

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 15 2018
Waco, Texas

David Cutcliffe Press Conference

DAVID CUTCLIFFE: It actually feels good to sit down. I'm so tired that my watch ran out of battery.

How about that? Lot of heroes out there on that field, a lot of them. I don't think I've ever been involved with a game where every position, each and every position had to have someone step up. Based upon either from something last week or based upon something particularly that happened today, it's got to start with Quentin Harris who played a complete game, took care of the ball, made big plays. What an incredible job he's done at preparing himself. Zac Roper has done a great job with him.

But everywhere. You go to the defensive secondary, and oh, my gosh, I'm counting out there how many second or third teamers we had out there, and they're playing their hearts out, and fought, and scratched and clawed. We played everybody we brought up front on defense.

You know, when you saw the efforts of Chris Rumph, and he's not in the forefront of everyone's mind, we lost players throughout the game that made someone step up, I don't think it can get lost. Probably the most important lesson for us as a program is what we've done in recruiting.

I haven't even talked with the staff about this yet, but our recruiting efforts are different. We've got a good football team because of that. We certainly think we have a great program. We coach well. Our people are dedicated to what we're doing. We're in the 11th year of this program, that we have recruited very well. That's why you see players that are capable, physically capable of stepping up and playing at a high level when asked to do so.

I think, to be honest with you, I know I don't need to get off on a tangent, I think we're going to be better moving forward than we are right now. Not only this team, but, you know, you had to get better today with that many people. But I'm talking about next year and the year



after.

We've got a bunch of good people in this organization. Wasn't perfect. You know, you get a punt block. Operation was really bad, 2.9. That will get a punt block. Other than that, we really did some great things in the kicking game.

Offensively, we ran the ball a lot better than they ran the ball. Their best running play was a quarterback scramble. We ran the football with authority. We made big plays.

We had a tough time with that heat, pressuring the quarterback maybe as much as we would like, and I thought Matt Guerrieri did an incredible job of blending the coverages. Leonard Johnson, we play a lot of man-to-man, but Leonard Johnson's pick six came off his own call that he made, and it was executed perfectly by our entire defense. Leonard stepped in front.

I told somebody after three steps, that's a touchdown. He is a terrific athlete. I mean, a terrific athlete. So that's only going to be hopefully a beginning for him.

So with that, I'll answer any questions that you have.

Q. Coach, I'm assuming you're out of your routine with everything going on back home. What's it say about your guys that they were able to put that aside and jump out, especially the way they did in the first half?

DAVID CUTCLIFFE: I told them at the hotel that I had admiration for them. I told them last night. I told them today that it's been incredibly smooth. Their focus, their commitment to handle whatever. Hey, we tell them to we're leaving at 7 o'clock in the morning, at the last second, not a single person -- we loaded up the bus at 5:45 and went to the airport, not a single person late. What's that tell you about this team?

I do admire these young men that are stressed college students, like everybody that's at Duke, yet they have found a way to be committed to each other as teammates and committed to this program. So this is something that we have a chance to build off of.

Q. How is Michael Carter after going down in the

first quarter?

DAVID CUTCLIFFE: I think we've got a sprain that he will come back from. Hopefully pretty quickly. That's the initial word I got. The initial word I got is that we don't have a torn ligament. But you're always cautious. More than likely we'll have an MRI and we'll know for sure at that point.

But, you know, when that happened, there was a lot of head shaking, and it's going to be natural. But our team just never changed. No matter what was thrown at them, they went out with a positive approach. Next-man-up. It was -- I don't think in my coaching career as an assistant or a head coach I've ever seen a team do what that was done today.

Now we'll put it away. We're not going to celebrate it beyond a plane ride. I told them I'd call the airport and tell Delta to crank the plane up and have the air conditioning working really good. That will be the biggest celebration we want to have.

But outside of that, we have to go to work on a cross town -- not cross town, a neighbor arrival in North Carolina Central, and we have to focus on being a better football team.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the origin of the next-man-up? Was there anyone in particular in the locker room who brought this up? Was it a coach?

DAVID CUTCLIFFE: No, I mean, it's just how we are. It's what we talk about all the time. It's how we practice. We do it at practice all the time. You know, when nobody predicted Aaron Young on a Tuesday would be out for two weeks. I don't know that anybody has noticed.

Here's a guy that's on the verge, I think, got a chance of becoming a great player. So whatever is asked of him, how about Scott Bracey's catch? You know, I think what it does is that our coaches do a great job of keeping them fueled.

We are unlike a lot of people. We rep everybody. There is a pro mentality to rep your ones and then the twos get it through osmosis. I haven't seen osmosis work very well with human beings, so we rep our twos and threes a lot.

Q. Your offense came out in the second half three straight three-and-outs. They get the block for a touchdown. A little bit of a momentum swing. Then you go 75 yards for a touchdown. How important was that drive for you guys?

DAVID CUTCLIFFE: Huge. That's the whole point of what we're talking about. What is your intention when

you go on that field? Are you thinking failure or are you thinking success? And our coaches have to generate that thought process to some degree. But we -- I think we do a great job of believing we're getting ready to be successful and do whatever it takes.

