

Big 12 Conference Football Championship Game: BYU vs Texas Tech

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Arlington, Texas, USA

AT&T Stadium

Texas Tech Red Raiders
Coach Joey McGuire
Jacob Rodriguez

Ben Roberts

John Curry

Postgame Press Conference

Texas Tech - 34, BYU - 7

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations on winning the Edward Jones Big 12 Championship title. We'll open it up with comments.

JOEY MCGUIRE: I want to start out with making -- when the Selection Committee starts looking at teams, I truly believe the Big 12 deserves two teams in the playoffs. When you look at BYU, they're 11-2, and their two losses are to the No. 4 team in the nation.

I have so much respect for Kalani. That's a really good football team. I hope the committee looks at it because there's going to be two-loss teams out there, but there's not going to be an 11-2 loss team. They did a great job throughout the season getting here.

For us, man, I'm so happy. Four years ago I sit in a room in Waco, Texas at the airport with Dusty Womble and Cody Campbell and President Schovanec and Kirby Hocutt, and they changed my life. Man, I can't say how much I appreciate you guys, I appreciate your friendship, I appreciate your belief in us.

Then I just can't say enough about Cody Campbell and the Matador Club and just forward thinking that he has to help us create this team.

These guys up here really helped us put this team together. These guys, you have Jacob Rodriguez, who slept on the floor as a walk-on to be a Red Raider; Ben



Roberts, he actually told me, I recruited him, and he committed to Tech. I was at the other school, and he said, Coach, I love you, man, but I'm a Red Raider no matter what. Whether you're the coach or not, I'm going to be a Red Raider.

And then this is a guy right here who was born and raised in Lubbock, Texas. He was actually my very first commit in my very first full class. As you all can see, they have elite mustaches.

Just proud of them. I'm so proud of this team. I think we've got the best coaching staff in the world. We've got the best administration staff in the world. We've got the best fans in the world. Proud of the way we played today.

Man, I can't wait to see where the CFP is going to put us tomorrow. We're looking forward to the bye. We're hoping and expecting that that's where we'll be because we're football banged up, and if you let us get healthy, I really believe we've got another gear.

With that, open it up to any questions for me or any of these guys.

Let me say one more thing. Take my hat off to our training staff. We've got the best medical staff and training staff in the country. You probably saw Ben Roberts goes down on one knee. He's from Eaton, so I don't know how tough he is. He's not from West Texas. We're making him tougher. His ab, hip was really bothering him. Mike and his staff got it loosen him up, and all of a sudden we got two picks by this guy in the second half. Hat's off to our training staff for getting him back in the game.

Q. Oftentimes in this era, we have an issue with cohesion, especially in these big-time rosters. What have you done and what have you seen top players do to make sure this roster has been cohesive in offense and defense?

JOEY MCGUIRE: The biggest thing, the leadership on this team are the guys that decided to come back. Jacob Rodriguez had the opportunity to declare, and he decided to come back.

We started putting this team together, I really asked a lot of them to bring all the new guys in and make them feel how special Lubbock is and how special our building is and how much we care about each other.

I think consistency is the key. They get the same guy every single day. They get the same coaching staff. The one thing about us, most important thing that we have is our players. Everybody in our building, their sole job is to help them be the best version of themselves. They feel that every day. We don't deviate. We don't. They get the same guys every single day.

I think whenever people started seeing that, they really started believing in what we were asking them to do and really became a special group.

Q. Ben, Joey kind of alluded to it. You basically were part of his first recruiting class in an era of the portal, NIL, rev share. It doesn't seem like you sniffed the transfer portal at all. What is it that Joey brought to Texas Tech that kind of made you buy into what he was trying to do and getting to this moment?

BEN ROBERTS: Like he was just saying, we get the same people every day in the building, and you know what to expect. He's working to grow us as men and as players every day. So there was no reason to leave him. I knew he was going to do what's best for me.

Q. Coach, not only did you retain most of your defense, but a five-star receiver like Micah Hudson is coming back, that kind of helps recruiting too. Just on the offensive side of the ball where you were trying to piece together this offense and what the identity was going to be, how difficult was that, or was it pretty easy once you got the defensive guys to buy in?

JOEY MCGUIRE: It starts with Mack and that coaching staff. That's the thing too, man. Year one for these guys, we've got two brand new -- an offensive coordinator and a defensive coordinator that's brand new to Texas Tech. And they did a great job.

It all started, too, with making sure our quarterback was coming back. He's had an absolutely crazy year. In June, he and I both said we're going to win the Big 12 Championship and we're going to walk out of Cowboys Stadium together.

It was really cool. His dad, Coach Morton, sent me a text this week and he said, just make sure I get a picture of you two walking out.

