

Southeastern Conference Football Media Days

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Billy Bowman Jr.

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're ready to start the afternoon session. Leading it is the Oklahoma Sooners. Billy Bowman is here, and he's ready for your questions.

Q. I want to ask you, of course, going into the Southeastern Conference, a lot of road games are going to be tough. Can you talk about that dynamic of playing on the road? I know the last two years road games have been pretty tough for you guys. Talk about that mentality of playing on the road and going to these venues in the SEC.

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: First off, joining the Southeastern Conference, having different opponents that we can go play at different venues, that's always a great thing to have for the college athlete because we don't always get to see those places. So going to places like Oxford, Mississippi or Baton Rouge, Louisiana, going out to Auburn for the first road game, those things are going to be fun from just a standpoint of just being there.

Then again, when we go on the road, it's us against everybody else. Our fans are always going to travel. But still it's not a home stadium. So we're not going to be 80,000, 90,000 deep with Sooner fans.

So just going in there with an attack mindset and just be road dogs.

Q. How's Peyton and Reggie coming along in the summer session with some of the guys you safeties are looking for to dial into before training camp comes up in a couple of weeks?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: A lot of safeties are stepping up in their role, whatever it may be. We've got guys like Jaydan Hardy, Michael Boganowski. They came in as freshmen. But Peyton is standing up and maturing. He's stepping into that leader role. He wants to take his game to the next level.

We all do a great job of helping each other get to that level. We meet all the time, do extra stuff all the time. Those guys that we brought in are guys who want to be there. They're bought in, and they're committed to it.

Reggie Powers, as you mentioned, he's a guy who he's going to train every day. I really like that out of the young guys.

Q. Billy, how do the offensive schemes that you're going to see in the SEC differ from what you guys saw in the Big 12, and how is this defense going to have to adjust to it?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: In the Big 12, you see spread offenses and things of that nature. The SEC is known for the trenches, the run game, stopping the run, and being able to run the ball at will.

Just going, playing whoever you play, everybody has their own identity, so you're going to have to change. Maybe it's changing what we do defensively against those offenses, but it's going to be fun.

Q. Just how confident are you that this team and you are prepared for the SEC schedule that lies ahead?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: We're very confident. The preparation we have put in, the work we have put in, it allows us to be confident.

Ever since the game ended in San Antonio versus Arizona, we've been hitting the road hard, working, grinding extra, doing everything we can to obviously come out here and perform better than we did last year.

Q. Your defense, but just another year under Venables, what are your expectations defensively for this group?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: We're not going to necessarily set out any expectations. We're going to play to our standard, the standard that University of Oklahoma has built. But being in Brent Venables' defense again is good. A lot of older guys coming back is good too. Things like that, we'll



be ready to hit the ground rolling and be one of the top defenses here.

Q. You decided to come back for another season at Oklahoma. What are the factors you considered in the decision to come back to Oklahoma?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: Ultimately, I want to win another National Championship. When I came here, Oklahoma won six, seven conference championships in a row. Since I've been here, I haven't been to one. My goal is to win championships.

We went to the college football playoffs four times also. I haven't been there also. So that's something I want to check off too.

Ultimately coming back, getting my degree, so I won't have to worry about it in a future life. Also, I'm still a college student-athlete. Why rush the next stage of my life? It's going to be there.

So coming back, having this time to spend with my teammates and things like that, it's why I came back.

Q. You talked about some of the new teams and the things that you're going to face in the SEC, but do you like bringing along Texas with you and just keeping that rivalry within the conference as you guys both go to the SEC again?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: Most definitely. I think, if one has to go, the other has to go. It's Texas versus Oklahoma. It's been like that since it first started. It's a great thing, you know, two prestigious college universities, obviously football programs specifically, going into arguably the best conference. That's going to be a thing of beauty to watch.

Q. The Big 12 kind of had the horns down as a penalty -- I don't know if you guys ever ran into that as an obstacle, but as Texas' biggest rival, now in the SEC, the officials said that's not going to be a problem, horns down. What's your take on that?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: It shouldn't be a penalty anyway. Everyone has a hand signal. If you let a hand signal affect you and affect the game, maybe you shouldn't be there.

Allowing us to throw the horns down, that's cool and all, but if it can't be part of the game, that's pretty tough.

Q. Obviously the OU defense made a jump year 2 under Coach Brent Venables. How much confidence does that even have now heading into this year now that you have a defensive mind like Venables as your

head coach?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: It brings a lot of confidence, especially bringing back experienced guys all over the defense, from the d-line, to the linebacker core to the defensive backs. Going into this year three will be another big jump. We're in control of our own destiny. I feel like we're doing a great job of continuing to keep the foot on the pedal, and we know we're not nowhere close to where we need to be.

Q. I know you've been asked this question a lot, but team leadership is so important. You, Danny, Ethan Downs on that defense, how much have you embraced that over this off-season this summer going into fall camp? You can talk about it all you want, but how important as you embrace this over the summer?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: I embraced it full speed, head on. I'm a guy, any room I step into, I'm going to work hard. I'm going to try to be that head guy, that top dog. Trying to be a leader on this team, it means a lot. I truly worked to be here where I am.

A lot of people don't see that. They just see the results. But there's work put behind it. So it's great to be a leader of this team, and it's great to be able to create more leaders. That's what makes a leader great. You can create more leaders.

I just want to leave Oklahoma better than I entered it, and I entered it in a pretty good situation. So I want to leave it better than I found it.

Q. We talked to you a lot about Coach Alley in the spring. Now that you're a little bit away from it, what has it brought for you guys? Is it new to you all to have new voices?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: Bringing in Coach Alley, it was great for us. Bringing in a young mastermind who thinks similarly to our head coach Brent Venables. He brings in more of a freestyle type of play. He's sort of the same schemes as Venables. So those guys are on the same page. Just being able to hone in on the details, I think, by bringing him in, allows us to focus on every little detail.

Q. Last season you got three interceptions for a touchdown. When you saw Jaxson Dart throw that pass at the Madden Academy, you immediately tweeted out pick six. How excited are you about seeing Jaxson Dart at Ole Miss this season?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: I'm excited about every team in the SEC. Ole Miss will be a game on the schedule. It's a road

game. We go down there, and we're going to do all we do to keep them points off the board.

Q. Billy, for a long time the Big 12 was known as a conference that provided innovative offense. The defenses weren't noted as often as a lot of the offenses were. Are you excited about coming from the Big 12 to the SEC and showing that, despite being a Big 12 team, you're capable of playing very physical, high quality defense?

BILLY BOWMAN JR.: I'm excited about joining the SEC, being more known as a defensive league rather than the Big 12. Our Coach, Brent Venables, he coached at Clemson in the ACC for a while. He went to multiple National Championships, beating multiple SEC offenses. So he's very capable, and I'm very excited for it.

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