Zac Roper called a great game. He gave Quentin plenty of opportunities to use his abilities well. That's a big part of coaching. It's not just the same series of plays called, it's trying to utilize the best abilities that players have, put them in those situations. Zac did a great job.

Our offensive staff conversations, we're going back and forth, I go back and forth between the offense and defense. But there are so many great conversations, I wish you could publish them almost how hard people are working on those head sets, and how many adjustments are being made.

Everybody thinks you go in at halftime and make adjustments. We make more during the game than we do at halftime.

Q. No turnovers, no penalties. I think that's -- no penalties, that's kind of a rarity?

DAVID CUTCLIFFE: It is, and when you do that, you have a really strong chance of winning. We believe in four things, turnovers, sacks, explosives, and penalties. If you win those four battles, you've got a real shot at winning a football game.

So how do you do that? You practice that way. We're totally committed to practicing that way every day.

Q. After Baylor scored that touchdown in the beginning of the second half, that was the first points you've let up in almost 90 minutes. What's that say about your defense against two potent offenses?

DAVID CUTCLIFFE: Well, I had a lot of concern going into the game about Baylor's ability to make explosive plays. Their size and speed at receiver is special. Two quarterbacks that are accurate, can throw the ball down the field. So to take it that long, I mean, to play another half without giving up a point, particularly with injuries and things, I thought there was a lot of fierceness on the field.

It starts with Joe and Ben. They're contagious, then players like Trevon McSwain in the second half. You talk about slowing momentum. We have great kickoff coverage, and then he gets a sack, and we get a stop backed up, and it flips field position. So that's how a team can win.

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Chris Rumph II Press Conference

Duke - 40, Baylor - 27

Q. Chris, it looked like you guys really controlled it with the front, especially they could really run the ball, you guys had really good pressure. What did you see out there today?

CHRIS RUMPH II: We watched a lot of film over the past week. We know what they want to do. Coach prepared us well, and we've just got their pass-rusher.

Q. I was going to say could you talk about defending their running backs? You guys had a little bit of trouble sometimes out there with some of their scrambles. But when it came to their running game, you guys shut them down?

CHRIS RUMPH II: You have to give them credit. They have great athletes over there. They do a good job recruiting at Baylor. They did have us a couple plays, but we just stayed poised and kept attacking and came over the hills.

Q. Baylor's touchdown in the second half, was the first touchdown you've allowed in almost 90 minutes of play. What's that say about your defensive intensity and your ability to touchdown opponents?

CHRIS RUMPH II: It shows we never let up on the gas pedal. Four quarters, that's what the coaches preach 60 minutes. We bring it to them. Just because that's gone, doesn't mean we're not going to stop coming after them.

Q. You guys came down a day early because of everything going on back home. Probably a little out of routine. But what's it say about you guys that you're able to come out, put that aside and jump out to a 23-0 lead in the first half?

CHRIS RUMPH II: You know what, it goes to the coaching the game and our poise as a team to be able to do that in our situation. God bless everyone back home. Hope everybody's safe.

But, yeah, we actually did it for them. We think about



the people we left back, those still in the storm, so we did it for them.

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Leonard Johnson Press Conference

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Q. Hey, Leonard, talk about, Gilbert going down last week, just talk about the atmosphere in the locker room throughout practice this week and rallying around him?

LEONARD JOHNSON: Yeah, we lost like one of the best corners in the ACC in my opinion. It's just next-man-up. Coach pushed us. He moved Mike Carter completely all over the field, moved him into corner, moved me into nickel or strike position. We knew we just had to play next-man-up. Just play hard.

Q. The interception for a touchdown obviously was a huge play in the game. I think it really put the game away. What did you see on that play?

LEONARD JOHNSON: Coach called us into cover three, so I just had the flats, D-line, great rush, got a quarterback out of the pocket. He was rushing to throw. I had the flats. Hopefully I just caught it, just ran down the field. But it was a great effort by the D-line getting him out of the pocket.

Q. How much did that help you all day? Looked like they were flushing the quarterback all day long?

LEONARD JOHNSON: Oh, yeah. It was great pressure. I mean, guys went down, EA went down, young guys came in and played hard. It's just next-man-up. Great rotation, fresh guy come in, make plays. That's what we needed.

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Jack Wohlabaugh Press Conference

Duke - 40, Baylor - 27

Q. I know you guys were working a lot on the second team with Harris. Talk about your relationship with him that you had through practice?

JACK WOHLABAUGH: Quen always has carried himself like a starter. So when his number was called, it was really no surprise how he was going to handle it. We all knew that. As for me and Quen, throughout camp, he's working with the twos, I'm working with the twos, so we really know each other and correct each other's wrongs. So we work together really well.

Q. It looked like especially in the first half you really kind of ran the ball at will. Did you feel good about what you were able to do out there?

JACK WOHLABAUGH: Yeah, it felt great in the first half, you know, coming out to a 23-point lead. 23-0, that felt great. We've just got to work on coming out strong the second half. Had a little mess up, but we brought it back, so...

