

# Valero Alamo Bowl: Oklahoma vs Oregon

Thursday, December 30, 2021

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome

**Oregon Ducks**

**Coach Bryan McClendon**

**Anthony Brown**

**Verone McKinley III**

**Jordan Happle**

Press Conference

Oklahoma 47, Oregon 32

BRYAN McCLENDON: First, I would just like to, again, just like I said to the team, these guys, man, they're special. They're a special group of guys. They're a special group of men. I just love everything about the group that we had.

I said it, and I told these guys, I said it every time I got in front of the mic, that I would not rather go into any other -- into this fight with any other group of guys, whether it be players and coaches and strength staff, everybody part of this program. I'm just really appreciative of the job they've done.

Truly you have everything right now telling these guys not to go out there during this time and give it all that they have, and they were able to block out everything and be able to kind of put the forefront of themselves, the team, the goals that they've had as a team, and I'm just really, really pleased with those guys.

Got to credit Oklahoma. The guys did a really good job of taking advantage of anything that we gave them. Obviously they're a talented team. They're well-coached. Those guys did a good job, did a good enough job to be able to win the game, and that goes credit to them, and the scheme and everything else that they put forward to be able to put those guys in position to take advantage of anything that we gave those guys.

Like I said, man, not negating the fact that those guys did a good job. I felt like we helped them out at times, as well, but I mean, those guys earned it. Those guys earned it,



and got to give credit to those guys, as well.

It really hurts as well as we played and everything else in the second half. There's not a consolation prize. You come here to win the game, and it hurts like hell when you don't. Right now that's where we are.

But again, I appreciate these seniors. I appreciate everybody and the job that they did throughout this entire bowl prep process. I mean, just really, really pleased with these guys, and I love everything about them.

With that, I'll open up to questions.

**Q. Any initial word on the severity of the injuries to Noah, Scoop and Dontae?**

BRYAN McCLENDON: Nothing real serious on any one of the fronts. I think Scoop has a shoulder; Noah got taken out for concussion symptoms; and Dontae had a lower leg extremity that they want to reevaluate and anything else. Everything else was just bumps and bruises associated with play. But as far as those, nothing real serious. Nothing that I feel like will keep those guys out of a good off-season or anything else.

**Q. What did you say to the team at half being down 30-3, because you definitely had a different energy in the second half.**

BRYAN McCLENDON: Well, I feel like you can't credit it to me. I'm not out there playing. I mean, it's these guys. The only thing I said to those guys were hey, man, we've come too far to really let a bad half kind of define us. At the end of the day there is no one play that you can run that can get you out of a 30-3 deficit. The only thing we can do is go out there and fight our ass off one play at a time, and go out there and keep doing it, keep doing it, keep doing it.

Those guys, like I said, it wasn't just me. Those guys out there, man, they believed in each other that they could go out there and get that done.

I mean, at the end of the day those guys need all the credit, not me.



**Q. Along those lines, with all the guys that were out for various injuries and other guys going out, what can you say about this team's fight to never give up, because anyone could have understood if they did, and they didn't.**

BRYAN McCLENDON: That's not what we do. That's about as simple of an answer as I can give you. That's not what we do. There is nothing -- we feel like there's nothing that we can't overcome as a group, regardless of who's here, regardless of who's there, regardless of next man up, regardless of what deficit, what situation, what turnover. It doesn't matter, it doesn't feel like there's anything that's going to stop us from going out there and giving our all.

That's just really how we're made up. But again, it really comes from a belief of the people in the locker room in each other, that those guys knew, man, that there was no quit in anybody. They knew the guy next to them wasn't going to quit, they knew their coaches weren't going to quit, they knew the trainers and everybody else weren't going to quit. It makes it really easy to be able to fight for one another when that's the case.

**Q. What are your thoughts on the way the young wide receivers played tonight?**

BRYAN McCLENDON: Yeah, proud of those guys. I thought we started off a little off in the sense of I felt like there were some balls that we could have handled that were off together a little bit, and that's the receivers' job to be able to handle it. I thought we were inconsistent at first being able to do that. I felt like those guys settled in because it is, it's a young group of guys that all of those guys are playing different spots, playing different -- playing a lot more. But that's no excuse.

But at the end of the day those guys came in there and did a really good job of just keep fighting, doing what they're coached to do, going out there and making those plays and doing their job, and not just them but everybody. Everybody. I mean, I'm proud of them, but I'm proud of everybody over there in that locker room for doing that, as well.

**Q. Anthony, what were the big struggles for you in the first half, and how were you able to turn it around on offense in the second half?**

ANTHONY BROWN: I would just say we were shooting ourselves in the foot from time to time. Credit to Oklahoma; they had certain calls on defense that were made for how we were trying to attack them. But just in the first half we were really just getting off schedule and

basically just hindering ourselves from continuing to progress in our drives and finish them.

**Q. Jordan and Verone, they scored on eight straight possessions, and we talked before the game about the volume of guys -- I know the two of you are going to say next man up because that's the mantra, but when Noah goes down and Dontae goes down and Scoop goes down, it adds to what you're already down. How difficult was it to get off the field and why was it such a struggle tonight? Was it just the depth above all? Not discrediting Oklahoma, but was that the big issue?**

JORDAN HAPPLE: No, I don't think depth was really an issue. Kind of like you said, our mantra is next man up. Injuries are part of football. You kind of have to deal with them, whether it's on the fly or you know beforehand.

