

Valero Alamo Bowl: Oklahoma vs Oregon

Thursday, December 30, 2021

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome

Oklahoma Sooners Coach Bob Stoops Caleb Williams Patrick Fields Kennedy Brooks Drake Stoops

Press Conference

Oklahoma 47, Oregon 32

BOB STOOPS: I'm proud to be here with all these great players and representing OU again and this team. Really proud of the way these guys competed and played here today, and really the work they put in for the last month getting ready for this. They really were invested and came together as a team through some adversity and realized they're representing the Sooners and played like Sooners. That's what we do.

Really special night, watching these guys offensively what they did. Caleb had an incredible day. You go 21 of 27, 242, three TDs and zero sacks, that's a day. Then you've got Kennedy Brooks and Eric Gray both averaged 10 yards a carry, 142 yards for Kennedy and three TDs. Just awesome. Pat was sensational defensively. Drake made a great touchdown catch with a great route, and Caleb put a good ball, great ball on him. The two of them connected.

Anyhow, defensively I thought we did a great -- obviously great job in the first half to give a commanding lead and gave up some deep balls, and we got caught with a couple of tough defenses where they ran it a little bit in one series, but overall just a great day, a great night, great way for these guys to finish 11-2, and proud of them.

This game I really believe segues right into next year, that we aren't going to miss a beat. This program is going to continue to move forward in a positive way and will not be going anywhere. We're going to be a year in and year out top 5, top 10 team and we'll be competing for National



Championships for years to come with Coach Venables. I was really proud to have him up there with me at the end of the celebration tonight.

Q. Bob, if you could talk about what you were thinking in the second half as Oregon was making their run. And Caleb, you got the passing game going in the first couple of series and I'm curious what the difference was as you got things going and what you saw.

CALEB WILLIAMS: Mainly the difference is that we believed in KB and other guys like KB and EG, especially offensive linemen, wanted to make sure that we got good positive yards, especially that was one of our goals I mean like a week and a half ago, two weeks ago when we first figured out Oregon and how they lose is when you get over -- like you said, Coach, he said we had two guys over 10 yards, averaged 10 yards a carry. That's phenomenal. And then let alone have a guy go for 140 and three touchdowns, it makes my job easier to get the passing game going. Obviously credit to the offensive line for both the passing game and then obviously my guys 140 and three touchdowns.

BOB STOOPS: And the cowboy hat was a gift to me from the Alamo Bowl and we decided to use it as our big-play kind of rally chain, turnover chain or big-play chain. So we had a big-play cowboy hat.

Q. Bob, you got a Gatorade bath for the first time in five years, handed off the visor to Brent.

BOB STOOPS: My game ball.

Q. Can you sum up what this night felt like when you knew it was in the bag and you began celebrating?

BOB STOOPS: Yeah, it was great. I loved the beginning. You kind of get addicted to the anxiety and excitement of playing and not knowing what's going to happen, you know, coming out on the field and getting ready for it, and I've missed it. I've missed that energy.

Once you're in it, you're fighting your way through it, and that was fun. Yeah, it is fun when you know it's over, you



can take your headset off and enjoy the moment. It was fun. It was exciting. Again, I'm appreciative to the team and to everybody for the opportunity.

Q. Caleb, can you just talk a little bit about what the past month has been like for you? I know a lot of players have gone through the same thing, but what was the last month like? Were there considerations of the transfer portal? Brent mentioned today the future of Oklahoma is you at quarterback. Do we anticipate you coming back next season?

CALEB WILLIAMS: First and foremost, I have been -- like you said, it's been up and down, a roller coaster. Like you said, all my guys have been through it. We were all shocked, we were all hit by it at the same time, same moment, so that's how it's been, up and down. We lost a lot of coaches, and we have a legend that comes back. We have GAs that step up. We have Coach Gundy. We have a bunch of guys like that that stepped up in a bunch of different places and helped lead us to this awesome Alamodome and week that we've been here or five days or so, and it's been awesome. Like everybody always says, San Antonio is very hospitable, and it's been just like that. Everybody has welcomed us, and it's been very fun.

The whole transfer portal thing and Coach BV going up there and saying all of that, I was focused on finishing the semester off strong, being with my guys, making sure that all my guys that won't be here next year -- I have the chance to be here. All my guys that won't be here next year, they go off on the right note, we go off 11-2, and I'm about to go on vacation with my family. I haven't been on vacation in a really long time. After all these ups and downs I want to go on vacation, spend time with my family and focus on that, and that's it.

BOB STOOPS: I want to give big compliments to Caleb Gundy calling the plays. He was sensational, with the other coaches chiming in, and the same thing with Brian Odom. I know we got worked a little in the second half, but he did an outstanding job, especially in the first half, to hold them to three points and get that lead.

Q. Drake and Bob, what was that moment like catching that touchdown pass and Drake going over and celebrating with your dad, and Bob, that moment for you?

