

CFP First Round: Alabama vs Oklahoma

Friday, December 19, 2025

Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium

Oklahoma Sooners

John Mateen

Postgame Press Conference

Alabama - 34, Oklahoma - 24

Q. How do you feel you played tonight? And also just take us through the pick-6 and maybe what happened there and the miscommunication.

JOHN MATEEN: Yeah, I checked some, but it was a bad check. I got tricked. And it was pretty bad. You watch the tape, it was obvious it wasn't a cover zero and I got tricked sometimes when you get trick you've got to mitigate the damage and I didn't do it. And I didn't make the tackle and I didn't let our defense have a chance. Overall it was OK. I get the ball there (indiscernible) we win, so it wasn't good enough.

Q. Are your plans to be back next season, a lot of talk about the draft or whatever. What are your plans for next season?

JOHN MATEEN: I haven't really thought about it yet. I'm pretty sure I'll take some time and weigh all the options and we'll see.

Q. On the third-and-3 throw to Xavier -- unfortunate play, he ended up dropping the ball -- but did you see the field kind of unfold in front of you? Did you think for a second, I should run this or he's definitely the target here? Or how did that kind of unfold?

JOHN MATEEN: I think in that moment it's obviously split decision. You trust your instincts. I knew I could run it but he's running open. It's unfortunate. It just didn't work out. Could have put it on his nose and I didn't.

But looking back, of course, you run, keep the drive going. But I don't regret what I did. And it just didn't work out.

Q. This season, win 10 games, make the playoff. A lot of people from outside would say this is a successful season, but how do you view it? And your view of it,



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how does it sort of portend what you guys could potentially do next year?

JOHN MATEEN: I haven't really taken a step back. I'm sure I will in the next couple of weeks, really see how we did. We did a lot of things people didn't expect. And it's just because of the group of guys we had.

I love these guys. And we all hate that it's over. And that's all I'm really thinking about right now. I wish we could just have one more day together.

Q. What did you maybe learn about yourself this year? Obviously a step up in competition in terms of playing in the SEC. You break your hand. You come back, play through it. What did you maybe learn this season about yourself?

JOHN MATEEN: I could probably go on and on about this, and again in the next couple of weeks I'll really be able to wrap it up and know. But I think I learned a lot about God and a lot about Jesus and fighting back and having courage and knowing what really matters. Because you hear a lot. And in my position there's a lot of people who have a lot of things to say.

There's couple things that matter in this building. What those people think about me matters. I just appreciate all the people that have my back, and knowing that people are the greatest commodity and the toughest to get. And here in this facility, we have a lot of important people that love each other. And I've learned -- I could go on and on, but it wasn't easy. I know that, but I don't regret it.

Q. Ben talked about -- it doesn't happen as much on offense because there's so much more changeover sometimes on offense than defense -- but if you guys would come back or if he could work with you guys some more and you guys could all come back, do you share that with him? Do you feel like if you guys stayed together, you guys could become a really good offense in the future?

JOHN MATEEN: Yeah, I think, when you look at any first-year offense and the first year of a bunch of guys being together, it's tough, it's hard, building a chemistry.



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You only get 15 spring practices and you throw in your own, but there's only so many live situations. Even if it's the last game of the year, we're not on the same page, it's not because we didn't put in the work, it's just football.

Any second year, look at the stats, around college football, the second year of football is typically more successful. He's a great coach. And he's learning a lot, too. We all learn from Coach V every day.

We have so many people in this building that can teach you so many things and so much experience, and I'm sure he'll be better because of it and everybody will.

Q. Ben talked about the up-and-down season Deion had, that he kept fighting through. Can you put it in your own words what he's been through this year and what a game like tonight, I know it didn't end up being how you liked, but a game like tonight for him means to you?

JOHN MATEEN: I'm really proud of him. I think me and -- I don't want to say -- he's been through a lot. If he shared his story, you kind of would be like, dang, I didn't know that.

There's a lot of things that happened to him that tested him as a person last year and this year, knowing that it's not going right but he did everything he could, and he takes care of it. He rolled out every day after practice. He's super consistent.

I told him I was proud of him. He's super mature, and I wish him the best moving forward. He's going to be playing football for a long time. I'm just glad I could give him the ball a couple times a day and show what he can do.

Q. Obviously not the result you wanted, but after the game, talking to those who have built you up since your Little Elm days, what were those conversations like?

JOHN MATEEN: My Little Elm coach, is that what you said? Yes, Coach Harbin, I've known him since I was in seventh grade -- sixth grade going -- had a little camp. I've known him a long time. He probably knows me better than I know me. He's a great man, backed by the right things.

He always has my back and gives me good perspective. So I like talking to him. I'm sure I'll see him when I go home, and I appreciate him.

Q. First half we saw a lot of different formations and ball going down the field, things were clicking for the most part. Third quarter looked like, at least in the

beginning, shorter routes, things of that nature. Was that just a continuation of their momentum the second half? Did they change some things at halftime defensively, different looks for you? What happened with that?

JOHN MATEEN: I think we kind of lost the rhythm, and it's just kind of how the game goes. There's typically a point every game where it shifts the other way. It's a good team.

I think to build the rhythm, you start with a couple of short throws and you build it up. And it just didn't end up like the couple of drives in the first half, and it's football that happens.

I know if I'm more detailed, and we all are, then it will be better. But I've got to watch the tape to find that out.

Q. You've talked about how much this place means to you getting to be the quarterback at OU. What do you think about just being a part of kind of putting OU back on the map and making the first playoff and everything? What does that mean to you, the season you guys were able to have?

JOHN MATEEN: It means a lot. I think sometimes I sit back and still see the logo on my chest or on my head and it kind of freaks me out -- Oklahoma versus Alabama -- and I just played in that game. It's all God's grace and I'm grateful for where I'm at and how it all went even though it didn't go how we wanted it to, and it ended up short.

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