

# Valero Alamo Bowl: Texas vs Colorado

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome

## Tom Herman

Texas Longhorns

Texas 55, Colorado 23

TOM HERMAN: I'd be remiss if I didn't start by thanking our fans for coming out in such a crazy time in 2020, showing their support. They were definitely felt. I know not just me but our entire program and our players really, really do appreciate their support.

Happy to come away with a win, obviously, with a very depleted roster. I think we counted 18 guys that were on the depth chart to start the season did not play in this game. We started seven freshmen, started three freshmen and two sophomores on the offensive line with a freshman tailback, started a freshman Mike linebacker, freshman safety, freshman three technique in a bowl game.

I think it was the first time we've ever rushed for 300 and passed for 300 in a bowl game, finished the season with the second highest scoring offense in school history, I think a couple other superlatives that I'm really proud of.

Most importantly proud of our players. Man, what they've been through these last 10 months is indescribable, absolutely indescribable. They deserve all the credit in the world for going through what they went through just to get to this point. We got to this point. They had fun. They played for each other. It wasn't always pretty certainly. We literally had guys out there that were playing their first snap of college football in the Valero Alamo Bowl.

Good thing there wasn't a big crowd because we were coaching a lot on the sidelines, yelling at guys in terms of their assignment, so on and so forth.

Injury update, T'Vondre Sweat with a shoulder sprain, Brenden Schooler with a left ankle sprain, Alfred Collins with a collar sprain, obviously Sam Ehlinger with a shoulder sprain. He wanted to go back in. The medical staff would not let him go back in, did not clear him to go back in.

For those guys to go out, too, considering how thin we



were, still finish the game the way that we did, I couldn't be prouder, couldn't be prouder. It's always a good thing to end your season with a win, to send these seniors out with a great taste in their mouth, start the off-season with a lot of positivity. A really, really good sign of things to come that we're capable of doing.

Questions.

**Q. Can you talk about Casey's performance. Could you have foreseen something as dynamic? When Bijan is cooking the way he is, how do you resist not feeding him the rock?**

TOM HERMAN: Well, a lot of it was on the offensive line. We went through a bit of a lull there in the second quarter that we were just trying to jump start some things. We're going to rotate our backs. We're going to keep them fresh.

I think Roschon showed that in the second half, in the fourth quarter, with that run, being fresh. Bijan had some great runs in the second half being fresh. That's kind of what we do. The missed opportunities in the second quarter in the run game, I don't think any tailback, probably wouldn't have mattered who was in the game.

As far as Casey is concerned, yeah, really, really proud of him. We knew at halftime that there was a strong possibility he was going to have to finish the game for us. Thought Mike Yurcich called a great second half for him, some max protection. This was a very, very complicated, complex, disruptive defense that we were playing. I thought Mike simplified the game for Casey, and Casey and his receivers delivered.

Really, really proud of them.

**Q. Back-to-back years you come in here and have a dominant performance. This year you did it with a lot of true freshmen. Did that feel a little bit different going into the off-season knowing you played that many young guys, maybe you can turn that into something in the next few months?**

TOM HERMAN: I think so, yeah. I think to see all of these young guys perform the way they did. We didn't play perfect by any stretch. We've got to find a way to defend the pass a little bit better and make plays on the ball on the



perimeter on defense. We've got to find a way to not get so stagnant at times offensively. We went a few drives there that stalled out on us in the second quarter.

Other than that, yeah, I mean, I think I said it in my opening remarks, to see all of these young guys do what they did and win the game the way that we did, convincingly that way, definitely I think puts a smile on a lot of us coaches, on our faces, knowing what we're going to be able to work with in the off-season.

**Q. With all due respect to Sam, is it too simplistic or is it correct to say that Casey, DeMarvion, this is the future of Texas football?**

TOM HERMAN: Yeah, I don't think you need 'all due respect'. I think that's pretty obvious that the young guys are the future of this program. They played really well tonight.

**Q. Do Hudson and Casey start out dead even assuming Sam does leave, or did you see a lot of meaningful action from Casey?**

TOM HERMAN: Ask me again when spring ball starts. I have no idea.

**Q. How impressed were you with Casey's calm and his arm?**

TOM HERMAN: I mean, nobody was surprised. Maybe all of you were because he hasn't played a whole lot. But we've seen him in practice for three years. None of us were surprised.

