

Kinder's Texas Bowl: Houston vs LSU

Sunday, December 28, 2025

Houston, Texas, USA

NRG Stadium

LSU Tigers

Coach Frank Wilson

Postgame Press Conference

Houston - 38, LSU - 35

FRANK WILSON: Really wanted victory at the conclusion of this season for our student-athletes because of all that they've gone through, all that they've persevered in positioning themselves to leave their mark in the best way they could and in the midst of all that's going on in the season, that they had no control of.

It wasn't their decision that I became the interim or their decision with the next coaching change, et cetera. All they did was love LSU, wore the purple and gold with pride and with dignity and did the things that we asked of them to give themselves the best opportunity to be the best version of them.

So tonight, when you had young guys playing big roles and asked to do things that they had not done in an entire season, we fell a little short. And for that I am proud of their efforts.

But here's what I said to our football team: In life, I don't want you to ever be content with finishing second. We finished second today, and we did so because our best wasn't good enough in all three phases of the game.

I thought we had growth in certain areas of the game, and I thought that it was glaring in other areas of the game where we were youthful and guys that had not played as many snaps but got an opportunity.

And because of it, they'll be better. They'll be better going forward. That there's calluses built on your hand, that they have wherewithal, they have toughness, they have perseverance. And they know how to do hard things. Sometimes to win, sometimes have you to lose.

And so they have gone through this gauntlet, if you will, of highs and lows, of maturation into what we call manhood.



And the sport exhibits it. It teaches you. It humbles you in challenging times.

So I said to our football team, this moment will make you a better man. It will make you a better husband, and I know you don't want to hear that right now. But you've got to stand tall. You've got to hold your chin up high. You've got to give credit to that opponent that you played against, a team that's now won 10 ball games in the season. And we knew they were a quality football team.

But I'm proud of our football team, and I'm proud of the way they competed to the best of their ability in the midst of where we're at in our current state.

Q. You were alluding to this, but the defense struggling the way it did today, do you think that's mostly because a lot of young guys playing after all those opt-outs?

FRANK WILSON: You have three All-Americans, right -- a safety, a corner, a linebacker -- plus another one in weeks and another play in West Weeks, and then Harold Perkins with Weeks, Mansoor Delane and A.J. Haulcy. I mean, that's a big blow to our football team.

It's not an excuse. It's just a reality. It's the reality of who we are. You recruit a student-athlete. You develop them and we're charged with developing them, all right? And then getting them to a point of having the ability to play.

But those guys are just names who will play on Sundays. And some of them will hear their names called early on. And I commend them, and I respect and understand the decision they have made for themselves.

So we didn't cry about it. We didn't wince about it. We didn't make an issue about it. We just got the next guy ready to go play. And we trained them to the best of their ability. And they went out and they competed to the best of their ability.

For that, I am proud of them and certainly there's a gap there from those guys who have opted out and those guys who are not here -- who are here.

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Q. How proud are you to get this team to the finish line? What's next for this team?

FRANK WILSON: Very proud to get this team to the finish line. When we were in the midst of the transition and they asked about coaching in this game, I said to an administrator, "I'm going to finish with my boys. I'll burn this building down if you don't let me finish. I'm going to finish with my boys." Because the love is unconditional, you know?

So they go out and they compete today and we finished second against a quality opponent.

Q. That was an awfully long discussion you had with the white hat at halftime. I've never seen them put up with a coach that long. What was the gist of that? What were you mad about? And what kind of explanation did you give?

FRANK WILSON: So here was my issue, that you had a cornerback playing a receiver, and if the receiver makes an attempting to go after the ball and he grabbed him or he blocked him in that manner, attempting to catch the ball, I get your call. I did not see it from my vision as the receiver attempting, nor the ball being in proximity to even be attempted to be caught.

So there was concern on my part in the call. Then the rebuttal or the answer for it was difficult for me to accept. And so I expressed those things -- I apologized on behalf of our university for it. But I'm willing to fight for our student-athletes and our football team if I think justice is not being done.