So we both waited. I told him this morning, I said, when we win this thing, wait for me. I'm not leaving the field until you leave the field. Don't do the same. We got to walk out together.

It's really cool, in the day and age that we live in, where all information is at your fingertips and anybody can say anything. We both at different times have been beat up for being a high school coach or being a guy that is injured and is not playing at a level. And, man, we came out on top today.

Q. Coach, BYU came out, kicked you in the teeth, 90 yards in their first drive. What did Shiel Wood do and this defense do to adjust it to where you only allowed 110 yards the rest of the game?

JOEY MCGUIRE: These guys will tell you -- we said it this morning -- one thing that we had heard yesterday or I had heard yesterday watching ESPN, they were talking about that they needed to start faster. We felt like we were going to get everything and anything, and we did. I think we got a reverse pass, double pass, reverse. They emptied the tank on that first drive.

The one thing we did make them do is drive the field, so they had to use everything. Then we settled in.

I think Shiel, that's one thing that makes him special. He does a great job adjusting. Once he kind of has your number, he can really dial in.

And these guys, the thing that we do really well as a team, they really listen. When you say, hey, we need to do this, this and this, they can adjust. We've got a really high IQ football team.

Q. Got to ask you, Jacob, and then Ben, if you guys don't mind, what was it like seeing all that red today? Then Ben, talk about your hops on that second interception, if you don't mind.

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: It was unreal. I think it was right before we went out for our first drive as a defense, and we're kind of looking out, want to get the crowd pumped up. And you look at what direction you want to get them pumped up in.

And I'm looking at 80 percent, 90 percent of the stadium is wearing red. That's huge to see. I know Red Raiders always travel well, and they've always have our back. It was great to see and great to hear.

BEN ROBERTS: When I ran out on the field, I didn't know where to look, just like he was saying, so I looked back at

the home sideline. Then like you were saying about the hops, I didn't think I jumped that high. I've been practicing -- I've been practicing that one hand in practice, and it finally paid off.

Q. This is for any of you guys. I don't know if you hear this a lot in Lubbock, but the national narrative about Texas Tech, fair or not, is that's the best team money can buy. When you hear that, what do you say to that?

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: If we are going to buy a team, why not be the best?

(Laughter).

Q. Coach, this one's for you. Having won a state championship as a high school football coach in this building, how special is it to win at the next level and prove you can do it?

JOEY MCGUIRE: It was incredible. We were coming up -- this stadium is just so beautiful, inside and out. And we were driving up in our buses, and you start seeing the stadium. I actually turned to Anthony Huffman, my chief of staff, and I said, check that out. I said, hello old friend. I'm back.

Man, it was cool. This has a lot of great memories. This was actually my 14th game to coach in this stadium. First time as a college coach, of course, but this is a special place.

Q. Jacob, it's been a whirlwind of a week for you. The awards that you've won, the Butkus Award, the award today for defensive player of the game, Big 12 Player of the Year on the defensive side. If you could go back and talk to yourself when you were sleeping on the floor as a walk-on or on the practice field at Rider High School, what would you tell yourself? Is it worth it?

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: I think everything's worth it. I think the amount of time and work that you put into what you do, I think just trusting in that process and believing in yourself and people around you. Doing the work only gives you opportunity. It doesn't give you any right to win or to lose. It just gives you the opportunity to be there.

I'm just proud of myself for putting in the work, but I'm more proud of the people I've been around and people I've gotten to experience in that time.

Q. Jacob and Coach, Jacob first, I saw you looking around up on the stage after the trophy presentation. Just get your thoughts when you're standing up there soaking it all in? The same thing with you, Joey, when

you're holding up that trophy and the confetti is going everywhere.

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, it was great. I was looking around. I was just looking for my wife. I really just kind of wanted to celebrate with her. She's meant so much to me in the 2 1/2 years we've been married. I think I really just kind of wanted to spend a moment with her and get to celebrate with her because of how much work she's put in this year with supporting me and being right there.

She's such a rock for me. And I'm just so thankful that she could be here for this.

Q. Coach, you've been in championship scenarios. You've been in postseason scenarios before as a high school coach. How do you balance the looking forward and how to continue to improve versus looking at the now and celebrating the now?

JOEY MCGUIRE: We'll go 24 hours. It will actually be a little bit longer than 24 hours probably, but they won't take long to get back focused. Once we figure out, one, who we could possibly play, we'll start looking at that.

The biggest thing is, looking at the schedule, I want to make sure these guys have some time, hopefully at some point they could go home for Christmas once we get our finals done and then get back and get back into who we're going to play and how we're going to practice.

This is a vet team. We're football banged up. We'll find out tomorrow exactly who's banged up and stuff like that.

