

# Valero Alamo Bowl: USC vs TCU

Sunday, December 28, 2025

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome

**TCU Horned Frogs**

**Coach Mitch Kirsch**

**Eric McAlister**

**Chase Curtis**

**Ken Seals**

Press Conference



years now, but most importantly, we've got a great staff that's put together a really, really good game plan for these guys just to go execute at a high level, and that was kind of what we were looking at going into this; how can we get our guys to play fast, play efficiently and execute at a high level.

We feel like we've put together a game plan in that regard. We're ready to go out, play fast, play physical, and go get this win.

**Q. Ken, you've obviously been on both sides of it, as a starter and as QB2. What's the biggest difference in preparation when you prepare for a game as a starter compared to being a backup?**

KEN SEALS: Yeah, I think there's a different level of excitement that I have this round of preparation. A guy like me who takes pride in their role, even as a backup, I tried to prepare like I was going to play in the game. It was always my thought process, like how unfortunate would it be if I actually got the opportunity that I wanted, got in the game, and then was disappointed in the way that I played because I didn't prepare the right way.

I think going through that process of preparation helps whenever it is your time, like it is now for me, and now that it's here, I'm just excited.

**Q. Eric, why did you decide you wanted to play in this bowl game, given your prospects for the NFL and the change of quarterback?**

ERIC McALISTER: I think it's mostly just because my teammates, they all decided to play. Once Bud Clark told me he was going to play, these guys have counted on me all year, and then I found out Ken was going to play, and I wasn't going to leave no one out there high and dry. Our OC left us, QB left us, and I really wasn't going to sit at home and watch my teammates play a game that I really wanted to play in, so I'm here.

KEN SEALS: I told him I'd throw him the ball.

ERIC McALISTER: Yeah, that too.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to our TCU offense press conference. It's my pleasure to introduce tight ends coach Mitch Kirsch. Coach, could you introduce the players you've brought with you.

MITCH KIRSCH: First of all, we've got Ken Seals, Eric McAlister and Chase Curtis, three guys that have been a part of this program for a few years now. Chase has been here longer than others. Ken grew up a TCU fan, same with Eric, and decided to transfer home, and they've been great for us since they got here.

THE MODERATOR: Anything about the week of preparation?

MITCH KIRSCH: Yeah, it's just been really good. Coach Dykes has talked about bowl games a lot kind of losing their luster a little bit. Being able to come down to San Antonio, be a part of the Valero Alamo Bowl, first-class organization that's put everything together for us, the guys are having a great time; coaches, wives, families are having a great time.

It's just good to spend this time with this group for the last week before everybody kind of goes their separate ways.

**Q. Mitch, obviously you've got the title of play caller coming up on Tuesday night, first time for you. How are you approaching this opportunity, and what has it been like being the guy running the offense?**

MITCH KIRSCH: Yeah, it's been really cool. Coach Dykes gave me this opportunity and I've been with them for eight



MITCH KIRSCH: I told him I'd get him the ball.

**Q. Chase, you've been around this program for a long time. I asked Bud a similar question yesterday, but what has it meant to you to stay in one place for as long as you have, and how much do you value TCU and the community?**

CHASE CURTIS: It's been awesome. It's been a dream come true. It's crazy whenever I talk to people outside about how long I've been in college, but I wouldn't want it any other way. TCU means the world to me. These guys mean the world to me. They've been with me through everything, all the ups, the lows, and just getting one more opportunity here to spend the week with them and just to get to represent TCU one more time means the world to me.

We're excited. It's going to be a good one.

**Q. Mitch, how have you guys kind of approached building the offense around some of Ken's strong suits leading up to this game?**

MITCH KIRSCH: Yeah, Ken and Josh have a lot of similarities in arm talent, the ways they've thrown the ball. Ken is a little bit more of a runner at times. But at the end of the day, like we said earlier, we just wanted to find a game plan that would get these guys to be able to play fast and not think. We want to execute at a high level, so that's what we've done with the game plan.

Everything that Josh could do, Ken can do. Let's not forget, Ken started 20 plus games in the SEC. So we felt as a staff for the longest time, we've had the best backup quarterback in the country, and now he's got a chance to kind of ride off into the sunset for TCU, a team that he grew up watching, and lay it all out on the line for these guys.

I'll never forget this: The day after Josh left, Eric McAlister got up in front of the whole team and said, Ken's our guy; we got his back. I thought that was really powerful and speaks to the culture of this team, as well. So that was something that was really awesome to see.

