

CFP First Round: Texas vs Clemson

Saturday, December 21, 2024

Austin, Texas, USA

DKR-Texas Memorial Stadium

Clemson Tigers

Garrett Riley

Cade Klubnik

T.J. Moore

Postgame Press Conference

Texas - 38, Clemson - 24

Q. It looked like maybe there in the second half you kind of concentrated a little bit more on the vertical game, rather than some of the slants inside. What was working for the offense besides tempo there in the second half?

GARRETT RILEY: I think this one did a really good job of putting the ball in play. So with us playing with tempo, just trying to really attack every level of their defense, credit to them. They do a really good job. They play soft in coverage a lot today. They did a great job and credit to them.

I just thought Cade specifically did a really nice job of attacking the field and creating some plays to extending the plays in the second half that gave us a few chunk plays to kind of get us going.

Q. If you could talk about the play of Cade and what he did today, and how he brought you guys back within a touchdown.

GARRETT RILEY: I mean, this team and this group of guys that we have, they're damn fighters, that's for sure. With this one leading the way and being at the forefront of that, just super proud of him and his resiliency, his ability to fight, his ability to have a short term memory, which is a very special thing, playing his position, good or bad.

This kid just absolutely played his ass off tonight in this season. He knows I'm very, very proud of him.

Q. Dabo just told us that you spoke up in the locker room and said this is the most fun you've ever had



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playing football this year with this team. What are you feeling right now?

CADE KLUBNIK: I hate losing. I hate losing, and I hate losing in the playoffs. But nobody picked us to be here in the beginning. Nobody believed in us. Nobody really wanted us here.

But we believed in each other, and this group of guys that has fought together -- you know, I just think of Jade Briningstool and Barrett and Tristan Leigh and Marcus, just naming a few guys, I feel like a year ago they were just like my teammates, and this year they're like truly my brothers. Because we've walked through like together, we've walked through hard times. I spoke up and shared how much it sucked and also was kind of vulnerable.

I also just kind of shared with them that I'm very thankful that I get to go through hard times -- that I get to go through hard times with people that I love and that love me because I can't imagine going through the stuff that we've gone through where I didn't love the people around me.

I'm hurting a lot. I've had a lot of emotions going on, but I'm going to miss a lot of these guys because they've had such an impact on the player that I am, but the man that I'm going to be and that I am now. So just kind of wanted to tell everybody in the room that.

Q. Cade, obviously a tough homecoming year here for you. Have you been able to process yet what it was like to be back playing here in town and out there on the field with your brothers, leading your team there in the second half the way you were able to?

CADE KLUBNIK: It was fun to be home, but I wish we would have won. That's what I came here to do. It wasn't a vacation. It wasn't really time to come home. It was time to come win a football game, and we didn't do that. That really sucked.

It's nice to be home and all that, but I wish we would have won.

Q. Was there any talk going on the field between you and your pals from Westlake?



CADE KLUBNIK: Not until the very end. Not until the very end. Michael dropped that pick at the very end, and he told me he wanted that one. I said he's not good enough to get it. I'm just kidding. He's a really good player.

I almost threw a pick to Mukuba, and I told him he still doesn't have the hands. Other than that, there wasn't really much.

Those guys are great guys, great football players, great dude, but there wasn't really much talk.

Q. From a game plan standpoint, how much of a bind were you in having Phil banged up, losing Jay Haynes, and at what point, when and how did you arrive at the decision that you were going to give Randall a try in the backfield?

GARRETT RILEY: We just kind of went in to almost a bye week, the week leading up to the game of trying it out. He's a skill guy and just kind of the way things have unfolded in that room is we felt like he could give us a spark and give us something and be unique back there.

I'm proud about him. He gave us a big time run today. He played explosive for us, and we asked him to do some things in a short period of time that he handled.

Yeah, just collectively that room, Keith came in and gave us some important snaps and execution with what he brought to the table. Jarvis Green enters the game and scores a touchdown. So we knew it was going to be by committee, but yeah, we went into this knowing that Adam could give us a little something back there too.

Q. Hey, Coach, after you guys' opening drive, your offense kind of stalled for the next four possessions, I guess. What was Texas doing that kind of limited you guys to move the ball down the field?

GARRETT RILEY: Well, what we wanted to do is definitely be in rhythm and play quickly and play fast and try and use tempo to our advantage. We just kind of got stuck in a lull there. We had a couple things, we felt like, on two consecutive drives. We've got some stuff there, and we get two tipped balls at the line of scrimmage.

Again, credit to those guys. I thought they do a great job in coverage. We all know what they are and all that defensively, but there was just a few things there. I thought early on in that -- the late first quarter, early second quarter where I thought we had some opportunities there. Just didn't seem to make it for some reason.

Q. Cade and T.J., you guys have been building that rapport all season. What was working for you two today to kind of have that connection that you did, especially in the second half?

CADE KLUBNIK: Yeah, I got some one-on-one opportunities, a great matchup for us, especially for T.J.

they were starting to isolate him a little bit more, and we wanted to take advantage of that and went and did so.

T.J. MOORE: I started to notice they were playing off more, and really that just started to open things up. I don't know.

Q. Garrett, I just wanted to ask there at the goal line situation on those two plays, your thought processes going in there after the timeout, and what you guys thought you could do there.

GARRETT RILEY: Yeah, had some things. Like any game plan, got some things in tight there at the goal line. Had two calls, and kind of came in at the third down and something differently than we expected there. Cade stuck the football and had to cut it up on the third down and gave us a chance on that one.

Then fourth down, really had a decision for him. He had two early options that he could do on that play. They took one away, and we had to give the football to Keith, and we just came up a little bit short.

Q. For Cade, now that the season is over, I guess you speak about your decision about next year. Can you confirm you're coming back and how excited you are?

CADE KLUBNIK: I'm just trying to deal with the emotions of tonight. Yeah, just trying to deal with the emotions of tonight and just trying to deal with I've got to play my last football game with a lot of these guys. I'm not really thinking about me right now. I'm trying to think about all of the relationships I've built over the last three years. That's really what I'm thinking about now.

Q. Cade and T.J., that touchdown that you caught, T.J., I think it was the fourth quarter, but Cade, you were scrambling around, looked like they were playing zone, and T.J. kind of found the soft spot there. I guess you couldn't consider him a freshman anymore. It seemed like a veteran move there. Could you just speak on that? T.J., can you take us through that play and how it unfolded?

T.J. MOORE: So it was kind of like -- how do I say this? Basically, it was kind of like a rub play, so I come under the

tight end. I seen like nobody was in that area or that zone. So I was like, okay, I'm going to just sit here. I see Cade scrambling out. It was just like he's going to throw it to me. He's going to throw it to me. Then I caught it.

I'm just going to let Cade take it.

CADE KLUBNIK: We had a zone beater on the right, and we kind of anticipated them playing a raid two with a high safety inside the No. 3. We were hoping that No. 3 would really go grab with a dig, would go grab a safety, and he just kind of stayed off, and that was going to open up the other route.

Then they just kind of played it, and down the red zone, you want to just kind of -- sometimes they cover it, and I want to be able to use my legs and stretch them out, and T.J. did a good job just kind of finding the window, and we made a play late.

Q. T.J., you had a career day, a career outing for you today, I guess. How do you feel in a moment where that kind of game comes in like in the loss for you guys?

T.J. MOORE: I know having a career high or whatever is good, but the fact that we lost kind of like down plays it. I'm not really so worried about myself. I'm kind of worried about the loss.

Now we don't get to be with our seniors anymore. That's really what I'm focused on.

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