

Big 12 Conference Football Championship Game: Oklahoma vs TCU

Saturday, December 2, 2017



Lincoln Riley
Ogbonnia Okoronkwo
Orlando Brown
Steven Parker
Baker Mayfield
Oklahoma Sooners

Oklahoma - 41

TCU - 17

THE MODERATOR: The MVP of today's game was Baker Mayfield. Congratulations, Baker.

BAKER MAYFIELD: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to go. We're going to start with Coach and let him make an opening statement. Coach, congratulations and your thoughts about the game?

LINCOLN RILEY: Thank you. Just tremendous effort. I just be couldn't be anymore proud of this team, you know, kind of from where this all started, you know, back in spring ball and then, you know, with all the things that changed this summer, a lot of teams could have used that as an excuse or a crutch and they never did. It was all about what did you want us to do, Coach? And they've been coachable the whole way through and I think that's a big part of the reason why we have been able to improve the way we have as a team.

We found ways to win games early in the season when we weren't at our best and we kept our heads down and kept fighting and kept getting better and better, not listening to the noise on the outside and we've played pretty good ball here at the end. Also, really proud of our group not listening to the entire narrative across the country that we shouldn't be playing this championship game and all that mess. That had nothing to do with it. We knew there was going to be a championship game several months ago and that was going to be part of

our journey if we wanted to get to this place. We were excited honestly just for the chance to play another game together. We only got a few left and to get that one we're appreciative and thankful we had the game.

To beat a really, really good TCU team again was tough. Their coaching staff and players are tremendous. It's a really, really good football team. So hats off to them and hats off to the rest of the league. I thought it was a great year for the Big 12 conference. The depth, the quality of teams, the competition, week in and week out was as good as any conference in the country. Proud of this conference. Very, very proud to be representing them here as a champion and we're certainly going to enjoy this one.

Q. Lincoln, if you could talk about your great third quarter. You put the game away. You get a stop, forced them to punt and your offense takes over.

LINCOLN RILEY: It started with the stop, you know, that was big. Defensively the biggest thing we talked about at halftime was we had to tackle better. We gave them a few big plays based on missing some tackles where we were there. We tackled much better in the second half. We got a stop and played a lot of great complimentary football in that quarter and had to separate ourselves. Defense led the charge and offense was able to get plays to Mykel and Marquise and got a lead and were able to run it out. Complimentary football spearheaded by our defense.

Q. Mr. Baker Mayfield, talk about your feelings right now after declaring that you were going to come back and play your senior season. Can you do that?

BAKER MAYFIELD: The reason I came back was to play for a national title. The most exciting thing about today was we controlled our own destiny. We just had to take care of business and all that is out in front of us. Came back, had great coaches, great head coach and then, you know, I got great players around me. We have all the pieces and it's just right now we're playing well together and that's the most exciting thing. I came back to make sure that we had strong leadership and we would take care of our own business and right now we're just doing that.

Q. Lincoln, you mentioned how your team has improved over the here. Is it possible that Baker

has improved over the year, and if so, how?

LINCOLN RILEY: It's definitely possible and no problem saying it with him sitting right here. He's done a lot of great things in his career, but he hasn't been perfect and he hasn't been coached perfect throughout his career. There's always room to improve. You never get to perfection in this game. We all chase it, but you never get there and it's a constant battle.

Give him credit, you know, for all the success that he's had. He stayed hungry and continued to be coachable, continued to want to improve as has this entire team and that's the reason why we're sitting up here today.

Q. For Lincoln and Baker, I'm sure you guys talked about championship November. Lincoln, what have you learned about playing championship football. You mentioned before when you first became an offensive coordinator you wanted to score as many points as possible; and Baker, this is three years for you. What have you learned about being a quarterback and playing championship football that's different from when you were younger?

LINCOLN RILEY: I would say I've learned a lot there. You've got to win in different ways to win in this month. The games are the most important, normally you're playing the best teams like we did today. You get weather factors. There is so much that goes into it, so you gotta be able to win different ways. And it really shows the true strength of your team along with the fact that at times you've got guys out or guys are banged up at this time of year.