Q. You started so fast, being an explosive start. I know you didn't think they were going to run away with it, but just how did they settle in and kind of get back in the game?

FRANK WILSON: Yeah, we put up 14 points, I think we ran seven plays. So that was a fast start for us. And then we couldn't get off the field. They sustained drives. I think at one point they had 14 minutes and we had 4:00 or something like that. I don't know.

But we didn't get off the field in situational football. So it allowed them to have life and to have opportunity and hope. And they began to believe because of those sustained drives and first downs that accumulated eventually into touchdowns.

But we had enough stops at times, then offensively we sputtered and we didn't score. So a tall task for a team to

not play consistently complementary football. But you look at that defense, and we wouldn't be where we are without them.

So it's the first time in a long time we didn't play our very best defensively. And God knows we played outstanding defensively in the last several weeks, for sure, and even in the season. But, again, there was some transition in personnel that you could probably attribute to some of that.

Q. From here, as you now go on to become the running backs coach at Ole Miss, have you thought about what your mindset is going to be on September 19th when you look across the field and you're going to be looking at some of the same players that you just coached in the bowl game tonight? Have you thought about what your mindset's going to be on that day?

FRANK WILSON: I have not. I have not. I've given my undivided attention to this team to this point and haven't peered over the fence to look at what that looks like going beyond.

I have given my commitment to Pete Golding and to that organization that at the conclusion of this game, my undivided attention will then turn to Ole Miss and my job in Oxford. I'm going to do that job to the best of my ability. But I have not, while on this job, started thinking about all of that just yet.

Q. I guess part of that, I know you won't be here after tonight. But what feel do you have for the guys that are still in the locker room? Do you anticipate a lot of guys exiting the program? Do you anticipate a lot of them sticking with LSU. What's your feel?

FRANK WILSON: That probably will be a Coach (indiscernible) question. He dealt with the retention and then the staff. I haven't had those conversations, respectively, with our student-athletes. So I'm not quite sure.

Q. Couple strong performances tonight from some of your pass catchers. Trey'Dez Green and Kyle Parker really kind of stepped up for you. Those are maybe potentially two pillars for this program going forward. What did you make about their game?

FRANK WILSON: Yeah, it was good to see. It was good to see guys with run-after-catch ability making plays, big plays, explosive plays, something we've learned throughout the season that was delivered on today. If you would have told me yesterday, this morning, this afternoon that we score 35, we finish second, I would have laughed, you know?



But I'm proud of those guys. I thought they played well. I thought they played well and gave us a chance to win this game.

Q. When you look back on this season, what do you think you will remember the most about this year?

FRANK WILSON: Guys who refuse to give in. Guys who set their hearts on finishing a task at hand, who leaned on each other, who loved one another.

And if you could have been a fly on the wall in that locker room when you see them embrace with tears of hurt, of joy, of fondness of one another, because they wanted to, they wanted to win. And the reality, they wanted to win for me, and I wouldn't let them. It's about you. It's not about me. I want you to do it for one another. But they're that selfless and they're that high-character young men.

So it's a forever thing for me with them that these relationships will last for a lifetime, and they're unconditional.

Q. It seemed like Berry didn't get a touch after the fumble. Have you coached him through some of those protection issues that he's had at times, and maybe what was the reasoning behind him not getting a touch after that?

FRANK WILSON: It's one of those things. We were on a two-year streak at one point without turning the ball over. Led the nation from a backfield unit. It's our creed. It's our mantra. It's what we talked about, ball security. And so we had a couple of, in this season -- Harlem's an outstanding young student-athlete who has a bright future ahead of him.

The game was in the balance, and it was critical moments, and I trusted our staff, you know, even in the midst of that fumble, for me, in my current role, my attention immediately then flipped over to the defense and those decisions that will have to be made.

As an offensive staff, I trust our staff to make the right decision to get the right people in the game to give us the best opportunity to win the football game.

Harlem has been outstanding in his freshman campaign. He has a bright future here. He'll be one of the great ones when it's all said and done. But in a game where every possession matters, that will probably contribute to why he didn't play as much as after the fumble.

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