

# Baylor University Football Media Conference

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Waco, Texas

## Matt Rhule Press Conference

Baylor 24, Texas 10

MATT RHULE: Obviously very proud of our team today, very proud of our players. Thought they battled. A lot of credit to Texas, they played hard. I thought Sam played really hard at quarterback. They did some things defensively, and thought our guys did a nice job of adjusting.

Pretty proud of our seniors. As I told them in there, two years ago we lost six games at home. Two years later win six games at home. Means a great deal.

Played a Texas team two years ago, we couldn't do very much against, now beat them. Wasn't always pretty, but that's what made it fun, though. Grind it, tough, hard-nosed win.

Our defense walked off at the end disappointed. That speaks to who they are. They're competitors. It wasn't about the scoreboard, they wanted to hold them out of there.

Really proud to know that senior group. Proud to know their parents. A lot of kids could have turned and run, but they stayed here. They're leaving here having won 10 games, which is hard to do in college football. To win 10 games in college football is really, really hard. To go 1-0, to beat a school like the University of Texas in a good fashion is hard.

So I'm really proud of them. I'm proud to know them. As I told them, enjoy this tonight, don't think about anything tomorrow, wake up and get ready for Kansas.

### **Q. Do you feel that is your best defensive games of the year?**

MATT RHULE: Had a lot of good ones. I thought that was a good one all the way up until the end. We had that long run right before half, that last drive. Other than that, I just thought dominant. Allowed us to run the football in the fourth quarter, chew clock.



To me dominant is when you feel like we can run the clock, we don't feel like we have to score again, they're not going to be able to score against us. They have dangerous players, I don't mean that in a disrespectful way.

Felt good about the way we were playing. Wanted to win, go 1-0 tonight. Thought we played really hard, very well, gave up for big plays, no big runs. A lot of guys played tonight that haven't played. Christian Morgan changed positions and went out there and played Sam linebacker. Out there in the second series. Josh was playing nose tackle, hasn't played very much. Rob Saulin played a lot of plays both ways.

In modern college football to be 10-1, have a guy playing both ways. I was really proud of those guys on defense.

### **Q. Update on Charlie?**

MATT RHULE: No, he got hit. The officials out there said, Take him out. He was banged up anyway. Just seemed like doctors wanted to hold him. No reason for him to go back out. Good to get Gary some reps, for him to kind of learn.

He ran out of bounds in the four-minute drill. It was good to get those guys those reps. I don't have a much of a feel with where he's at. He was in the locker room celebrating with us.

### **Q. (No microphone.)**

MATT RHULE: I told our guys, I said, Make this game about this game right now. I will say obviously we're excited to have a chance to play one more. Good news, bad news with everything in life. There's one more Tuesday practice, one more week of meetings and all that. For that I'm proud.

But I really don't want to minimize what it means to beat Texas for us, how good of a football team that is. They won the Sugar Bowl last year. Sam is such a great player, great defense. They have been giving up good plays in the passing game. For us to run the ball, things we haven't done, really pleased.

I just have so much respect for them. To beat them, I don't want our guys to let that go by. As I said earlier, two years ago it wasn't a very pretty game. Last year

was four shots from the 20 and we couldn't get in. For us to win this year and win that way, running the football, playing defense at the end, I'm just really proud of the process of our players.

That's what my whole message to our players is, You've done this because of your process. This didn't happen tonight. It happened every morning over the last two years, 6 a.m. wake-up call, 5 a.m. wake-up call. This is what we expect of you moving forward.

I'm happy to go play again. I'm really happy they found a way to get this win.

**Q. (Question about James Lynch.)**

MATT RHULE: I thought that was a function of a lot of guys. I thought Lock did a great job. Bravvion did a great job. A lot of great coverage.

Then getting a lead allowed those guys to say, We're going to make you one-dimensional. We three-man rushed. Sam did a great job stepping up, finding some guys, running sometimes. James is such a great, great, great young man, such a great player. He's working so hard. People will slide things to him and chip him and double him. Doesn't complain. Keeps working.

