

TaxAct Texas Bowl: Ole Miss vs Texas Tech

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Houston, Texas, USA

NRG Stadium

Texas Tech Red Raiders Coach Joey McGuire Press Conference

Texas Tech - 42, Ole Miss - 25

COACH MCGUIRE: I've been doing this 29 years. I've had some special moments in my career, but tonight was really special to finish off this with these guys. The reason it was because you know it's hard whenever you get a new coach come in and you do things so different. You get a new staff that comes in, you do things so different. I always tell everybody, different is not good or bad; different is just different.

For them to accept us the way they did and just play the way they do every single game, how hard they play, it shows that they believe in what we're doing, but more than anything they love each other and they believe in each other.

And tonight just showed that. Crazy game. We got the ball, took the ball away on defensive and that really set up some short fields in the first half. Couldn't be more proud of this football team.

Q. What's it say about the toughness of Tyler Shough after a couple of late hits, one of them being a targeting call, him having a performance the way he did today?

COACH MCGUIRE: What's crazy is -- Tyler, I get up this morning, Drew comes up to me, we're going to breakfast, he says Tyler has been throwing up all night. He said he stopped and we feel good. Luckily we play at 8:00 tonight and didn't play at 11:00 this morning; he wouldn't have been able to go.

But they got a lot of fluid in him. And Dr. Fine (phonetic) and Drew, our head trainer, did a good job getting him ready to go. He was ready.

We talked, all these bowl practices, he would have to make a difference running the football. When you're playing a



defense like that, when they're dropping eight, there's going to be times that you gotta pull it down and run the football. Thought he did a really good job.

Checked to some really good plays. Put us in some good situations.

But I'm so happy for that young man because I was telling a scout the other day, he's probably the third quarterback taken this year if he's healthy all year long in the NFL Draft.

I know he was frustrated early. He had to heal and sit behind two really good quarterbacks who were playing really well. Whenever it was his turn to take back over the team, he really did. And he showed it tonight.

Q. You said on stage there he has unfinished business. He's coming back. When did you find that out? How long have you known that?

COACH MCGUIRE: I really haven't. I think we've talked about it off and on. He's talked about it a little. And him saying it there kind of clarified it. But I think it's still going to be real interesting. I got an email the other day about him possibly being invited to the combine. So when you start looking at that and you look at the quarterback in that draft class, you've got to decide all those things.

But the good thing about him, man, he's a really smart young man. He knows what he wants. And he works really hard to get it. So if that happens, like he said, man, it's going to be good for the Red Raiders.

Q. You guys all season long were preaching the take three on defense. How has that really been shown tonight and how about the veteran leadership?

COACH MCGUIRE: It was big. We got five tonight. And it was crazy, I was asking how many we gave up, I think we gave three up. And until that last, that fifth one, you're still kind of, not 50/50 game, but it's pretty close if you're only a plus-1 in turnover. But gave us some short fields.

Turnovers are some of the biggest momentum swings. And there were times that they were driving the ball and

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getting some big yardage but we were able to get the ball out. So that was huge.

And then we were able to capitalize. I think we capitalized on at least three of them in some way scoring-wise.

Q. Could you talk about that first offensive play? Why you did it and why it was important to honor Coach Leach like that?

COACH MCGUIRE: Really appreciate Coach Kiffin, we've talked about it. I know they were close friends. I'm a football geek. I really am. I'm really a high school football geek especially. And there's very few people in this game that have changed the game the way he did.

And we just wanted to come out and honor him, tip our hat to him, say thank you for what he's done. I guarantee you, guys, especially guys my age that coached high school football, some of the stuff he did in the passing game totally changed the offenses that were being run in the state of Texas.

So just wanted to show our appreciation and especially do it on a big stage, last game being played and do it in the red and black.

Q. They have a running back, Quinshon Judkins, seven games over 100 rushing yards. You guys held him to under 100, 96, and an average of 4 yards per carry. What does that say about your defensive line and your (indiscernible)?

COACH MCGUIRE: I thought -- they got some yards late. Evans got some yards late. But I thought, especially early in the game, the first half, I mean, the third quarter, I thought our defense played really well stopping the run.

They're as good as anybody we faced. And like third in the nation running the football. And that kid's really special. For us to be able to -- we just kept talking about getting the ball down, making them drive the field. And we felt like we could capitalize on a mistake or us knocking the ball out.

And the guys did a great job. I thought Coach DeRuyter, credit to him and his defensive staff. Thought he had a really good game plan and the guys executed it.

Q. I know you're focused on the team, but it was a pretty big game for you with your new contract, and to come out and get eight wins for the first time since 2013, could you encapsulate the day for you?

COACH MCGUIRE: It was awesome. It was a work in progress. I can't thank the administration enough. One

thing we did last week, before we ever started talking about me is we took care of some of our other staff that have been coming out -- our strength staff, some guys that were on one-year contracts, getting them to two-year contracts, stuff like that. I thought that was more important.