So you've got to fight through it, be able to persevere throughout the season, like I said, to continue to improve, and if you do that you will put yourselves in a position to win these big games and you can't be scared to go win them. You can't worry about what's on the line. You don't want to play not to lose. You want to play to win. This team, this program, has that mentality and I felt that from the day I walked in here.

BAKER MAYFIELD: For me, it's been, you know, as later in the year the stages get bigger, implications get bigger. But the most important thing is about doing your job and that's where I've settled in doing my job, like it is handing the ball off 100 times like West Virginia last year in a blizzard or just barely throwing in the game. Just managing the clock, doing my job, putting us in the best position to win. That's what November is all about. Like you said, any way to win, sometimes you've got to do it in different ways and you need everybody on the team to do it in November and December.

Q. Baker and Obo, there was a big celebration on

the field, confetti and all that. Could you guys tell us what it felt like compared to previous Big 12 championships? You've won three in a row now. How did this differ because you were allowed to have a celebration, and Lincoln if you could address that, as well? Looks like you were distracted.

LINCOLN RILEY: That's what they said you did at our press conferences, John.

BAKER MAYFIELD: Having the big screen and the crowd still there makes it a lot of fun, but I wouldn't say that's what made it. I think what made this one was the fact that it's our third one in a row and we all -- the seniors here and Orlando as a junior, we came back with the mindset this was our first goal and we've worked so hard to get here. It's been a year long process and it feels great when it happens. The best one is always the next one.

OGBONNIA OKORONKWO: Yeah, to piggyback off of Baker, both of them are definitely special. It was special winning at home last year and it was special watching the confetti, being under the big screen but it's always the next one. You could say next year when we win it it will be even better, the next one is always going to be the best one.

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, you know, they've all been different. The first one was on the road, you know, a lot of us were just kind of getting our start, Obo at that point was just starting to play some, Baker's first year starting, Orlando's first year starting, Steven had played as a freshman and just taken on that role. That was awesome, doing it in Stillwater, and like Obo said, last year celebrating at home was great and this year at the neutral site was great, too. Hell, I don't care how we do it, as long as we win it. I will take all three of 'em. (Laughter.)

Q. Coach, you played TCU just a couple of weeks ago. What did they do different? What did you see different from them and how were you able to dominate in the second half?

LINCOLN RILEY: I don't know that either side did a ton differently. There were some small intricate things throughout the game that you could tell, some adjustments we made and some adjustments they made.

Both teams are pretty good, so you're not going to scrap everything. You do just because you're playing is somebody for the second time. I don't think either side does that really on either side of the ball. In the third quarter we had momentum from the defense and then we hit the two big plays, the one to Mykel and the one to Marquise were big plays and Baker threw great balls

and that was big. We were able to separate ourselves and get a big boost. You gotta hit some of those shots against guys like them. As good as they are and aggressive as they are when you get your chances you better make 'em, and for the most part tonight we did that on all three sides of the ball.

Q. Players, starting with Steven and working your way down, you guys were rocking along pretty well two years ago when you went into the playoff and feeling confident firm right. Do you feel more confident about your situation going into this year and if so why?

STEVEN PARKER: For sure, we had a good year as far as getting better each week, starting with practice. We always said take champ reps and they're going to equal basically winning a championship, and I feel like we've done our part. So I feel like if we keep on working the way that we've been working everything is going to play out just how we want it to.

ORLANDO BROWN: For me, that was my first year starting and naturally as I matured and been in this program for so long I'm only more confident now going into the playoffs. If we do get the opportunity, you know, I'm definitely going to be excited to go out there and lay it all on the line.

OGBONNIA OKORONKWO: I didn't have much of a role (Chuckles.) But, yeah, the team was confident then --

LINCOLN RILEY: You made up for it.

OGBONNIA OKORONKWO: Right. Now I feel like we're really confident as a team. We're really close and it's a family in that locker room. We're all excited.

