

CFP First Round: Texas vs Clemson

Saturday, December 21, 2024

Austin, Texas, USA

DKR-Texas Memorial Stadium

Texas Longhorns

Jahdae Barron

Barryn Sorrell

Michael Taaffe

Postgame Press Conference



PLAYOFF FIRST ROUND

things that we haven't -- I don't know how many yards they had passing, but definitely need to improve. Myself, the defensive backs as a whole.

He helped us out get ready for next Saturday for sure. Hats off to Cade. He's a baller. But I didn't play good enough. I'm glad that I made that last play because I was ticked off I didn't play good enough as a competitor. I wanted to do more.

But the great thing about football is we had more points than them, and so we get to do it again on January 1st, so I'm so blessed, to excited to have another opportunity with guys like Jahdae and Barryn.

Q. Jahdae, can you speak to what this means to Andrew and Michael and you for the relationships you guys have, to win a game like this Wednesday guys that you know?

JAHDAE BARRON: I mean, it means everything for those guys and for me. That's why I wanted to wear a shirt for Andrew Mukuba, Michael Taaffe. A lot of reasons, and a few of the reasons, Andrew used to be at Clemson. He's from the city.

Then Michael Taft, he's from the city and he's playing against his old quarterback. Those are the guys I had with me when I won the award. And I said that award, it wasn't just me on it, but also those guys that helped me because they've been pushing me.

Just to follow up with Taaffe, we've got to do better, but I'm so proud of Taaffe. He wanted to make more plays, but it's not about how you start, it's about how you finished, and he finished the correct way, and he sealed the game for us.

Q. Michael and Jahdae, that game sealing 4th down hit that you made, what are the emotions of a play like that?

MICHAEL TAAFFE: Yeah, for sure, was so torn because I wanted to get out there again and try to make a play, but then again, when your offense gets 1st downs when they keep burning the clock, it's like, all right, we won the game, so it's whatever.

Texas, 38, Clemson 24

Q. Barryn, can you take us through that fourth and 1 stop and what is it about this defense that you guys were able to come up big in these late game situations?

BARRYN SORRELL: Yeah, in the huddle before I'm telling the guys, this is what we work on, this is what we practice for. We call it a red zone locked. The team might be able to drive down the field and we can't control where we are, but we're not letting anybody get in the paint, and that's the mentality that we have on this defense, especially on this defensive line.

Shout-out to Bill. It's hard for a running back to make a play when an offensive line is right in his face as soon as he gets the ball. So shout out, thank God for Shea.

Q. Michael, you told us this past Monday that your job was (indiscernible) and you actually got a sack and then after the game was one of the great sports moments. You met Cade on the field and embraced. Can you walk us through that moment together?

MICHAEL TAAFFE: Yeah, well, when you look across the sideline, no matter how close you are with the other opponent, they're your opponent for 60 minutes. Once you step through those white lines, then he's your opponent and that's just how football is. That's how I'm raised. That's how competitive I am. He's the same way. We were definitely sharing words back and forth, so that was fun.

But then at the end of the game it's all love. He's a great guy. He had a great game. Made us -- exposed some



I care about winning more than anything else. That's all I care about. So I can have zero stats. I can get a play in. But if we won, I'm happy.

But then at the end of the day we got another opportunity. It's our job as a defense to hold our standard and not let anybody get in our paint. That's what we talk about. What these guys preach is not letting anybody get in our paint. That's what we take pride in. That's what we hunger for.

Somebody had to make a play. I knew that it was time to make a play, and I just made the play that came to me.

JAHDAE BARRON: Just to follow up, he kind of hit everything, but us three, we're all defensive leaders here. Taaffe, he just keeps everybody going, no matter the adversity that we face, and he's always there just harping on everybody, just making sure we're staying engaged and mentally focused. This game you have to have a lot of strong mental focus, just keep playing and having adversity up and downs, them driving down the field.

But just to hold us and just to be tight and not let anybody get in the paint when it mattered. That was big.

Q. Barryn, once you get the hand-off (indiscernible) you get the sack, as well. Do you feel like you're playing your best ball right now?

BARRYN SORRELL: Any time you get to make a play, I'm definitely happy to do that. That's why I work for, and that's what we work on as a front. But that's just the standard of Texas defense that we have built, starting with these guys up here.

But that's the standard on this defense is to go out there and make plays, and I'm happy I made plays out there, but I get to play good on January 1st, and hopefully that's my best game.

Q. A lot of jokes, a lot of laughing happening right now. How much fun are you having playing with each other this season?

JAHDAE BARRON: Sometimes I have mood swings. I don't know why. I'm just happy. I'm just blessed to be up here with these guys. We have another opportunity just to continue playing football. But I'm just most proud of how we just bought in. We're still buying into Sark's culture, and we love everybody. It's not a bond that we have on the field but we strongly have it off the field, just connecting with people, me talking to Sorrell, we're in different position groups and just things like that, just having a connection with everybody.