I was really proud of the holding line as a whole, even though some of the young guys, (indiscernible), T.J. Franklin, played a lot of football tonight. We knew we couldn't have another 90-snap game on defense. We knew we couldn't have guys play 80 snaps on the D-line. We rotated a lot early and it showed up with those guys having the sacks late.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MATT RHULE: I just learned about him, I'd say. I think Denzel has come as far as any player I've ever been around. My question about him going back to the Texas game last year, he didn't play at the end of the game. Sore hamstring, whatever it was. Didn't play.

On Monday they told me they don't think Denzel is going to play. He went out and played tonight. I mean, he played.

I just think he's one of those young people that answers the call, man. He answers the challenge. You can challenge Denzel. He steps up. Man, he fights for it. He finds a way to make it happen.

A lot of people see the finished product, but they won't see all the hard things he did to get there, the hard days he had. Proud he found a way to play today. A lot of older players said I'm not sure if they can go. Tyrell had surgery on Monday, practiced on Tuesday, played pretty well. Bravvion, not sure he can go. He went. A lot of guys I'm proud of.

**Q. (Question about the foundation of the team and Senior Night.)**

MATT RHULE: Meant a lot to me. I had the seniors get up, take a lap around the field. I wanted them to remember that. I wanted them to remember they won just not on Senior Day, but the way they played the game. Wake up tomorrow and we're going to snap right back to reality and find all the things we did wrong.

I just think, as I said, this game, this win, two years in the making, two years of process, two years of one day at a time, two years of a grind. Doesn't mean we relax. Next two years have to be even better, grind even more.

I see No Porter walking into the locker room, Taylor. A lot of guys that sacrificed their senior year in 2017, guys that just fought to get us a bowl game, like Ira, Greg, all those guys, take a lot of pride in seeing their guys, the scoreboard that we're going to go do something in two weeks.

Got to 10 wins. Really not many people picked us to get to 10 wins. These guys overachieved based on what people thought. I'm proud of that.

**Q. Why do you feel like it's been so quick?**

MATT RHULE: Just a bunch of guys that worked. They worked. They're good players. I mean, we got talented players. We've recruited well. I'll say this to you. Recruiting is not ranking. Recruiting is not what people say it is. Recruiting is finding players that can play, develop them, put them in the right position.

I will say this. We knew what we were doing recruiting. We find good players. We got a lot of good players.

I mean, even like tonight, Yusuf Terry was out there playing as a freshman, redshirting. He's going to be something else. We have good players. Will have good players for years to come. It's about getting the right good players, guys that want the grind, want to work. We have those kind of kids.

This has nothing to do with the coaching staff to me. This has to do with our players, the players that have decided to come, their parents and families. A lot of parents and families either kept their kids here or made a decision to come here when there was a lot of noise, a lot of chatter.

I think that to me is the story, all the little stories. Guys who walked on, who paid to be on the football team, paid to go to school, contribute. A lot of great stories like that. Proud to be a part of those guys.

**Q. Clearly disappointed last week, you had a**

**fumble early tonight. Talk about coming back.**

MATT RHULE: I think crazy things have a tendency to happen by seniors on Senior Night. Chris makes a great play, going to go score. He fumbles. Jameson, how many times you see a corner get called for unabating the quarterback? Never seen it before.

I went into halftime, We got it out of our system now, boys? Let's go play. The play right before the half, I think there's something to that.

We're not 45-0 all the time. I felt comfortable with it being 7-3 at halftime. Senior Night guys get a little tear in their eye, do some crazy things early. No doubt our guys were over last week on Sunday.

We went to team chapel. First time we had done a chapel coming off a loss, never done it on Sundays before because we took them off. Walked in there. Not sure how the music would go. These guys are boisterous. Number one they understand what is import and, number two, that you are going to be ready to go.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MATT RHULE: How about Isaac today? Thought he was awesome. Pinned them down inside, tight, good protection. I thought our special teams were really good today. Noah kicked the ball into the end zone every time. The punting game was really, really good.

**Q. Sounds like you're a little hoarse. Is that from the game, the locker room?**

MATT RHULE: I've been sick for like two weeks. I've been sick for a while. My voice has been like this. Once it gets like this, it's kind of there for a while.