BAKER MAYFIELD: I think for us, it's knowing how we're going to carry ourselves into it no matter what happens and no matter where we're at. The thing that we've learned this year and throughout the past years is sticking together is the most important. Only thing that matters is how we are in the locker room, how we handle ourselves, how we practice, how we play, how we handle ourselves off the field and how we work out. Everything factors into that, and I think for us it's continuing to know what's gotten us to this point and why we have had success and carrying that same mind-set and not changing anything for a potential playoff game, anything like that, it's just continuing the same recipe for success and that's what's gotten us here.

Q. Coach, as you look back on this season and Coach Stoops we saw him out there after the celebration, how much did you lean on him as the

season went along getting ready for this rematch for the second time in four weeks?

LINCOLN RILEY: I've definitely leaned on him. I would be crazy not to. I've told you guys you know what he means to me and how, you know, this happening, in large part is due to him, his unselfishness.

Like a lot of guys would be sitting there, like him today saying, man, that could have been me, or maybe bitter about it and he may be the happiest person out there on the field celebrating with us. That's just him. He's a special guy. I've leaned on him for advice and loved having him around and thankful we had the opportunity to have him around our program.

It's just -- you know, things are just a little bit different at Oklahoma. How many other places does the head coach that just retired is still around and still so involved and the it's just so smooth. It's just different. It's a different place. We're built different. There you go, and I think that's a big reason why you see the consistent success.

Q. Lincoln, Caleb's scoop and score there, first -- TCU's first play you guys have not have those momentous defensive plays early in games this year. What did that do for you as far as getting the ball rolling?

LINCOLN RILEY: We have had a lot of big defensive plays this year, a lot of them early in games. Not necessarily defensive touchdowns, but we have made a lot of big plays and that was a huge one, no doubt. We got the ball on the ground and great presence of mind by Caleb to scoop it and it was a huge shot in the arm for our team. Defense played extremely well the second half of the season and they were great again today.

Q. Orlando, can you talk about your match-up? You had a talented guy on you, Mat Boesen. Can you talk about how that went? And Baker, it seemed like you had an inordinate number of deep throws today. What led to you guys thinking of going that direction?

ORLANDO BROWN: You know, like you said, he is a great player. He came here with a game plan, same game plan I figured he would come here with. I was able to honestly have one of my best games of my career. I feel like I held up pretty well. I knew what he was trying to do. I knew how he was going to approach me with it being the second time we played. There were a few plays here and there where I do feel like he physically beat me, but overall, man, it was a competitive match-up.

BAKER MAYFIELD: I wouldn't say it was just the whole game plan was to go deep the whole time it just

happened that we had some guys get open. There was definitely multiple throws I would like to have back and could make better.

We just -- Marquise Brown is so fast it creates mismatches and he's one of the reasons there were many deep balls today. But other than that there were multiple throws I would like to have back.

Q. Baker, now that the regular season is over, are you going to allow yourself to think about the Heisman and also, too, when did you get the shirt updated?

LINCOLN RILEY: Why are you looking at me?

BAKER MAYFIELD: No, the thing is I'm going to enjoy looking at this next week, traveling, going on the road, and the good thing is I will be going with teammates as well and you gotta enjoy it. It has been a long season, but like I said, we will enjoy this week and after that it's back to work. Obviously I'm not going to down play that, that would be something very special, just getting to go is special enough. The reason I came back was for a national title. I had this updated before Bedlam.

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Gary Patterson
Travin Howard
John Diarse
Kenny Hill
TCU Horned Frogs

Oklahoma - 41

TCU - 17

THE MODERATOR: Okay, we're now joined by TCU, Coach, your thoughts about today's game?

GARY PATTERSON: Well, number one we played a very good Oklahoma team. You gotta give them credit. Like I told Baker and Lincoln after the ball game, last week in my press conference I tried to divert, tried to put all the pressure on me so everybody got off of it. And like I told them, I have a lot of respect for the University of Oklahoma and their football team and for Baker Mayfield, great player.