Credit to Oklahoma; they played a really good game on offense as a whole and we struggled in the first half. I think we improved a lot in the second half from a defensive standpoint as a whole, but credit to Oklahoma. They did their thing tonight.

VERONE MCKINLEY III: I would say the same thing. I think that Jeff Bassa and Nate did a good job, and the guys who haven't played as much this year, they all stepped up, and Oklahoma did a good job today. They really did. Caleb Williams, phenomenal player, different rotation at running backs, they did a good job.

But for the most part I think we did a lot better in the second half, and as the game goes on making those adjustments. We just needed one stop. I just felt like we needed more time, and that's just how football is.

**Q. Verone, I know you talked about after the Pac-12 Championship how you were disappointed obviously with the way things went and wanted to make amends at the bowl game. Obviously not the way you wanted to end the season, but what is the future for you and the decision in regard to that?**

VERONE MCKINLEY III: I'm not sure. I would say that that feeling after the Pac-12 Championship, we didn't like it, and this one is a little different because we did fight hard in that second half. Like I said, we were close. We were close. A lot of people thought we weren't going to be able to come back, and we came back out there and fought, and I want to give B-Mac credit because he brought that fire to the locker room and we trusted him. It's hard to come in, coaches leave, but Coach B-Mac got us right, we prepared right and we didn't start off well, but we continued to fight and fight and fight and we just needed a little bit more time.

In regards to my future, I'll talk with my family about that kind of these next few days and weeks. That's just something that's out there.

**Q. Underclassmen like yourself have a little bit of a different deadline than the guys like Travis because they have until February. You have like three weeks. Are you enrolled in class on Monday? Will you be back in Eugene at that point? Give us through, are you going to take up until the January 17th deadline or is this something the next couple of days?**

VERONE MCKINLEY III: I'm enrolled in classes. That's just because I enrolled for classes a while ago. But get my body back, talk to my family, talk to my coaches, coach Lanning and the new staff and things like that. So just kind of taking my time.

**Q. For Jordan and Anthony, you guys' final game in an Oregon uniform. What are you going to remember most about your time here, and what does the future look like for each of you guys on each of your sides of the ball?**

JORDAN HAPPLE: Yeah, obviously I started out at Boise State, but my time here, I've loved every moment of it. They took me in with open arms from the first day I got here, and I'd like to give credit to Coach B-Mac. I've really appreciated him through this whole thing. Kind of like Verone said, a lot of coaches up and leave, and I think B-Mac did a tremendous job with this group.

As for my plans, I'm going to go and try to train for pro day and get to the NFL. But yeah.

ANTHONY BROWN: I would say just my time here at Oregon has, to me, been very special. Coming from Boston College all the way out here, they welcomed me with open arms, and I would say through everything that happened this year, last year without them, I wouldn't be here. They're my family. I love them. I appreciate everything about them, especially Coach B-Mac for keeping a staff around because I know for a fact that in times like this, a staff wouldn't stay together just to coach a bowl game. I really appreciate them for staying, and I hope everybody else appreciates what they've done because they didn't have to.

But I really think they stood on their word and just really been here for us, and that's special. That's something that you don't usually get out of a whole bunch of coaches.

I would just say my time here was just incredible. I can't even complain.

**Q. Verone, you're from around here, grew up around the DFW area. Game notwithstanding, what was it like for you to play against guys that you grew up against and trained with throughout your whole life, because being in the Pac-12 you don't get to do that on a week in and week out basis?**

VERONE MCKINLEY III: It was a lot of fun. I would say that first half wasn't as fun but that second half was a lot of fun. We kind of showed that. To play against Oklahoma, I got recruited by Oklahoma pretty hard. I'm familiar with Coach Stoops, somebody I kind of grew up talking to when I was getting recruited. It was really fun to play against those guys. It just bring more competitive fire out of me. I'm a competitor, and to do it with the guys next to me who we've sweat, bleed on everything together, made it even more fun because I came out to Oregon to do things like this. I wanted to be different. I wanted to be innovative, and that's why I came up here, so it was fun.

**Q. Your parents said you're going to go home to New Jersey for a few days before starting training, going off to Orlando for the Hula Bowl. Have you picked out where you'll be training in the interim? And now that the season is over, in the big picture how banged up were you? We knew the hand, we knew the ankle. Against Stony Brook there was something upper body. Now that it's over, how much did you play through?**

ANTHONY BROWN: Shit. Excuse my language, but I played through a lot. It was hard, but like I said, without them, I wouldn't keep going. It hurts, just to play through everything that I've been through. Yeah, whether it was the hand, my foot, knee. Didn't really matter. I didn't care, because it was all for them. Like I said, they're my family. I love them. I wouldn't change anything. I wouldn't have stopped playing just because of that. There wasn't a nick -- there's a difference between being hurt and being injured. Was I playing on that borderline? Probably. But for them, I'd give my body up. I don't care.

And as far as training, I would just say I've got to talk to my parents and end up seeing where I'm training at in a few days.

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