certainly within field goal range so I was trying to play the one-score game, knowing we'd get the ball back.

Q. Into the wind (no microphone)?

COACH RHULE: Yeah. I said to him, hey, can you make it from there? He said, yeah, I can make it from there. He did a nice job.

As I said, our specialists were a little out of whack, and I thought they settled down and that was a big-time kick. Big-time kick. The last one, I was going to give him a chance to kick another one there and try to make it a one-score game.

Q. How did Lenoy do overall, filling in for Taylor?

COACH RHULE: I think he was a little down on himself a couple times. Hey, I could have made this play. I said, just keep playing, bro. It's always so hard to say tell everybody does. I was proud of him. Went out there, was making the right checks, trying to get us on the same page. I thought that overall, seemed like he did a pretty good job. Go back, watch the tape, see exactly what he did right and what he did wrong. It will be a great experience for him moving forward.

Q. Matt, you've tried to teach these guys something. Eric Ogor didn't play today, was not dressed out today. You sent him home last night or today. What happened?

COACH RHULE: I sent him home last night because -- I'll speak in generalities, right, because I didn't feel like he was doing what everybody else was doing.

I didn't feel like -- you know, we hand them a test on Thursday night. The test takes a long time. Guys work at it. It shows your teammates that you're prepared and are going to do what everyone else does. When he handed his in, to me it showed he wanted to do his own thing and didn't want to be part of the team.

As I told him, I said, I love you. You just can't play for me. I love you. Just can't go out there and represent us tomorrow.

So, you know, it's like anything with our kids, right? Doesn't mean we don't love our kids when we discipline them. I love Eric, but there's a standard, and there's -- not just a standard. There's a brotherhood.

If I go to leave my office on Wednesday night at 9:45 and Taylor Young is in the linebacker room working on stuff on his own, then don't come in on Friday and not be focused. Don't come in on Friday and not be prepared. Don't come in on Friday and be -- I hate to

use this word -- selfish in terms of the things you did.

Speaking in generalities, because I always want to protect our players, but he wasn't willing to do what everyone else did.

Q. You say he can't play for you. Is that today, or is that --

COACH RHULE: I deal with things one day at a -- don't want to be hyperbolic, but I said can't play for me, sorry. I'm always here to help kids. I'm not here to just get rid of kids. I'm here to help move them forward.

I love Eric, but I hope as he watched the game, that was painful. I hope as he saw Taylor go down and Jalen have to play the whole game instead of being able to go play Will, and we're down to three or four scholarship linebackers in that game, the 23-13 game that we were in, it was 20-13, you know, I hope that was painful. I hope he grows from it. I hope he moves forward from it. He didn't break the law or do anything like that, but he did something here for me. And you have to set a standard.

Thank you very much, guys.

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Charlie Brewer Press Conference

Q. (No microphone) you look back at that, is that growing up pains or not understanding the value of the football.

CHARLIE BREWER: It's being careless with the football. We need to find a way to eliminate that to score touchdowns.

Q. You made plays again today, scrambling and stuff. Is that something that's always been part of your game?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, I think so. Just trying to create something. Obviously (no microphone).

Q. Charlie, you had such success, like Travis, and now y'all didn't win a game at home. How do you mentally deal with that?

CHARLIE BREWER: It stinks. We just got to get ready for TCU.

Q. Knowing how well the offense played, does that make the turnovers late more frustrating?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah, we just, similar to last week, left a lot out there.

Q. When you talk about, when she asked a question about (no microphone), and you say it stinks, describe that, other than the obvious. You're not used to that. We talked about it last week, how much this is starting to bother you a little bit.

CHARLIE BREWER: Yeah. Just frustrating for everybody. And for me, you know, I like to win. Obviously, everyone does. And I need to find a way as the quarterback, leader of the football team, to help put us in better positions, maybe.

Q. What are the good things that you can take out of this? JaMycal running well (no microphone). What are some of the positives?

CHARLIE BREWER: That we're starting to get more first downs, but I just think we're really struggling once we get inside the 30- or 20-yard line. So we need to fix that. Can't fix that, it doesn't really matter what we're

doing before that.

Q. Coach Ruhle says you're getting better, flashes here and there. Do you see that in practice during the week? Do you see this team, despite the record and the losses, getting better?

CHARLIE BREWER: Yes, definitely.

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 18 2017
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JaMycal Hasty Press Conference

Q. JaMycal, you guys played really well until the fourth quarter, and then a couple of late mistakes. How frustrating was it, knowing how well you played early in this game?

JaMYCAL HASTY: It's always frustrating, especially with it being senior day and you always want to get the win for those guys, the last game of the year. So it was frustrating, but we'll keep pushing forward.

Q. How do you feel like you played? Big runs, obviously. How do you feel about your performance?

JaMYCAL HASTY: I think I did all right. I feel like I could have did a lot more. I think I left a lot of stuff out there. Still feel I could have did more to help us win.

Q. Talk about senior day. How tough was it to see a guy like Mo, guy like Taylor go down, not be able to finish the game.

JaMYCAL HASTY: It's hard. I've been here for three years. Seeing T.Y. and everything he's been through, all the seniors, it's hard watching them, probably their last home game and you always want to get the win for those guys.

