



**Baylor (25-6) 3, Rice (27-4) 2**

Friday, Dec. 2, 2022

Ferrell Center (Waco, Texas)

Attendance: 1,007

## RICE POSTMATCH QUOTES

### **Rice Head Coach Genny Volpe**

#### ***Opening Statement...***

"Congrats to Baylor, it was a hell of a fight and I'm just really proud of this team for how we executed. I thought we executed at a high level and they followed the game plan, they did everything we asked of them and more. Just like I told them in the locker room, I think they inspired a bunch of people in this gym and anyone that was here could see a team that never gave up. They fight all the time, they play for each other, they're talented but their talent only takes you so far. There's just so much more to this group and I'm very very proud of them. That was a tough loss for us to take, we wanted that really bad so this hurts a lot, but congrats to Baylor."

#### ***On the match against Baylor in October vs. now...***

"We had a bad day that day and Baylor played extremely well. It was just a bad combination for us. Even just looking at the stat sheet right now, we came out on top in pretty much every category, except blocks by 3.5. I think that Baylor is a tough opponent, we match up well with each other. If we play defense the way I know we can play defense then I knew the odds would go in our favor, and I think we pretty much did as much as we could defensively. They said there was a point here, a point there that didn't go our way. But I think what this team has done consistently is try to get this much better every day. We're no doubt a better team today than we were back in October, and that's the way it should be. If you're focused, if you're doing things the right way then you're no doubt getting better every single day. You're not just being passive or being accepting of the wins and that kind of thing. And that's what makes me really proud of this group, that they never stopped trying to improve upon the day before."

#### ***On fifth-year seniors Carly Graham and Anota Adekunle...***

"These two have pretty much helped change Rice Volleyball for the better. It's been an honor to coach them, they are two of the most talented volleyball players we've ever had but also on top of that they are amazing people, teammates and leaders. I told them in the locker room before we came out here that I'm so thankful they chose to stay at Rice for their fifth year, and I don't even think I could put into words how much they've impacted me and this program. Anyone who has watched our program throughout the years will remember these two for a very long time and the impact they made on their teammates will last forever."

### **Rice Setter Carly Graham**

#### ***On the momentum in the fifth set...***

"We were fighting for each other for every point. Some balls just didn't go our way and we kept fighting through it and every single point we were going after it, and just fighting for one another. That's why we can walk out of here with our shoulders back and our heads held high and feel proud of ourselves. We left everything out there and it's like Genny said in the locker room, that's the proudest loss that could have possibly happened because we truly gave every single point for each other."

#### ***On the energy from the first set...***

"We talked about it in the locker room before. We knew we had to be fearless and go after it and that's such a great team. And if we were being safe we weren't going to get the result we wanted. We had to go for it and I think that's how we started out the match and we tried to keep doing that the entire match."

### **Rice Middle Blocker Anota Adekunle**

#### ***On the energy from the first set...***

"We were going for it. We knew that going into this game we were going to have to give it everything that we had and that's what we did in the first set. For everyone that was out there on the court, we did it for each other and tried our best to execute the game plan."



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## **BAYLOR POSTMATCH QUOTES**

### **Baylor Head Coach Ryan McGuyre**

#### ***Opening Statement...***

"What an amazing team Rice is. Just what Jenny does with that group and how hard they fought tonight. A lot different team than what we saw when we were at their place. Most certainly, all of our players would say it took everything we've got to get through the match tonight. I thought some players who maybe struggled for them yesterday really stepped up and played well. I think, for us, of the three sets we won I never felt we were in control of any of them. So it just came down to the end. We had a good start in the fifth set to get it going. I think when you do it right both teams finish emotionally exhausted in a five-set battle like that. I know it's always disappointing to be on either end when it ends that way, but love my team's heart and character and how they started the fifth set, after just probably being demoralized a little bit in that fourth set. Then we were able to make some adjustments.

"We talk about compartmentalizing stuff. Kara was huge down the stretch, Lauren was huge down the stretch, Allie Szech was huge, it was a good team effort. Our players were asked to do some things that maybe we weren't doing as often, because Rice was defending the traditional stuff we were doing. A few little wrinkles there at the end and then we were able to go back to some of our strengths. It was good. Proud of our team effort. It was a long day for me today, and I'm blessed with an amazing staff who do a good job of preparing our girls."

#### ***On digging out of it in the second set...***

"It really is. The strength and character of this team shine through. It's so hard to end a team's season, especially when they're really good. We have our fifth-year seniors, but they have a couple of really seasoned ones as well. They didn't give us anything at all. I felt like we really had to earn it. Had to pass down the stretch, had to swing down the stretch. Just the character from our young players. Averi is a setter, and I was asking her to set some sets we should probably practice a little more. ... But, ultimately, this team trusts each other. Briseño made some great digs down the stretch. Such a fun team to coach. They just play so free, and adjust when needed. You don't have to worry about managing emotions."

#### ***On opening the tournament at home...***

"I think that was huge, too. Rice and us were on the bubble, and we did some work early. Our sport comes down to one or two points. If we don't pull out the five-setter at home against Oklahoma, maybe we're on the road. If we don't recover and finish off K-State well after losing to Texas, maybe we're not hosting. If we don't beat Wisconsin in five sets after being in a similar match like this back in August, maybe we're not hosting. It's huge because our fans are great. The energy was great. Kara talks about multiplying the joy, so we get to multiply it with a bunch of beautiful people here in the Waco community."

#### ***On the turn into the fifth set...***

"It's difficult, but not so when you have a resilient team and you have a game plan. We say all the time, you've got to weather the storms. So, definitely a storm crashed on us in the 4th set. But our principles are, we're going to stay the course. The best way to get through it is to tackle it head-on. We don't want it easy, we don't want excuses. We don't want it to get easier from our opponents. We can't abandon ship, and that's what this team is really good at is not abandoning ship in those storms. But there's got to be a real change, or we're going to sink. So, we're going to stick together, but we're going to make some real changes. And the change was multiplying the joy, it was being good on the blocks, it was being a little more aggressive on our hits. Maybe one degree tougher on our serves and we really talked about wanting to swing for edges a little bit more. And that was different than what we were doing most of the match. So, it made it a little bit more difficult to defend."

### **Baylor Outside Hitter Lauren Harrison**

#### ***On the match...***

"It felt pretty good. But at the end of the day I was just excited that our season is continuing, and that was the most important thing."

#### ***On being a service target...***

"I think it's been happening a lot this season, so I've gotten a lot of practice working with it. And then in practice, we work on it a lot. And in my head, I'm just saying, pass for the middles, pass for the middles. And if I'm passing for the middles and it's a good pass, then the offense can be run efficiently."

### **Baylor Middle Blocker Kara McGhee**

#### ***On the match...***

"We kind of talked about it in the huddle, but our team does really good when we're playing with joy. Sometimes, a lot of times, that has to come from one great play with momentum and you can just carry that on."

#### ***On team blocks...***

"I think getting a good block it just naturally brings a lot of momentum. So, that's huge. I also think it does the flip side on the other team. it's just really frustrating. So, having a bunch of those, 11, helps change the game, for sure."