

TaxAct Texas Bowl: Ole Miss vs Texas Tech

Thursday, December 29, 2022

Houston, Texas, USA

NRG Stadium

Texas Tech Red Raiders

Tahj Brooks

Tyler Shough

Press Conference

Texas Tech - 42, Ole Miss - 25

Q. Tyler, you finally made the decision, the announcement you're going to come back to Texas next year after a season of such highs and lows for you in particular, what went into that decision?

TYLER SHOUGH: Really just based on where I feel I can go in the draft next year, and also really I love this team so much, a lot of guys coming back, including Coach McGuire and Coach Kittley. I have such a great relationship with all the guys on staff, and why would I leave when I feel we're building that momentum and I just want to be part of something special, especially a special team and the close-knit unit.

Q. Coach McGuire talked about how some of the senior guys on the team were able to help the team buy in and the need where you guys are, one of the guys talked about was SaRodorick, what did it mean to play with him?

TAHJ BROOKS: It was great. It was a blessing to play with him, my guy. When I first got here, he took me under his wing, showed me the ropes. Just honored to play with him, and I'm happy that he scored his (indiscernible) touchdown and last touchdown as a Red Raider. It was a great moment.

Q. Tyler, your coach told us that you were sick all night. Could you tell us what was going on and how you were able to overcome and have the kind of game you did today?

TYLER SHOUGH: Myself and a couple other guys, like Malik (indiscernible) -- we all had food poisoning. I threw up like every hour on the hour. Didn't really sleep last night. I curled up next to the toilet. I was literally thinking



about, it was the last dance with Michael Jordan, walk down the team practice me and Lance and I look at each other, pool game, pool game, that's what I was saying to myself the whole time. I felt like absolute crap. (Inaudible) Dr. Fine, he got a game ball. Helped us out so much. I had probably like 16 pounds of fluids in me from IVs throughout the day. Took one at halftime, took two before the game. Probably showed, I was exhausted. But I knew I was going to -- whatever it was going to take to play, I had no food in me, it wasn't really me but it was the guys on the team. Malik, he left his heart out there. And Krishon playing through injuries, our defense, they were (indiscernible).

Q. Now that it's over, and are you like, I can't believe I've done this?

TYLER SHOUGH: I was starting to fade at the end of the game, getting really exhausted. But I definitely could eat something pretty soon.

Q. Tyler, it's well established, obviously it's long been established that (indiscernible) can run the football. But how are you taking to this increasing workload of the power of a quarterback run game?

TYLER SHOUGH: I don't mind it. I just think it's whatever it takes to get the first down. I really like it because my mindset is I always wanted the ball in my hands or had the power to go still make plays or put it in fighter hands. Just having those options, if they are giving us this look, we're in tape management. Just because I feel like it's something I can do, I think it keeps the defense on their heels because we have so many options. I think that's how it turned out this game, and it will end up being beneficial.

Q. For either of you guys, obviously one of the previous storylines is Ole Miss explosive offense, particularly their running game. How much of a challenge was that to y'all to outshine them, so to speak?

TAHJ BROOKS: It was great. Just the guys up front that made big holes and some runs that happened for me and Tyler.

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Just that dog mentality with the run, just every down, every player is physical before the game. We're told we have to be physical against the defense so we did.

TYLER SHOUGH: I think we had to take advantage of our opportunities, and the defense just put us in great spots. Gave us great field position all game, five turnovers, still didn't capitalize on a lot of our drives. Wish we could've had some of those back. The O line played their hearts out and Coach Kittley called a great game (indiscernible).

Q. If you go back, look at the start of the year preseason, expected to finish ninth in Big 12. You start off with eight wins. Joey, the culture, but also close out the season against an SEC team, that the conference the slogan is it just means more. What does that do for morale going into the offseason and the belief of this program?

TAHJ BROOKS: That means just this is not the end. It's not the finish. It means next year we will have bigger goals, bigger things we need to accomplish next year because we've done it. We've been in big games, played in big games. And really just as incoming recruits, working, working to get to that next level.