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 18 2017
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Lenoy Jones, Jr. Press Conference

LENOY JONES, JR.: (No microphone) shift, just a tough dude and I respect that very much.

Q. I talked to (indiscernible) about it. This defense, you think back to what you were at the beginning of the year. How much better have you gotten, the defense?

LENOY JONES, JR.: Oh, my gosh. I feel like the leadership spoke up and we all got together. I mean, like I said, we got to step it up and play our games. Play like little kids, have fun and play fast.

Q. Obviously, you didn't want T.Y. to get hurt. How much can something like this help you in terms of getting this kind of experience playing that spot? Help you going into next year.

LENOY JONES, JR.: Being a leader because I'll be an old guy next year. I've got two years after this. Just learning from T.Y., and he taught me how to be a leader definitely.

Q. How much do you hurt for the seniors not winning today, not getting to get them a win today?

LENOY JONES, JR.: Man, it hurts. It hurts big-time. But, I mine, next year, when seniors come back to see us, they're going to be like they started this process.

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 18 2017
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Ishmail Wainright Press Conference

Q. So how did that touchdown feel?

ISHMAIL WAINRIGHT: Felt pretty good. Experiencing the last one being at home. It felt good.

Q. What was going through your head during the touchdown and when you caught it after (no microphone)?

ISHMAIL WAINRIGHT: Catch the ball and run. Run as fast as you can but (no microphone) end zone. I was excited.

Q. Ish, what was the locker room like afterwards. Obviously, guys not getting a win at home to close it out. Seniors like yourself watching their careers kind of dwindle down to this final week. What was it like?

ISHMAIL WAINRIGHT: I mean, nobody likes to lose, to be honest. Guys are like, hey, you know, apologizing. But, I mean, nothing to apologize. We beat ourselves and we played against a great team. But we have one more. And that's basically the mantra. We have one more game. We lost today. It's the last home game of the season, but we have one more (no microphone) one more game. And that's the mindset a lot of guys had.

Q. How frustrating is it to feel like multiple times this year, you guys have been in games and instead of necessarily getting another team making the play, you guys have kind of shot yourselves in the foot?

ISHMAIL WAINRIGHT: I mean, it's just -- I guess that's football. One play can turn the game around. One fumble, one touchdown, one field goal block, one dropped pass can, you know, mess up a game.

And it's not like basketball. It's not like a turnover, we need to get it back. But it's just we can't beat ourselves in the process, playing to win. We just can't beat ourselves. And we beat ourselves the last couple games. We should have won.

Q. I know you've got another game left. But you

see a lot of these younger players and they're going through the trial by fire right now. What kind of a (no microphone) not only next week but with a lot of these guys?

ISHMAIL WAINRIGHT: I have a lot of confidence in guys, especially Grayland. I mean, Grayland, Lenoy, Charlie Brewer, he's a freshman. I mean, people think he might be little. He's a freshman. Look at the things he's done. (No microphone) the O-line, D-line, guys coming in next year, tremendous confidence in them. If they come in, the freshmen that come in, if they're ready to play right away. You got to trust the process. That's what the guys are doing right now. They're trusting the process and look at them now.

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 18 2017
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Grayland Arnold Press Conference

Q. (No microphone) did that seem to kind of give you guys a little bit of a lift there because, you know, even though you guys bent, you didn't break on that?

GRAYLAND ARNOLD: Yeah. We did bend. We didn't break. But also, we got to get off the field. You know, we can't be on the field that long. We've got to get a turnover at some point. We didn't get any turnovers, and that was our main objective. That was one of our main goals was to get a turnover. That's part of the process.

Q. What was the key as far as this defense because you guys lost Taylor so early. How did that change any of the dynamics about playing defense in this game?

GRAYLAND ARNOLD: It didn't really change anything. It just was a big loss. Taylor is a great player. He makes a lot of plays. Somebody don't fit in the gap, Taylor's the type of guy that can fill in two gaps and just make a lot of plays. He's a great player. So that hurt.

Q. Do you guys feel like you guys are playing the best defense of the season right now, even in spite of the results of the game?

GRAYLAND ARNOLD: It's not the best. I mean, once again, we didn't get no turnovers, but we feel like we're playing -- we're getting better and better each week, but it comes a time where we like, we just -- it ain't about getting better. It's like about all right, let's go out and total dominate from start to finish. First quarter to fourth quarter. If it go to overtime, keep dominating and that's what we've really got to do. We got to get turnovers.

Q. What do you think going through this season will make you guys in the future? Do you think it will make you kind of just tough and kind of impervious?

GRAYLAND ARNOLD: Yeah. I mean, we keep getting tougher, but I feel like it will open the younger guys up, like myself, because I'm a younger guy too. But it will open the guys up to like the process. You've got to live

for the process. So, like, we say take away the ball and get the ball out at practice. That's very important, because that's (no microphone) to the game. All that stuff means a lot.

Q. How much does it hurt you to (no microphone)?

GRAYLAND ARNOLD: It's going to hurt a lot, because I know it hurt him. So when it hurt him, it hurt me. Because when I came here my first year, Taylor was one of the guys that just -- he's like legitimately like my big brother. So like me just seeing him with that pain, it hurts. I just know like we got to do everything we can to try to get (no microphone) fell short.