DRAKE STOOPS: It was great. Obviously I like catching touchdown passes, so that was nice. No, yeah, it was awesome. It's definitely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and getting to play one game under my dad, just one game out of my whole career is definitely something I'll remember forever, and I'm sure he'll cherish it, as well.

BOB STOOPS: Yeah, it was cool. Things you hear on the headset, we saw the defense they were in and they were going to come after Caleb, and Coach Gundy said on the headphones, he said, Drake gotta run a great route and win. As soon as they snapped the ball, Caleb looked that way, threw a great ball, Drake ran a great route and it was a touchdown. So I was tipped off to check Drake out on the snap, see if he runs a great route.

CALEB WILLIAMS: We almost took that play out, by the way. Almost. Kept it in, worked it a few more times and got a touchdown off of it, so not too bad.

Q. Kennedy and Caleb, can you talk about you've had eight offensive possessions in a row where you scored points tonight. That's unbelievable efficiency. What do you chalk that up to? That's some big time football right there.

CALEB WILLIAMS: We can both say at the same time: The. Offensive. Line.

KENNEDY BROOKS: No, big facts. They dominated this whole entire game, man. They freaking -- like everything, all the credit for me and him, offensive line dominated. It's that simple. We couldn't do it without them. They put in the work this week, and we knew for a fact we had to come in and win this game, we had to be the most physical team, and that's what they did. It's all the credit to the offensive line honestly.

CALEB WILLIAMS: Like he said, to hear it again, the offensive line, they get all the credit for that. He had 140, three touchdowns, I had 200 something, three touchdowns, I think, and I mean, like I said, all goes to the offensive line. I had zero sacks, didn't touch the ground. That goes to that.

KENNEDY BROOKS: Must be nice.

CALEB WILLIAMS: It's lovely. But yeah, like I said, it all goes to them. I love those guys, each and every one of them, even the O-line the subs in. You treat everybody the same, you love each one of them the same, you all treat them the same, and they go out and do things like that for you, keep you off the ground.

Q. Kennedy, now you have a decision to make. Have you thought a lot about it, and does a game like this, does that sway you one way or the other?

KENNEDY BROOKS: Man, honestly I haven't really thought about it. I'm just enjoying this moment. This is probably one of the biggest moments I've ever had in

football honestly, and right now I'm just enjoying it with this team, and we'll see what happens after that.

Q. You're the defensive player of the game and we haven't gotten to you over there. What was it like? The first half it seemed like there were some adjustments made and the run game right at you guys, you were able to stabilize it. Got away from you in the second half, but overall what did you think?

PATRICK FIELDS: I mean, like you said, the first half I think we were dominant, but I think it was just as simple as we did our job. Guys fit runs the right way, and because of that we did our job, and I think the second half we got like a little content with the first half, and guys just weren't doing their job. We may have been out of gaps on plays, didn't get the communications. But I think the first half we didn't do anything special, we just simply did our job, and I think the second half we weren't as consistent doing that.

Q. Caleb, you mentioned the month and sort of trying to focus on the game. Was it difficult to compartmentalize that with also everything about your future and those things? And what are your early impressions of Coach Venables and Coach Lebby?

CALEB WILLIAMS: To start it off, in the beginning they gave us a few days off because they also needed -- it was a shocker to everybody at Oklahoma. We got a few days off, and that gave me enough time to settle in and focus on and try and come in and work out and go through the all the things we needed to settle on, team practices and things like that to make sure I'm here in the moment, I'm here with my guys, focus on making sure that I'm leading them in the right ways, that we're not going down the wrong path to where we come out of here with a loss, because like I said, I want to send these guys off on the right note.

And then early impressions on Coach BV and Coach Lebby, we talk all the time, me and Coach Lebby. He's called me like -- I think we've talked like every day since I've been here since he hasn't been able to be here. And then also Coach BV, as everybody knows, you can see it on the sideline, you can see it -- when he's coaching, you can see it in practice and things like that, even when he's not coaching right now, he has a whole lot of energy, a whole lot of passion for what he's doing, and like I said, I think Oklahoma chose the right guy to come in here and be the head guy, and we'll see how Oklahoma does and how I decide.

Q. Kennedy, you've already talked about the offensive line, but what did you see out of Eric Gray and Marcus Major tonight, as well?

KENNEDY BROOKS: Oh, man, they dominated. It was cool seeing especially Marcus out there. I love my little dude going out there and balling like that. It's amazing. And Eric did a great job, too. Just like the stats, man, 10 yards per carry, man, that's amazing. It's not easy to do. Him going out and doing that, man, it's amazing.

Q. Caleb, this being the first time that we've gotten to talk to you since the season started, tell us about the whole season. You're kind of -- catch us up. You started out, you were second team, you won that job, but then eventually you become the starting quarterback. Ups and downs, highs and lows, the season finished with two losses. Take us through it.

CALEB WILLIAMS: There has been a lot of ups and downs. I came here a year ago now, and man, it's been an awesome journey being around guys like Pat, guys like Drake, and obviously KB, having him in the backfield with me has been a pleasure, helping me out with -- when I first got here, we'd make -- he'd kind of bully me about not learning the playbook or not learning fast enough. I was on my stuff trying to learn the playbook and get everything down with all the communication and being the leader for this team.