But it's a pretty awesome day. I really do love this place and love this team, love the school, love everything about Texas Tech. And for them to put that much behind me and belief behind me, I told Kirby at the end, whenever we got through finalizing everything, I said, (indiscernible) Kirby, I promise you we'll work every single day to reach our goals at Texas Tech.

Q. Where does this game rank in terms of wild (indiscernible) that you've been involved in?

COACH MCGUIRE: My gosh, if you go just through that fourth quarter, you've got where we're fixed to probably put it out of reach and they don't give up on it. They knock the ball through the back of end zone. Then you turn around, go onside kick and Loic catches it on the run and scores.

(Indiscernible) was smiling at the end and I'm, like, I'm not smiling because I don't want to play these defensive snaps. We would rather run the ball out on offense.

But it was crazy. It was such highs and lows of the game. I thought the guys really handled it, whether we turned the ball over and the defense had to come out and play or we caused a turnover and the offense capitalized on it I thought they did a good job.

Q. From the beginning of the journey to spring ball, to finishing the season on the high note, what's been the biggest difference of the team in this program?

COACH MCGUIRE: Just a toughness and a belief in that toughness. We practiced really hard. We practiced at a high pace. We chart everything when it comes to all our GPS numbers. Those guys hear about it every single day of how hard we practice.

Tyree Wilson, the week that he got hurt -- I think it was a Kansas game -- that Wednesday was the first day we didn't go full pads. And he said, Coach, you're getting soft on us. And I said you ain't practicing anyway.

So we didn't even think about it. I didn't think about not going full pads. They just came every day and went to work and they just show high care factor a toughness. We're just going to keep building on that.

Q. This was a season where you were able to have buy-in from start to finish. How were you able to keep

these guys and the ship on the right course the entire year?

COACH MCGUIRE: Oh man, great leadership. SaRodorick, he's such a great leader. Muddy, he's kind of the strong voice whenever you need to be strong. Tyree, the two fire hydrants in the middle with Boog and Tony.

We have such strong leaders. And they did a good job of whenever it was time to quiet voices to hear ours, the coaches or mine, they did a good job. And then they inserted themselves when they needed to.

We talk about all the time that there's leaders and if you're leading by example you're just doing your job. You're just a hard worker. Leaders bring people with them and they're not scared to be vocal. And so that was something that senior leadership really did well and I think we'll continue to build off of it.

Q. Knowing how much you care about those guys, especially the ones who played their last game, what did it mean to send them off with a win?

COACH MCGUIRE: It was big. We talked about how we would be remembered, how this team would be remembered. Pastor Bobby today talked to the guys about the beginning of something special, and everybody would know when that began and who was a part of that. And so I think it's really big.

I told SaRodorick, you're going to look up and where we are next year you're going to know that you're the reason why and you set the example and tone. So it was big, really big.

Q. Loic, you mentioned, has a return, gets 100 yards receiving. Bradley gets eight catches and a touchdown. Has this young receiver room just scratched the surface of what they can be?

COACH MCGUIRE: I 100 percent believe that. Those two guys -- I think going into -- Bradley has been really consistent all year long and won some awards. But going into that OU week, you could see 9 and 19 really taking off, really starting to feel a lot of confidence.

And it carried through bowl practice. I told Emmett today that those two guys were going to have huge days for us. They're such big bodies. They do a great job catching the football. They're tough guys. And I really think they're fixing to cause a lot of problems for a lot of people.

Q. When you look at where college football is heading because of opt-outs and NIL, there's a lot of people

that don't think bowl season matters. But to get a win at the end of the year, an SEC team, a conference that boasts about their priority, their seniority of being one of the best in the college football realm, what does that do for morale going into the offseason?

COACH MCGUIRE: It's big. I don't believe that bowl's don't matter. You play a long season and you worked your tail off to become bowl eligible. It's a reward.

People that say that really discount what's important. What's important are the players. This is a reward for the players. Our guys had a blast this week. Texas Bowl was incredible, hospitality has been incredible.

For people, there's a lot of selfish coaches that are saying that. They really don't get the big picture. The big picture is you get to play another week with your football team, and you get to reward a lot of seniors that worked their tails off to get here.

I'm not going to take that stance. I'm always going to use it. We plan on being in one every single year. We used it to build our young players and we used it to reward our seniors. And I think that's really important.

I think people lose sight of that. And it's not good for the game, people that lose sight of what's important.

Q. First time David (indiscernible) got you the ball three times -- interception, the fake punt that he stopped and the fumble recovery. Just can you address the game that he had?

COACH MCGUIRE: He's so active. He's a smart football player. I felt like he really has played really well the back half, tackling really well the back half of the season and just done a great job. He's a smart football player. And excited about him.

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