TYLER SHOUGH: I think it shows we're capable of playing at a high level, no matter, whatever the team is, no matter the conference. We really don't care who it is we are going to play. We are trying to build the brand and build a logo because doesn't matter who they are, as their logo or where they come from, it's just about the players on the field and coaches.

So I think we just really believe in each other. That's what it's going to come down to coming into next year and honestly we'll be even better.

Q. You mentioned SaRodorick took you under his wing when you got here. Now that you're the older back, is that a role you filled in for like Cam'Ron Valdez, some of the younger backs on the team?

TAHJ BROOKS: Yes, sir. Really just taking those guys under my wing showing them what the right thing to do right reads, things of that nature. To process. So I left it really we have to keep a high standard within ourselves.

Q. Tyler, your teammates have described you as a competitor. After those two hits earlier in the game, the two shots when you're sliding, can you describe your mindset following those who hits, and you remained physical throughout the game?

TYLER SHOUGH: I was smiling. I was happy we got a first down out of it. I've got to fix my sliding strategy or something. Hey, it works, though, they just hit me anyway.

I was fine. I can't believe it. My head was -- rattled the brain a little bit. It was loose, it was fun.

Q. Tyler, is that your hat or is that --

TYLER SHOUGH: This is the one they gave me. This is like -- it's really nice. We all got Cowboy hats from the Rodeo Bowl. They're like \$10 plastic ones. They still look cool. I gave it to a coach's kid. I didn't know that they give you won if you won MVP. I thought it was pretty forward. I was in the market for buying a Cowboy hat, come back next year. Mark it off Christmas list.

Q. Next year, Oregon Ducks I think are coming to Lubbock, I know we're going there, I think they're coming here first. Any thoughts on facing your old team?

TYLER SHOUGH: It would be awesome. There's guys I played with who are still there, and it would be great to see them. Obviously whole new staff, whole new team. But I think it will be a fun game. And they're a great opponent.

Q. Can you take us through the touchdown pass that you threw?

TYLER SHOUGH: Yes, it was basically an RPO where I'll either run it. He was going to lead block me and the corner down on that glance route I was going to pull it up throw it to them because they were driving so far somewhere on those runs especially down there. Really wish I would have hit coy on the previous one there were low balls -- I trust him so much he's going to get up no matter what. He made a really good route.

Q. And then the touchdown round when you and Morton were when did you implement that practice?

TYLER SHOUGH: Our bowl prep, something we did with Donny before him Behren, he has really good skill set with it too. Just to give them a different look. We had so many options, a couple of them where we definitely should've scored and there are some ones where they covered up.

It's a lot of fun, especially Behren, he can make plays and throw to him and knows plays, can throw it or run it. We just wanted to have a lot of trick play, fun in the bowl game.

Q. Tyler, do you feel like today was probably your best (inaudible) put together so far, and is this what you envision when you were rehabbing in the back, just

really wanting to put your best foot forward?

TYLER SHOUGH: I think the goal every single day is to keep getting better. I wouldn't say -- I have to watch the film and go back. I'm not really sure about that. I'm really happy we won as a team. That's the most fun I've had out there.

The defense playing off of each other and just seeing all the emotion in my teammates' eyes and embrace that moment together, because personally, to be on that journey, it was really hard. And I was really thankful for all the things they'd done for me to support me.

Q. Coach McGuire said this was one of the craziest games he's ever been in. Have you guys ever been in a game where there's been more targeting reviews than there have been punts?

TYLER SHOUGH: I don't think so.

TAHJ BROOKS: I didn't know that either. It was crazy when we came out, it was red lights and dark we ran out of the tunnel, that was probably the craziest thing.

TYLER SHOUGH: That was a really good venue. The Texas Bowl did a really good job. We played here last year obviously against Houston. This is really well done. We always love coming down here.

We knew it was going to be a good atmosphere, especially with Tech fans. But it was a fun game.

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