But today was a big day for us to win this game, to be the Big 12 champs, but also hopefully get that bye to let these guys' bodies feel really good for our next opponent and when we play again.

Q. I know you kind of have an idea because what you did at Cedar Hill, but do you think that your players appreciate what they've accomplished today? This is your first conference championship in Texas Tech history, since I believe 1955, so 70 years. And kind of on the humorous side, when these three guys came in, have you showed them the movie "Slapshot"? The minute they came in, they looked like the Hanson brothers.

JOEY MCGUIRE: I'll find that and send that picture to all three of them. That's great. That's perfect.

Man, the one thing that we talked about and we said it as a team -- they've heard this before from me -- but when this is all said and done and I'm gone, I want people to say that

he loved them, he loved his players, cared about his players. It was all about them.

Then on the football side, I want them to be able to say we did stuff that had never been done.

They know that. Like they talk about it. Skyler Gill-Howard has really spoke that into existence, and we said it. Texas Tech has never won a Big 12 Championship, and we're now the Big 12 champions. We're the first, and we've done something nobody's ever done. And I'm proud of them.

Q. Ben, can you discuss, I guess, the circumstances, how you got hurt? Then you were kind of out and in and back out again. Kind of what you were thinking at that point. And also describe how those plays unfolded, where you had two interceptions, and then you had a shot at another interception.

BEN ROBERTS: That first drive I was feeling really good. I think it was the play where Bear scrambles, and I came back and hit him. I guess I was fully extended and kind of tweaked my low abdomen.

I kept trying to play. I just couldn't run full speed, and I didn't want to hurt the team. I was, like, put Brock in, and I'm proud of him for what he did.

I just did everything I could to stretch it out and fix it up. But the trainers really helped me at halftime. They got it all heated up and relaxed, and I was ready to go in the second half.

JOEY MCGUIRE: Freshmen.

Q. Jacob, I hope you get to pack your bags to New York City because you definitely deserve it, but another guy that played a long time ago at Tech, are you the new Hispanic Zach Thomas?

BEN ROBERTS: I love it.

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: I don't know about that one. He was great. He's been somebody that we've looked up to, and we got to meet him last year. I mean, he's the best there is. It's such an honor to be mentioned in the same breath as him. And looking forward to meeting him again.

Q. Coach, the other day Coach Scott Frost referred to college football as broken because of the unequal application of NIL. This morning, Brett Yormark talked about working with Power 4 commissioners to kind of level out things. I wonder what you -- how you might respond to the changes that could be coming to that.

JOEY MCGUIRE: The one thing I know is we have a great administration, and we've got forward-thinking people. So whatever rules are out there that they're going to put in place, we're going to be ahead of the game. We'll have a plan.

We keep talking about that stuff, but I think where it's broken is the calendar needs to be fixed. We should be playing on zero week. Everybody should be on zero week. It should be week one. Last week should have been the conference championship.

Man, this really cool thing that's going on in Texas right now. It's called the high school playoffs. They actually play every seven days. We've got a state champ back there. But they actually play every seven days. I would fix that stuff before I look at some of the other stuff. Because we're putting these guys in such a tough situation.

College football, if you want to talk about being broken, college football is not supposed to be played in the second semester. College football is not supposed to be played on January 19th. All the stuff that you can't fix that away makes the portal window easier on coaches and everything like that. If we want to get behind something and fix something, let's fix the calendar before we do anything else.

Q. For Coach and the guys, this has been a long time coming, not only for the team, first 12-win season, Big 12 champs, but for the community of Lubbock, Red Raider fans, they've been so starved all those lean years. You know you're bringing so much joy. I've gotten so many texts from people. They're crying. They can't believe this is going on. What do you guys say to all the fans, not only who are here, but all over the world?

JOEY MCGUIRE: You're from Lubbock, man. Go ahead.

JOHN CURRY: I've waited 20 years for this, and I know a bunch of Red Raiders fans have been waiting forever their whole lives. The amount of texts I've gotten also is just amazing. It's amazing to be able to be part of the team that finally brings it back to Lubbock.

Q. With your experience in Lubbock, Texas, tell everybody who's never been to Lubbock, Texas, in one word what Lubbock, Texas, means to you?

JOEY MCGUIRE: One word. Who wants to start it? Go ahead.

BEN ROBERTS: Grit.

JOHN CURRY: For me, my one word is just everything.

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: Hard-working.

JOEY McGUIRE: Man, it's not one word. I'm going to tell you, it's the greatest place on earth. I'll be there for the rest of my life. I appreciate the administration for doing what they did last week. People think, well, that's just -- it's not.

I'm a Texan. I ain't never been anywhere else. I'll never be anywhere else. I'm proud to be the head coach at Texas Tech, and this team's not done yet.

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