

# CFP First Round: Alabama vs Oklahoma

Friday, December 19, 2025

Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium

## Oklahoma Sooners

## R Mason Thomas

### Postgame Press Conference

Alabama - 34, Oklahoma - 24

**Q. R Mason, can you just tell us a little bit about your rehab process, getting back, wanting to play obviously in this game? What was the injury? What went into the process of you getting back to play?**

R MASON THOMAS: Shout-out to the trainers -- Jonathan Gress, Geoff Lau, Hailey, Dylan, Luke -- they all helped me getting back. Healing right, getting my mind right just so I won't play timid or scared. I'll be 65, 70 percent -- let's go be 85, 90 percent, because nobody is 100 percent during the season. Let's go be as high as we can be so we can ball out for this playoff game. Shout out to them.

**Q. How did you feel like the defense played tonight? You guys didn't have anything to do with the pick-6 or anything. So overall it looked like you guys had a fairly good day. How did you feel like you guys played today?**

R MASON THOMAS: We played good. It's kind of hard to just say what the defense did. The whole team, we didn't get the job done. But I heard something like 1.4 yards per carry. At the end of the day it doesn't really matter at this point if we don't come out with the W.

I think we played overall good. A lot of environment, communication, just playing with -- I seen we played with aggression, played fast. That's all that really matters. It's kind of hard to say with the defense. As a team we didn't come out with the victory.

**Q. Curious just what you think about the overall success of this season. Do you come to the end of this and feel like you had a successful year? And I also asked Brent sort of a similar question. He actually referenced you, the fact that you fought to come back and play when maybe you wouldn't have had to, necessarily. He said that he felt like that was**



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an example of success. I don't know how successful you feel like the season was, but just the mentality maybe you guys set as a standard here, what do you feel about that as you end the season?

R MASON THOMAS: I wouldn't have it any other way. If God has a plan and let his will be done, however it has to be, but I wouldn't have it any other way with these guys. To come back and play with my guys, that's the whole point of me coming back.

I didn't come back for no fans. I didn't come back to one more time in The Palace. I wouldn't have come back if I didn't love my guys.

Coach V is right. What did you call it, successful because we didn't have the big diamond on our pinkie ring? Yeah, you could say no. But at the end of the day, to go out with my guys like this, I count it as successful, yeah.

**Q. What was it like for you to lead this team and lead this defense this year for you personally and then to watch them kind of mature and get going in the direction that Brent Venables kind of started four years ago.**

R MASON THOMAS: It all starts with Coach V, the ultimate leader. I just piggyback off of him. For our defense to be how it was this year says a lot about our coaching and our leadership.

But I'm more of the one that says certain things than kind of sit back and watch it happen. I'm not really that big of a talker. Leadership, that's more Kip, Owen, John.

I think for them, how they develop me to the leader I am today is crazy. Looking back at my freshman year, I guess it would be insane if you all wouldn't know, (indiscernible) not here day to day, but it all starts with Coach V. Amazing coach, amazing leader. Wouldn't have it any other way.

**Q. Obviously you were out for a couple of weeks, but to return for this game on this stage and at home in front of the fans and the national audience, again, you're out for a couple of weeks, but how did it feel to get back and play?**



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R MASON THOMAS: I felt amazing. I know I said it wasn't really about the fans, but it is nice to be in a -- look up at a crowd of Norman Nation, to look up and see that crimson and black -- I know we said we wanted a blackout.

But it did play a factor. I did say we weren't playing for fans, but I can't do Sooner Nation like that, that's bad. But to go and play last time being at Oklahoma, I kind of knew it, senior night wasn't my last time; I knew we were going to have a playoff game here. That meant a lot. I'm just glad I was able to come back and play with my guys for the last time.

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