Against a team like that, especially offense you can't make mistakes. We did a great job of fighting back in the first half to get into a one-score game and you can't give up big plays. We gave up a couple, we had to scramble and got on a wide receiver and the safety didn't go. So Baker found the guy open and then we got ran by on the second one. Two plays is basically the second half and offensively we've got to do a better job in the second half. They turned up the volume and we did not.

You've got to make plays. Very proud of this football team. Very proud of these guys. Seniors, you got a group that's 10-3. Fought themselves into this ball game. Preseason we were picked sixth, and really have overcome a lot of things. We probably had one of the tougher off-conferences what we had to do as far as we had to travel in six ball games at tough places, and I thought they fought through all of that. So to get back to this not point it was great.

But you have to give Oklahoma a lot of credit. I'm proud of them being our conference champion. You

want to beat them, now the game, at the end of the days you need to cheer for them. They asked me if I thought they were one of the best ones in the country, and I said yep, I told them their offense was probably like when we played Sam Bradford back in 2008 which tells you how long I've been around here. That group played for a national championship. That's a very good group that you have across from us, and they did a very good job and made the plays they needed to today and we didn't.

Q. My question is for you, Travin Howard. What was it they were doing in the second half for that offensive explosion when the game got away?

TRAVIN HOWARD: I mean they just came out and played their football game. We executed plays, like Coach P. said, and that's pretty much it. We have to pay attention to detail and execute our calls.

Q. Gary, you and Baker had a moment after the game. Now that you're never going to have to play him again. What are your thoughts on the kind of career he's had and how challenging it's been for you as a defensive coach?

GARY PATTERSON: Well, yeah, Baker is very much alike, he could probably be a linebacker because he plays quarterback like a defensive guy. He's going to challenge you and do the things he needs to do. Kenny plays quarterback like a defensive guide.

We all grow up. We all go through it. I have been here a long time. I have talked to lots of different coaches before the ball game. They know how I am. Like I said, in the early part I try to divert by saying a few things to put all the attention on me so I could take it away from my football team and so they could get ready for the ball game. But Baker Mayfield played well today. He made the plays he needed to.

In answer to the question a second ago, like I told you, came down to two plays. We played coverage where the free safety was supposed to help the strong over the top, anytime No. 5 was in the number two position we had to protect him and we didn't and they got away from an end on a zone blitz on a scramble play, so that was basically our two touchdowns in the second half. Besides the final drive which I thought the disappointing thing I had was they lined up in 21%, were in the divide zone for about 12 plays, which to

me, that's why the 11 seed in the country, 11 people run the football.

Outside of that, you've got to give Baker credit. He hasn't just done it one year, he's done it three years. In his cast, and there are other people that graduated and he stepped up. So you shouldn't be anything that TCU should say that should take away from anything he's done today because he's had a great career and he finished the regular season with a championship, like champions do.

Q. Gary, on that first play of the second half, zone blitz, is that the risk/reward there, if you get him you get him and if not --

GARY PATTERSON: No, we had a guy going to deep third. So they brought a guy running orbit motion and the deep safety came up and played the flat, both of 'em took him. But what happened was they didn't have anybody blocking because they went to empty, and the guy that caught the ball in the end went the flat and the guy in the flat was supposed to cover him and he didn't stay with him.

Any quarterback that you give that amount of time is not going to usually end up very well. But you know, bottom line to it is if you want to come down to it as a coach you've got to take fault. So I probably shouldn't have called it.

Q. Coach, towards the end of the second quarter when you went for the field goal, 7 seconds left on the clock, going for the field goal was that probably you knew you were getting the ball back at the third quarter --

GARY PATTERSON: And I didn't have any timeouts left. You can throw to the end zone, but if you're not careful you're going to run out and end up with zero. But we did know we were going to start with the ball the second half. So I was trying to get two possessions. You can get a field goal and then you're within one score and you get the ball back and go down the field and hear you go but it obviously be didn't turn out that way.