**Q. What goes through your mind when you hear that Sam is not going back? Have you talked to him after the game? Did he have anything to say to you?**

TOM HERMAN: No, we talked on the sideline for a brief minute, just kind of explaining what happened. I didn't even know when the injury occurred or what the mechanism was that caused the injury. I told him how proud I am of him. I would assume that he knows that by now, how appreciative not only me but this entire program and university is of him and what he's done.

What went through my mind was the last two games. It's next guy up. Casey delivered. Hudson delivered. Everybody around them delivered. We were able to rally without our leader in there. That's a really, really good sign of a cohesive team that knows how to practice and knows how to prepare.

**Q. What kind of evolution have you seen with Bijan**

**from the runningback we saw in September to the guy we saw against Kansas State and this game?**

TOM HERMAN: Experience and patience. Stan Drayton has done an excellent job grooming him for those moments late in the year. I've said it ad nauseam. I'll repeat it again. When a true freshman comes in in the summertime, especially in a summer like we were forced to have, everybody in the country was forced to have, it's going to take some time for the speed of the game to slow down and for him to understand different fronts, different line movements, blocking schemes, the whole nine. Just the evolution of where he was from training camp until now is night and day.

I don't think he's hit his ceiling yet. He would be the first to tell you that. He's still got a lot of work to do. But really, really proud of the way that he has continued to improve and practice and show us in practice each and every week that level of improvement.

**Q. What kind of statement did this game make that you and this coaching staff are the right group to lead the program going forward?**

TOM HERMAN: I don't think any kind of statement. I think the credit goes to the players. These players, these young players did a great job in preparation. They went out and executed.

**Q. Now that you've made it through the season, 2020 is almost over, what advice would you give to your past self about getting through this year?**

TOM HERMAN: I don't know. I haven't had a chance to even reflect upon that yet. I think this was uncharted territory for everybody. Hopefully we never have to do it again.

But like I've said before, the time for reflection is after the season when you're not in the middle of preparation, you're not in the middle of a game, or 10 minutes after the game has ended.

We'll have plenty of time to reflect on things that we did well and things that we need to improve on.

**Q. With all the opt-out you had before the game, you had no idea what you were going to get. What was your level of concern in preparation knowing you were facing a team that was on a little bit of a hot streak?**

TOM HERMAN: We knew what we were going to get. We had full confidence in the guys that played. They practiced really, really well. I know it sounds cliché, I said it in

multiple press conferences, that we had a great nine days of practice. I meant it. It showed tonight.

**Q. When you learned that Sam was done, it was Casey's turn, what was your conversation with him like? What did you tell him? What did you want to emphasize with Mike?**

TOM HERMAN: Mike is a pro. I didn't have to say a whole lot. He knew. We talked at halftime about the plays that he felt comfortable calling with Casey. We talked to Casey about the plays he felt comfortable with, as well.

What was the first part of your question?

**Q. What did you tell Casey when you told him it was him? What did you emphasize with him?**

TOM HERMAN: Nothing really dramatic. We smiled. I said, You're up, kid. I told him that I believed in him and his team believed in him, to go do you. And he did.

**Q. Was Denzel an opt-out or was he hurt? Why was he not available?**

TOM HERMAN: Medical reasons.

**Q. All of your backup quarterbacks were ready to play. How surprised was Ben Ballard? Was this part of the plan to put him in the last couple of snaps?**

TOM HERMAN: I think when the game got to the point where we knew we had it won, we were going to play as many people as we could, especially seniors. I know Ben is not one. We wanted to get him in, make sure that everybody that was available touched the field.

**Q. Four years, four bowl wins, seems like it's incredibly hard to win four straight games of any kind. What do you think it is that allows your teams to cut it loose, play freely in the post-season?**

TOM HERMAN: I think the grind of the season, the urgency of preparing each and every week can be a grind. Every now and again that grind will sneak up on you and cause you to have a bad game.

When you have a chance to take a deep breath and have some fun with your teammates and bond a little bit, there's not a whole lot of pressure of a game. You don't turn these games around every five days.

It's a little bit more relaxed atmosphere knowing that you've got time to prepare. The level of urgency, until you get to the last few days of preparation, it's more about honing in

on your fundamentals, improving. These young guys did not have a spring practice. To allow them to really hone their individual skills, get familiar again with the schemes on offense and defense. Then not have, like I said, the pressure or urgency of the repetitiveness of the grind of a season is really the only way to best describe it.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, coach.

TOM HERMAN: Thanks, guys.

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