

# CFP Quarterfinal at the Capital One Orange Bowl: Oregon vs Texas Tech

Tuesday, December 30, 2025

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

## Texas Tech Red Raiders Coach Joey McGuire

### Press Conference



We called out here and talked to some of the equipment guys for the Dolphins, and of course we've got a couple of Red Raiders that are Dolphin players, so we expect to be able to wear our normal molded cleats versus our grass cleats, so we're excited about that.

**Q. Coach, 25 days between games; how does it feel to actually be here finally?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: Yeah, we're really excited. Like this morning we were doing our walk-through, and I was proud of the way the guys were handling it, but man, we are ready to play. I think they've walked through our game plan as much as possible, and we still have a fast Friday tomorrow and then we have another walk-through on game day.

Feel good where we're at, but we're ready to play.

**Q. How do you avoid the lull having had so much time off?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: Yeah, one, I think it's very important for us to start well in the game. I think one thing we also have to do is we've got to weather their storm. They started really fast against James Madison, so we've got to do a good job of weathering their storm.

That's one thing that I think as a whole we have to take a look at the structure we have at this level of College Football Playoff that really need to change. But it is what it is right now, so we've got to do a great job of handling it, and we really do need to start really fast.

**Q. Y'all don't play on a lot of natural grass fields. I know the players probably like it a little bit better. What do they think of that?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: Yeah, we're lucky we have that grass field at home. It's going to be a little different because our grass is probably not as tight as what we're going to play on. We played at Arizona State this year, and they've got as good a grass field as there is in the country. They say this is a really fast track, so we're excited about that.

**Q. What sticks out to you about Oregon on tape?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: The effort they play with, which is doesn't surprise me. I'm a big fan of Coach Lanning, and I think he's an effort-based guy with the people that he coached for and how he's grown up in this coaching world.

But how hard they play, and then they're extremely athletic. They've got great team speed, and they've got really good big-time playmakers, so that really jumps off film.

**Q. Since Texas Tech hasn't played in this setting before, how much pressure do you feel for the university?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: I think it's a mixture of not just us performing at a high level Texas Tech-wise, but for the Big 12. I've talked to Commissioner Yormark multiple times over the last few weeks, and man, I know we're not only just representing the TT but we're representing the Big 12.

I think it's important. But the one thing about this team, man, they love playing the game. They love playing football together. We're just going to go out and do what we've done all year long and try to play at a really high level, execute the game plan.

But there is a -- I don't think they feel it, but I definitely feel it. It's important that we perform, and it's important that we win the football game, not only for Texas Tech but for the Big 12.

**Q. What were some of the challenges of getting 21 transfers --**

JOEY MCGUIRE: Well, I think it's important that you do as much as possible. Gus Malzahn is a really good friend of mine; so I can call Gus and say, "Tell me about Lee

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Hunter." And Mack Brown is a really good friend of mine; so it was easy to pick up the phone with Mack and say, "Tell me about Howard Sampson."

I think it's important whenever you're going through and putting a team together that you do your research, and then I feel like we have some really good things in place to build a culture. And Lubbock, Texas, is a great place to be. It's a college town. That town is built around the TT.

So I think the players, whenever they get there, they really feel the love of the community. So I think that's been really important to building this team.

**Q. It seems like you're the same guy. How have you stayed true to who you are as the stage has changed?**

JOEY McGUIRE: My biggest thing, I learned this a long time ago, I had a great mentor. I've had great mentors. It's really cool, I saw one of our fans put it out because Nick Saban has got such a great tree represented in this College Football Playoff.

And I learned from Robert Woods, who's a Hall of Fame Texas high school coach, one of the greatest coaches of all times. I learned from him and then my first AD, Gina Farmer. If you make it about the players and they genuinely feel that and they understand how much you care about them, then you can do some incredible things as a group.

Man, that's the thing; I tell parents, I tell anybody that comes to Texas Tech whenever they visit that I wake up every morning, and my job is to make these guys the best version of themselves. And if you keep that in the forefront, then a lot of good things can happen, and winning is a byproduct of that.

That's just what I've always believed. January, starting in January will start my 32nd year of coaching, and no matter if it's a 22-year-old or it's a 16-year-old that you're coaching, they're all the same. They're playing a kid's game that they absolutely love, and they want to do great things. I just try to help them do that.

**Q. What's the key to victory for Texas Tech?**

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah, we've got to do a great job of stopping the run. These guys run at such a high level, so we've got to do a good job of stopping the run. Whoever wins the turnover battle, you've got two explosive offenses, so who can give their offense an extra couple possessions.

And I think we've got to make plays on special teams. That's where we've been from really all of our victories this

year, but especially Arizona State, after that loss, we've done a great job of stopping the run, creating turnovers. I think Indiana and Texas Tech are the No. 1 team in the country in turnover margin. We're plus 17. And then playing really well on special teams. I think those are the keys to this game.

**Q. Having played so many other games, I think this will be (indiscernible).**

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah, it's kind of been -- whatever the first game was this year, and we had a couple last year, but the 11:00 kicks, we have played extremely well. We had a couple early this season, and I started saying, man, we're the best 11:00 a.m. team in the country. Then all of a sudden we'd get another 11:00 a.m. game, and that's really in your wheelhouse.