I think that's what I love about it.

BARRYN SORRELL: Yeah, it definitely goes just to our culture. We know what matters, so at the end of the day we're going to go out there and have fun. Especially on defense, we call it we're throwing a party. We're throwing a party every Saturday, and that's what we went out there and did today and that's what I'm going to do next week.

It all starts off with fun. At the end of the day, the stakes are obviously getting higher, but we all picked up the football for a reason, and I'm just happy that we all continue to get to play.

MICHAEL TAAFFE: Yeah, to follow what they talked about because I 100 percent agree, we get to do this. We're so blessed to be in this opportunity. I think our defense, the one thing that I could describe our defense as, the culture of our defense is the love for one another.

When we break it out after walk-throughs, after time-outs, we're all hands on one another, loving one another, and that's so fun.

When you get to the real world and you've got to work, then I'll say I'm working, but right now I'm not working, I'm getting to do that. I don't work. I have fun every single day.

Q. Michael, it seems like in some ways this game went against script. Was today evidence of this team's versatility and greatness?

MICHAEL TAAFFE: Well, Cade is a tremendous quarterback. We all knew that. I specifically knew that. What he can do with his legs, what he can do with his arm. Everybody it seemed like on their offense was on the same page. When he was scrambling, they're going to find room and a zone to get open, catch the ball and get upfield. Definitely made our job really hard, but I'm so glad that we had that opportunity now to see, all right, let's get better from this. Let's see what we can do moving forward as far as upping the good of what we're doing and fixing the bad.

You never want to forget about the good because you always want to keep pushing the good. But then looking at the bad how can we fix that, how can we minimize our mistakes.

The offense did what they do. I'm so proud of that offense. It feels good when you get to sit on the sideline for seven minutes coming out of the half if I'm not mistaken. They run the rock, and it's so awesome. It hurts for a defense when you're just getting the run, run, run, run, and you

can't stop it.

Q. Hey, Barryn, this was an imperfect win; you guys had some leakage. How can that help you moving forward in the return to Atlanta?

BARRYN SORRELL: Just realizing that it's a blessing that we still get to keep playing. Obviously there's things that we can work on, like he just said, but at the end of the day we get to go back to work, and that what we've been doing throughout this whole year. We've had success on the defense but it's because we're harping on the details each and every week. Even when there might be a performance where it might seem good to everybody else, we're looking at the tape and we're trying to see what can we do to make it a Berwyn and a better defensive performance.

Just realizing that we have another opportunity on January 1st and we're going to take the steps and clean things up so that we can go out there and have a better performance.

Q. For all three of you guys, you're going up against Arizona State next. Your thoughts on facing that kind of offense.

MICHAEL TAAFFE: Yeah, haven't looked at the scouting report yet on Arizona State. Can't wait to do it. Obviously a great challenge. When you get a bye week and this type of platform, this type of college football platform, that obviously shows a testament to how good you are as a team.

We're going to have a really good opponent, and we're going to respect our opponent. We're going to get ready for the challenge. I'm so excited for the challenge. I know Barryn preaches stopping the run all the time, so he's going to be excited for the challenge, and when the opportunity presents itself, we're going to be ready to go. We're going to go get it.

BARRYN SORRELL: Yeah, I'm excited. Obviously I'm blessed just to keep playing and play again on January 1st, but my time being here, I feel like I've heard that a lot, that a team is going to come in here and run the ball on us, and I'd like to say there was a different result a lot of those times. Just looking forward to that challenge again. Everybody up front is going to be looking forward to that challenge, especially this box, because that's what we do as a defense. We just harp on stopping the run.

It'll be fun for that challenge for sure.

JAHDAAE BARRON: It'll be an amazing challenge. He's a hard downhill running back, and I'm knowing these guys

can get everybody on board to just execute and we're going to trust PK's plan and we're going to have a good plan to do it?

Q. Jahdae, you've talked about Michael's defense. Why is Michael deserving of postseason accolades?

JAHDAAE BARRON: That guy is amazing. I can start like 15 years ago. That dude is amazing. It's nothing he does on the field, on camera. It's everything he does off the field, off the camera, how he just commits himself to the Lord, for one. He trusts the Lord. That's why he goes out there and plays fast and literally tackles like a maniac, because he knows everything is in the Lord's hands. That's number one.

For two, he trusts his teammates, and we trust him. We know he's going to play fast, and he loves /USZ. He loves us unconditionally, no matter the mistakes we make, no matter if we get on his nerves. I get him mad every single day. Literally he gets mad at me every day. But that guy right there, he's a tremendous hard worker, and he just continues to push himself.

You guys get to see it when the cameras come on, but this guy pushes himself like no other, more than anybody else that I know off the field, so I know he's going to continue to do great things in his life.

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