

Aflac Kickoff Game: Auburn vs. Baylor

Saturday, September 5, 2026

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Auburn Tigers

Cody Sigler

Jake Johnson

Cole Best

Postgame Press Conference



off pretty good. I felt we've got to keep on going throughout the half. They kind of came out in the beginning, gashing us, and we were able to hold up when they got to the red zone.

We have a mindset called good whenever stuff goes bad, just good, and I feel like that came out tonight. Something would happened on offense, and we went out there and we stopped them. (Indiscernible) two-point play. They scored, next play mentality after how many timeouts they used, just next play mentality on it.

Q. It was difficult in the third quarter with them stuffing that fake punt. You guys on the sideline, everyone on the team went into the huddle. Who was at the center of that, and what was the message going into the fourth quarter?

JAKE JOHNSON: I'm not really sure who was at the center, but I'll say that goes back to our connectedness and just love, trust and believe in one another.

That's something you build in the off-season and workouts and really just the mentality of your team. No matter whether the offense is doing good or bad, or same with the defense. We trust and believe in each other. We're going to play hard every single play and just grind with one another. We just trust each other.

Q. What does it say about Deryc and Ellis to come off the bench there at guard on the biggest drive of the game and be able to punch it in, running the ball right behind those guys?

COLE BEST: Absolutely. I think it's a sign of a mature program. Next guy has got to be ready at every position and the guy behind him and the guy behind him.

Not the situation you want when both of your guards go out for a drive, but man, I thought they did a fantastic job of being ready. They came in, they were dialed, they were communicating, and to go score, that's a sign of maturity. That's a sign of a mature program. Hat's off to those guys for being ready and getting done what we need to do.

Auburn - 17, Baylor - 16

Q. Cody, what was your view or reaction that last play with Eric coming up there and sticking the guy on the 2-point conversion after having the touchdown on the fourth down right before that?

CODY SIGLER: I would say after the fact, all the fans, it felt like a home game out there. Eric, he comes to work every day. I'm pretty sure that was him on the touchdown, and that just shows, his next play mentality, came out here and did the job.

Q. Jake, when you look at the way Byrum and you guys responded, the last drive, and Alex said, look, you guys got down to the goal line and said, look, we're going to put two tights on the field and run the football in. How important was that to finish a drive like that?

JAKE JOHNSON: First, I just want to say credit to the defense for keeping a low scoring game. You just know the impact that Byrum has on the offense. He brings it every day, his consistency, his work ethic.

In big games you have to run the ball in order to win. I think just being able to accomplish that, I think it shows where our offense is going and where we're improving and just getting better every single day. I think it's awesome to just finish the drive.

Q. Cody, it seems like it was bend don't break for the defense in this game. How do you describe what you guys did well and what you maybe didn't do as well?

CODY SIGLER: I feel like in the first half we kind of started



... when all is said, we're done.®

Q. Y'all did a lot this off-season in fall camp to build togetherness and build out the team chemistry. How much do you feel like that played a factor there in the fourth quarter as you're trying to go out and get the win in a tight game?

COLE BEST: Man, I think it was everything. Game was sloppy in a lot of ways, but that NP speaks for itself, bend don't break. We stuck together. Defense had the offense back. Offense had the defense back. Special teams had everybody's back.

It wasn't pretty in any way, but to be able to go out and get the job done and win, it's hard to win at any level. I think it speaks a lot to our connectedness piece. We spend a lot of time, these coaches, these leaders, everybody has really harped on that, building that connection within the building, on the field and off the field.

Ultimately, that's what this game comes down to. It really speaks volumes of our connectedness and trust and playing for the guy next to you.

Q. Cole, you've played with Byrum probably more than anybody else on this team. Tough game for him, first time he's ever had three picks. How much confidence do you still have in him on that last drive where you go and score a touchdown?

COLE BEST: Confidence hasn't wavered at all. Like Byrum, that's a guy that I've been around for a long time. I've got nothing but trust in that guy. I know he's going to go watch the tape, he's fix what he needs to fix, and we're going to fix what we need to fix. You go back and look at a couple of those picks, there's times when the protection could have been better, the communication could have been better, and we could have kept a lot of hits off of him too.

I think it's a collective team thing, but nothing but full trust in Byrum, and I think I speak for everybody on this team when I say that.

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