Like you said, I was second team the whole time, and just talking to my family every day that I could, my mentors and things like that. Like you said, it was really tough because I've never been a guy to -- everybody knows I came in here and I wanted to win. I wanted to win the job. I wanted to go and try and win games for us and help win games for us. I mean, it was tough sitting there watching sometimes.

I tried to do my best, and I hope that I did well. I think I did well. When I finally started, you can go ask Justin Broyles in the summer. I told him if and when I get the chance, I will not give it back, and I always like looked to that Tom Brady thing with Drew Bledsoe, and I just kept referring to that in my mind just going back and watching it, things like that, just not giving the spot back.

Spence, all love to him, all love to Stog, and I hope they do absolutely amazing at SC, South Carolina.

Q. Kennedy, just curious, coming back to your home state, having this sort of performance in what might be your final college game, what did it mean to you? What did it feel like when you were out there?

KENNEDY BROOKS: Man, it was amazing. Being this close to home, having all my family come out here and see me, man, that's what matters to me the most. Just them getting a chance to see me play, man, that's what means

the most to me. Being out here with my guys, it's been fun, and I can't wait to see what happens next honestly. All props to them, all props to the offensive line, and thanks to Coach Stoops for coming back for one more. Man, this is a dream. He recruited me, and just for -- it's been a dream, and obviously one of the best teams of my life, so I'm so thankful for him, and thank you so much.

BOB STOOPS: Appreciate it, buddy. I'm back to the golf course tomorrow. (Laughter.)

Q. Pat, you've had a long career here at Oklahoma. You won the defensive player of the game, MVP for this bowl game. You've won other awards, humanitarian, all that stuff, off the field, as well. Can you talk about your reaction when they announced you defensive MVP? Then for Caleb, one of your good friends, Jalil Farooq, had one of his best games or maybe his best game overall as a Sooner so far. Can you talk about your relationship on and off the field with him and maybe that connection on the field, as well?

PATRICK FIELDS: Yeah, I think it was just kind of a crazy moment. I kind of just went -- right after I came into my career here, I just took the mentality of I'm just going to put my head down, I'm going to work, I'm going to do the right thing. I wasn't necessarily the guy that everybody wanted. I wasn't necessarily the guy that everybody betted on, not the fastest, not the strongest, not the quickest. But I think anybody who's ever met me will say I've just been a man of integrity. I've always just put my head down and worked. I always kind of just did the right thing, and I think -- I don't know, it just so happened this is my fourth year, a lot of things fell into my lap in terms of awards and recognition and accolades and things like that, but I think it's just -- I've always just been the same person. I just always tried to be like a man of integrity, man of honesty, which is why I love Coach Stoops so much and this program here, Joe C, President Harris, all the administration, just the things they emphasize in terms of being a man and the development of the character of us. That's just something like that made me fall in love with the university as a high school recruit, and then I seen that much more when I was here.

Joe C, he took time out of his day to have lunch with me. President Harris same thing, invited me -- they've introduced me to their family, really brought me in. I was like a young kid. I always had the mentality of I want to do right, and I was just fortunate and blessed to be under such a great administration and staff that they helped mold me and guide me and mentor me and put me in the right direction.

It was a surreal moment. I think my four years has been

one heck of a journey. I didn't see myself doing any of this, honest to God. I never even saw myself playing Division I. I always just put my head down and worked. I always did things with integrity and honesty, and it just so happened that God chose to bless me with these accolades and this recognition.

It's been an amazing journey. I can't say thank you enough to everybody here at OU like genuinely from the bottom of my heart, and I think I try to make that shown every single day in our interactions and in our conversations.

I know that was like a little ramble, but I wanted to make sure everybody here at OU, they understood how much I care about them, as well as want the media to see how incredible this university is, and I think me giving my testimony of the relationships I have with them, that's why we are the university that we are. That's why we'll have the success that we're going to have in the future. That's why we will continue to win National Championships and Big 12 Championships.

CALEB WILLIAMS: Talking about Jalil and our connection, we actually played little league together about 10 years ago now. It's crazy. We were around 11 or 12, and we played little league. We played wide receiver and running back. It was me and him and all my other guys back home. But we couldn't go to the same high school. We tried to go to the same high school, and then we told each other at little league we were going to end up going to college together, and dreams came true, and we're here at Oklahoma together.

He believed in me. He wasn't able to take any visits. He wasn't able to come and see when Coach Riley was here, he wasn't able to come and see Coach Simmons. He did all Zoom and stuff like that. So he believed in me. He believed in this place, and he came here. He committed here.

I'm so happy that he was able to get a few balls his way, and he made a couple big plays for us that we needed down the stretch to keep the clock going or to lead to another touchdown for me or KB. I wish I could have gotten him one, I really do, but I'm so grateful and so happy that it was this game that he was able to come in and make a big impact, so yeah.

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