But I coached hard tonight. I tried to coach really, really hard tonight. I tried to make sure I kept my energy up the entire game, especially in the second half. This is different, being tired. Being really, really happy. I'm not going to bed any time early tonight, just for the record.

**Q. How will you celebrate?**

MATT RHULE: I'm going to go home be around my family, friends, daughters. Julie always caters in or cooks. We go back and we celebrate as a family win, lose or draw. It's not like if we lose a game, I don't come home and slam the door and go to bed. We celebrate no matter what. It's too hard.

But we won tonight. I'm going to go home and celebrate. It's early enough I'm going to watch some other people play, watch someone else celebrate and watch someone else suffer.

**Q. Talk about the first five minutes of the second**

**half. Defense came out, got a stop. You scored. Not that you were worried or thinking about last week, how important was that stretch?**

MATT RHULE: Yeah, we talk about the middle eight, the last four minutes. We gave up a field goal in the middle eight, which we don't normally do. That was really frustrating.

I thought it was almost like cathartic tonight, get it out of our system. Went out there, the defense played well. At the end of the day someone makes a play on you, is that sustainable or not? Nice run. Great play by Keaontay.

I feel like we have all we need. They were doing some really nice things pressure-wise against us. Shawn Bell... Here is what they're doing, Thomas, made some adjustments. I thought we had an answer for the rest of the game.

**Q. You learn from how you have the lead, different style game, but when you had the lead pop open, do you feel like last week's second half is a learning experience?**

MATT RHULE: I think last week was definitely a learning experience. What was I before that, as a head coach, I was 38-0 having a lead going into the fourth quarter. Here it's 17 or 19-0. Hadn't done it very often.

Defense, don't worry about the game, keep a fourth quarter shutout. We scored, with Denzel, then ran the football, got the win.

Each game is different. I thought our guys were comfortable in the fourth quarter grinding it out. When you come to November, nothing should be easy.

Before the game I was watching the Ohio State-Penn State game. Nothing is easy. Nothing is easy when you come down to November.

That's a good team. A team that won the Sugar Bowl last year. A proud team that lost some really close games. Nothing should be easy. You have to grind it out. I thought our guys did that.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MATT RHULE: We were going to just pump the ball. Tried to make them jump. They didn't jump. We tried it again and they did jump. Then they threw the ball and caught it.

Really good poise by our guys. We've never really actually done it like that where we resigned the same thing, tried to make them jump again. Felt like let's take a shot, see if we can get them to jump. It kind of worked.

That's hard on the center because he has to feel the guy almost come into the neutral zone. Great throw. It's those plays I think are the ones that close games out. Those are the kind of plays to me that win big games, your discipline, play making shows up as a really critical time.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MATT RHULE: He's something special. The best thing is he's always working on what he's not good at to get better. Know what I'm saying? Not someone that just looks at his stats.

There's something about recruiting guys who played point guard, played basketball, played offense. Some of the things we lose nowadays, all the single-sport athletes, one-platoon football.

Coach Paterno used to talk about recruiting baseball players, guys that could track the ball. That's what Grayland was. People still talk about him playing basketball.

He has such a great feel for adjusting to the balls. Really the biggest thing is he wanted to redshirt last year. It was him making a decision to move from corner into safety, that not a lot of guys will do. He's not 6'2". We thought he could be a difference maker inside. He was banged up there for a while. Look at the turnovers he's created. Those aren't gimmes. He's making big-time plays down the field, catching the ball. That was critical tonight.

**Q. (Question about mood in the locker room.)**

MATT RHULE: I think happy. Every game like this is kind of uncharted territory. Are we supposed to be happy, coach? I think happy. I think also, though, hopefully the seniors, it meant a lot to them.

Some of these games come down to the last second, you kick the field goal, joyous. You have the lead, like we almost found a way to get it done. I think really happy. My challenge to them was, Don't look ahead two weeks from now, enjoy this, then tomorrow let's get ready for Kansas, try to go 1-0 next week.