Q. Gary, the fourth and a foot play how much did you consider a quarterback sneak there?

GARY PATTERSON: You know what? I didn't call that. Obviously, the bottom line is they knew it was, too, and Sonny called it and it didn't work. It's always easy for me to say as a head coach I wish we would have went right at 'em. Those are the things we will talk about later on. You know, defense and offense it's one of those things where when you make the play you make the play and if you don't make the play -- they all would have come in and each scored a touchdown because they all fell in on the inside zone he would have been a

hero. But it didn't work, so the bottom line is you end with them having the football.

That's really -- you know, you didn't want -- the worst thing that could happen in the third quarter happened. We didn't keep the football. We didn't go down to score and they got two big plays and the game was over.

So it's not the way we meant it to happen, but that's not the way that you want it to happen. That's probably the worst scenario we could have had and it happened. Here we go.

Q. For John Diarse. John, would you describe the touchdown catch you made that was reversed on replay and be kind of what you were thinking during the review; and then also tell us about your team mate, Jalen Reagor's season so far?

JOHN DIARSE: As far as the catch goes, all the credit goes to Kenny and the O line for giving him time and allowing him to put the ball in the right place and left me to do my job and catch it.

I just remember, you know, falling with it and having possession. I immediately ran to the sideline and told Coach, that's a catch.

GARY PATTERSON: He was arguing with me.

JOHN DIARSE: I was definitely arguing it --

GARY PATTERSON: I told him I would take it as a catch as soon as they put their hands up.

JOHN DIARSE: Great execution play all the way around, but when you have this feeling right here when you wish things would have been other ways. It really doesn't hold any weight.

As far as Jalen Reagor, that's what we expect. Freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, it's your time to make a play you make a play and he is against the bell all year long and I'm excited personally to watch him the rest of his career.

Q. Kenny Hill, can you sum up what you feel your career has been at TCU on this day, and also do you think Baker Mayfield is the Heisman Trophy winner?

KENNY HILL: My career has been up and down. Last year we didn't have the season we wanted, but we came back this year and we accomplished a lot of goals that we set out to get. It's been a fun ride and a wild ride, and I thank this guy here for giving me the opportunity to come here and play.

As far as Baker goes, man, he looks like the Heisman,

so he's put up numbers all year, played outstanding. He's one of the best in college football, so to me he looks like the Heisman.

Q. Kenny, defensively who was Oklahoma throwing at you kind of in the second half? The first half, seems like you were able to move the ball. But what did they do to you in the second half?

KENNY HILL: I mean, just kind of a mix of everything, bringing blitzes from different spots, blocking corners up and down, disguising coverages. They were just mixing it up the whole time.

I mean, they just did a good job. They came out in the second half ready to go, fired up. We scored 17 straight on them and they came out ready to go and they weren't about to let that happen again. We just didn't come out and execute, though.

Q. For John Diarse, John, you found a home here. Have you had a chance to reflect on your time here at TCU?

JOHN DIARSE: Definitely so and much like Kenny, thankful for Coach Patterson for letting me come here and live out my dream and continue to play college football. Personally before we left the hotel I began to reflect on just the past five years. Just battling through so much adversity and still getting to this chance that a lot of guys don't get to play in. It's definitely been a fun ride, just one that I'm thankful for and I mean the sky is the limit as far as the future goes.

Q. Travin, this is your final game against Mayfield, this level, you've seen a lot of him. What thoughts do you have of him as you move on in your career?

TRAVIN HOWARD: His play speaks for itself. You can't take anything away from him. Like Kenny said, he comes out every week and he balls. You can't take anything away from him. He's a good football player.

Q. Kenny, is it enough to play for a Big 12 Championship when you know there is no likelihood of a playoff berth?

KENNY HILL: Obviously we wanted to win the game and it just didn't turn out that way this year. I mean, like -- yeah, you want to win this game, you want to have your name up there to go into the playoff, but we just -- on offense we didn't come out and execute like we needed to second half. That's just --

GARY PATTERSON: I can answer that for you. Yes, it is. Anytime you can win a championship, there is only going to be until we go to eight it's only going to be four teams. Get to this point to play for a championship, to get to this point, I mean -- like I told them, our kids didn't have any reason to be down. We're disappointed that we didn't win. As a program, that's what we built

and we're not going to take a backseat to anybody.