You'd kind of like a 2:30 kick because it's early and you can get your juices flowing but it's not too late to where you've got to sit around in the hotel all day long.

These guys, whenever they said we were going to play in the Orange Bowl, I said, man, it's 12:00 here but it's 11:00 a.m. Central Time, and we've played really well at 11:00 a.m. I think whenever you've had success like that, you can push that message, and we'll be ready to go.

**Q. The Utah game was 10:00 a.m., right?**

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah, 10:00 a.m., that was an early kick. That was a little bit earlier. But still, I think that's one thing, whenever you go that way, they're not used to playing at 10:00 a.m. their time ever. That's usually whenever you go to the West Coast for some reason, that's usually a night game. That's really tough to play in.

But we've got that 10:00 a.m. kick, and I thought that was an advantage for us.

**Q. How about with the kids, just get them up, get something to eat and go play ball?**

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah, we're excited. It's funny, if you come to our hotel this morning -- if you came this morning and if you come on game day, we've got blue lights. So we've got blue lights set up on the table while they're eating breakfast waking them up and getting them going.

We practice Thursday and Friday morning pretty early. When we're in pads, we're an afternoon practice team, but Thursday and Friday we practice pretty early in the morning. So our guys are used to getting up and getting going.



**Q. (Indiscernible) sustainable for Texas Tech. What does that mean to you?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: Man, he was on the interview committee, and the day I sat with him and felt his passion about Texas Tech, he said, "I'm all in, wherever college athletics is going, we're going to be all in," I knew that it could be really special.

The thing that -- I read an article yesterday about Cody, and the thing that I just keep saying, the more and more people that listen to Cody Campbell, the better off college athletics is going to be. I know some of the commissioners have been really -- not threatened but not necessarily agreeing with him, and they think he really doesn't see the big picture.

Get in the room with him. Don't throw stones at him outside the room, but when you're in the room with him, you'll understand, he's smarter than you. Not only that, I heard Kirby Hocutt, our AD, his high school coach said this. Cody has wore a jock. Cody not only is an incredible businessman, but he played this game at an extremely high level, a higher level than any commissioner than I know of.

It's not only did he play this game, but he's also so intelligent whenever it comes to the business world that I think if we could really get behind some of his ideas and do it as a collective, we're better athletically.

But your question, man, he went all in. And I told him. I said, "Man, we'll do everything that we can to make you right," and we to this point have made him right as far as him going all in behind us.

**Q. (Indiscernible) level, though?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: I know this sounds crazy, but man, I just believe -- I was at a place that I never won a playoff game in the history of the school. They started playing in 1932, and they didn't win a playoff game until 2006. Four years later we went 16-0. I do believe what we do and the way we do things produces a winning program.

When they hired me four years ago, so it's really cool, year four, we go 16-0 year four, we're in the College Football Playoffs, I really felt like we could be successful. It really helps whenever you have the backing that we have of Cody Campbell, John Sellers, Dusty Womble, Mike Wallace, Gary Petersen. Those are kind of the big five that have really been the push, and then all of Texas Tech behind us.

**Q. Do you feel like after those guys got into it, your**

**job (indiscernible)?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: I think if you're not so self-driven that the pressure could really get to you because now the expectations raise from the outside. But man, somebody was telling me whenever we got to the Big 12, they were like, man, this is a big deal, or maybe it was before the Big 12 because they were talking about contract extension. And I said, look, if we don't win the Big 12, then I don't want to talk about contract extension because I've failed.

That's not anything to do with how they felt. It's how I felt. I'm my worst critic, besides my wife sometimes. It's one of those deals I think if you're self-driven, then the outside expectations are not going to bother you because you have -- your expectations of yourself are so high.

**Q. What about the part where you have to integrate (indiscernible) from the outside, manage it, bring them into that expectation environment? Is that something you have dealt with?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: I think anytime, at any level that you're at, whenever you start winning, the expectation just goes up. Whenever I got hired in 2003 at Cedar Hill, one of the things that came out in the "Dallas Morning News," which is the biggest newspaper in Texas, was they let a Hall of Fame high school coach go because he didn't win enough games. So I knew right then if I didn't win enough games, I was going to be fired.

I think no matter -- that's your livelihood no matter what level it is, then you still feel the pressure of winning. That's kind of how I've always felt.

**Q. How has your team grown since the two programs played in 2023?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: I'm really proud of our coaching staff. The one thing I'm really proud of, if you look, the players that we have on our team are playing their best football in their career. So I'm really proud of our coaching staff. I think we've grown as a coaching staff.

Then I think the guys that were in that game are older, and that was Ben Roberts, he was a redshirt freshman. I think our talent level on our roster is higher, but I think theirs is, too.

It's really hard when you look at Oregon and you look at us, it's almost like you're looking in the mirror. We're very similar football teams.

**Q. The football we've grown up watching, a game played two years ago (indiscernible) maybe not the**

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**case in today's day and age?**

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah, really whenever I look at that roster or look at that game, there was guys on the roster that were there but they weren't playing yet. Jacob Rodriguez didn't get to play in that game because he got hurt the week before. That was Ben Roberts' very first start. But the roster between the guys that we have, they were young, and then the guys that -- kind of the turnover of the roster, it's very different.

But I think it's very different for them, too. I don't look across the field and see a lot of guys that played in that game on their team, either.

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