Q. Is it kind of natural to let down a little bit? You're on the road, you're up 23-0, you're probably feeling pretty good about things. Is it kind of natural to let down then?

JACK WOHLABAUGH: I don't know if natural's the right word. But you have to have that mindset that games not over. You have to keep pounding it in on them and keep going.

Q. You have that relationship with Quen. Talk about you've seen him a lot throughout practice. What did you see from him today on the field? And where do you think the ceiling is?

JACK WOHLABAUGH: I thought Quen really proved himself today. I thought he proved that he could be the starting quarterback with all the decisions he made. The plays were really like -- the play might break down, but he makes a quick five-yard gain. He really proved himself as a starter, I think.

Q. You guys went three-and-out on your first three possessions in the second half, and then they blocked the punt, score, it's a two-possession game. Crowd's coming back into it, and then you guys go 75 yards and score. How big of a drive was that for you guys?

JACK WOHLABAUGH: Yeah, that was big time. We were talking on the sideline that we really had to get moving. Last week we started a little slow in the second half against Northwestern, so we knew that was a bit of a threat to us. So coming out with that long drive got us feeling good. Took away the momentum from Baylor, so that was really important.

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Quentin Harris Press Conference

Duke - 40, Baylor - 27

Q. First start today, what is on your mind and what did you think of the performance?

QUENTIN HARRIS: Yeah, I mean, definitely a little different than going out there and starting. But on a week-to-week basis it didn't change for me in terms of my preparation. I've got to play and prepare each week like I'm going to be starter for a case or an example like Northwestern. Daniel was having a great game until he went down, and I had to kind of step in there and just trust my preparation.

So nothing really changed for me on a day to day basis or week to week basis. But just really proud of the team effort we put together and were able to come out on top.

Q. Something talked about with Chris was just you're out of routine this week and had to come down early because of everything going on back home. What's it say about you guys putting that all aside and jump being out to the 23-0 lead in the first half?

QUENTIN HARRIS: Yeah, you know, it says a lot about just our focus, I think. Obviously a little bit of an unorthodox schedule for us this week having to come out on Thursday morning. But I thought guys, we were here for Thursday and Friday for our practice, had great focus. We were very detail oriented and just kind of continued things like clock work, like normal.

It shows the maturity and just the focus that our group had, and I was really proud of everybody. Had a lot of guys step in and play some snaps when they haven't previously, including myself, especially on the defensive side of the ball. So just really proud of the team effort and how guys stepped up into roles and really performed well.

Q. You kind of lost momentum there early in the third quarter, had three straight three-and-outs and they blocked the punt return for a touchdown. You



guys come out and go 75 yards for a touchdown, how big was that for you guys?

QUENTIN HARRIS: You know, that was big for us. We definitely wanted to answer that after they had scored on that blocked punt. Just kind of was telling the guys on the sideline, we built up a cushion for a reason. Now we've got to go execute and score again and increase the lead.

So just really proud of the drive we put together there. Just kind of mixed and matched in different match-ups and different guys and everything. I thought that came at a really big time for us, and that really helped stretch the lead and stretch the game in our favor.

Q. I know you'd probably like to complete a few more higher percentage of passes. But no big mistakes. Three touchdown passes. Overall, how do you feel?

QUENTIN HARRIS: Yeah, definitely I thought I had a couple balls I probably could have been more accurate on. Definitely want to get the completion percentage up. But at the end of the day, it's a team game and my individual stats don't matter. As long as we come out on top, I'm happy as can be. It says a lot about the team effort we put together to be able to come back after we fought adversity in this game.

Q. Talk about the team effort. You guys did a good job capitalizing on the defense with the first quarter with the fumble and scoring on the same drive after the blocked field goal. What is your mindset after a turnover like that? You guys are set up in good field position.

QUENTIN HARRIS: Yeah, it's a jolt of excitement on the sideline when you have some of those turnovers. We had a couple of them today. Just the mindset I was saying. Reiterating to the guys that we've got to score here and take advantage of it, because when you get those opportunities they are rare in football. So when you get those opportunities, especially on their side of the field, you've got to go ahead and score and capitalize on it because they're very precious. And you want to extend the lead when you can and not let your foot off the gas.

Q. In last year's match-up against Baylor, every touchdown was more than 30 yards. How much was on your mind today? You had a lot of

explosive plays. That was a theme for the team last year, so trying to develop that?

QUENTIN HARRIS: Yeah, definitely I think we've kind of had a pretty aggressive offense over the last couple -- dating back to last season. Definitely wanted to -- we've got a lot of trust on our guys on the outside, lot of great receivers in the room that can all play. Definitely had a lot of trust in them to get the job done. All we had to do to get up there and know they're going to make the play and do all the work.

But, you know, I think we just have a very dynamic offense. Lot of different guys can step up into roles. Great running backs, great receivers, great tight ends, great linemen up front that blocked for us today. So definitely wanted to capitalize on those explosives. But definitely was really proud of the drives we were able to put together and sustain.