**Q. Ken, Mitch just talked about that moment with Eric standing up. What did that mean to you, to have a guy you've known since high school stand up for you and supporting in that moment?**

KEN SEALS: Yeah, it was really cool. It meant a lot to me. Kind of going into that meeting, I was prepared to say something, just to like, calm the nerves. I think it was a time of uncertainty for a lot of people, especially on the

team. Didn't really know if everyone was uneasy about the decision. Kind of still trying to figure out how everyone felt about it.

Before anything was said, Eric got up and obviously said what he said. It just means a lot to have one of the leaders of our team speak up at a time when people don't really know what to think or what to do. Someone takes control and kind of eases the waters, calms everyone's minds a little bit and says, we've got one more game, let's go win it.

**Q. Chase, this is your first full season you've been able to play since 2022 and it's been your most productive offensively. What has this meant for you personally to be able to see that growth in the stat sheets?**

CHASE CURTIS: I mean, it's just been nice to stay healthy for a full season just so I could keep playing with these guys and go to all the road games and everything. For the stats, it's cool and everything, but just to be able to, like, put on the pads with these guys, that means the world to me. If I could do a ninth year, I'd do it.

I mean, it's been just really cool to be able to play the full season.

**Q. Chase, what type of coach would you say Mitch has been for you since he's been on the staff?**

CHASE CURTIS: Man, Mitch has been a great role model to me. I said a couple weeks ago, he's like an older brother to me because I'm closer to him in age than most of the other tight ends in the room. But he's made football really fun for me again.

I've grown so much with him as a coach, and it means the world to me. He's got this opportunity, and I know he's going to do a good job. He's a really great coach. It's someone that I know 10 years from now if I'm going through something I can give him a call and he'll answer.

I love him, and he's my guy.

**Q. Eric, you talked about it a little bit last week, the decision to stand up in front of the team and throw your support behind Ken. When you think about your leadership role in this program, what was it that kind of pushed you to actually stand up and say those words?**

ERIC McALISTER: I think it's more that I knew a lot of guys were going to play, and I really care for Ken. Like I've been preaching for Ken for a long time, even when Hoover was hurt and he was throwing the ball the first spring I was there.

I think once we all heard the news that Josh was leaving at that breakfast, I kind of went in there and asked a bunch of guys, what's the deal, are you all still playing, they're asking me if I'm going to play, and I knew that if I'm going to play, I can get all these guys behind Ken, and if we can get everybody behind Ken, to believe in Ken, we're going to win the football game.

**Q. Ken, you went from starting as a true freshman in the SEC, now you get to play a bowl game for your dream school. If you could go back and tell your younger self about your would-be journey, what would you say?**

KEN SEALS: Yeah, it's been a lot of ups and downs. Shoot, man; college football has been the biggest blessing of my life. There's been times where it's been hard and it's sucked. But to be able to ride those highs with guys that you love and care for and invest so much, invest so much time, effort, energy, all the sacrifice that you put in, I mean, I think I'd just tell my younger self to enjoy it because this is my sixth season, but now that I'm looking at my last game, it's like, wow, how has it flown by so fast in a way.

Even COVID, those really pretty much two years, like, snapped, and it was over. I can say the same for college football now.

I think this last season, not certain if I was ever going to get to play a game, my whole approach has been just enjoy it. Enjoy the time that you have with your teammates again, playing in your hometown. I've really tried to kind of step back a lot of times and just appreciate the situation I'm in.

Yeah, I'd probably just say enjoy it.

**Q. For Ken and Eric, what would your message be to the towns of Weatherford and Azle about showing up in San Antonio for one last game?**

ERIC McALISTER: Show out, show up, be loud, and get a picture afterwards because we appreciate them all showing up.

KEN SEALS: Yeah, I guess you can't say much about Weatherford, but it's cool to be able to play pretty close to home for those guys. I wish I got to throw a touchdown to them in high school, but hopefully we can make it happen on Tuesday.

**Q. Ken, you kind of touched on it, but for everyone else, how are you taking this week? Are you kind of just cherishing some of the last times being together?**

KEN SEALS: Yeah, like I said, everything that we do it's starting to get to the last times. We just had our last Friday walk-through. Tomorrow is going to be our last run-through. Then Tuesday is going to be my last game. It's just kind of the last of everything.

At the same time, you're preparing for a football game, so it's like, deal with that and that emotion after the game. Everything is going to be so much more sweet and so much better when you go out and handle business and you dominate and you win the football game.

So being able to appreciate the situation that you're in, appreciate the time that you have with these people, but also understanding we've got to get the job done and there's still a lot to do, and we've got to get prepared to go play our best game.

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