These three guys are great ambassadors of what TCU football is all about. They sit up here and they're going to answer good questions and try to be great hosts and go about their business, but the bottom line to it is we want to win a national championship. We're going to keep working toward that. We're going to get back on the recruiting trail and recruit guys to get an opportunity to play in this game. Yes, I think it's well worth it. If you didn't, then you shouldn't do it.

To me, I didn't think you saw a team out there that was going 50%. Because they didn't know whether they were going to have a chance to play in the playoffs. You had a team that was battling their tails off against a really good football team. If you would have said 20 years ago that were people sitting in this room 20 years ago that laughed, and here we are last three years out four we've won over ten ball games. We played for titles. We tied for one. We played for a championship today, and we're going to keep doing it and try to recruit guys like this sitting up here that make a difference. I told them this didn't have to be a -- you should hang your head deal because you lost to a good football team, a team that's got a chance to give whoever they play. If they get into the playoffs everything they want, especially offensively. So for us, this is a good group of young people. I said that at the beginning of the year and I still say that. We have a great fan base. I loved the way we showed up and to be honest with you it was great on both sides. Both schools had great attendance. It was fun to be a part of it and I think it speaks well for the Big 12 conference. You had two teams that wanted to win T it was a close ball game at halftime and we didn't do what we needed to do.

But that's what Oklahoma did. They wanted to win a championship and they did that. They came back and imposed their will and the bottom line is it was 41-17. We need to -- if we want to be better as a program then we're going to have to keep improving, keep getting better. That's our whole goal.

Q. I think if I read this right, Oklahoma has won 11 of the 22 Big 12 championships. What do you guys or any team in this conference need to do to narrow that gap and what do you see as the gap between Oklahoma and everybody else in this league?

GARY PATTERSON: I don't know, everybody has had their shots. You gotta understand that there are some people that believe -- you gotta get to where you believe you can play on that level every day. That's what I told them. Any conference we have been in, our goal was to set our standard to the teams that won. When we went to the Mountain West, it was BYU and

Utah. When we were in conference USA it was Louisville and Southern Miss at the time.

So for us our standard of where we need to get to and what we need to do recruitingwise, schemewise, coachingwise, playerwise is Oklahoma. And, you know, up to this year, every one of our ball games to be honest up to this year had been less than 7 points. These were the two football games that got out of hand and they're a good football team. The last time it was like that was when Sam Bradford was there in 2008. 2008 they had a team that -- we lost two ball games that year, we lost to Oklahoma and they played for a national championship, and we lost to Utah, and in the last 40 seconds, and they beat Alabama in the Sugar Bowl, we were 11-2. And we have been here before and we know what you got to do to get things done and the way this league is we've got to keep recruiting and coaching and I think you've seen the level of defense get better in this league this year and I think you're going to keep seeing it improve.

There's a lot of parity and anybody that tells you it's okay to play in two separate conferences and it's harder is wrong. You've got to play everybody in this league every year once, and our case to come back and play Oklahoma twice is a tough venture, especially the way they were playing toward the end of the year. We're going to keep battling. That's what our goal is. If it means we have to go through Norman all the time to get there, that's what we'll do. But we will have fun trying.

Q. Gary, Oklahoma's defense has been a punch line on these playoff shows. Doesn't seem like the Committee thinks much of the OU defense. What do you think?

GARY PATTERSON: We will see. Everybody said we didn't play any defense in the league last year and look how they played against Auburn last year in the bowl game.

My advice to 'em is just wait! I mean, they got an opportunity a year ago to go play and they played very well. They will be as physical as a lot of teams they're going to play against. Everybody said they weren't up to par last year and they won their bowl game. My advice is, I'll put the challenge out whoever gets an opportunity to play 'em, have fun! We've got a chance to do it twice.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much. Congratulations on your season, and good luck in the bowl games.