

Texas Football Press Conference

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Transcripts courtesy of ASAP Sports

Lorenzo Joe

Q. When the season started you weren't named on the depth chart, and you sent out a tweet. How did you feel at the beginning of the year when you weren't on the depth chart and how hard did you work to get into position where you could be and have the impact you have?

LORENZO JOE: I just used it as motivation. Like I said, I just went out to practice every day, kept working hard, and that's all I could do. I've been supporting the guys that have been playing the whole year, just trying to bring a lot of energy to the sideline during the games, and I got my opportunity against TCU game, and like I said, been working hard and hopefully just keep on building off that.

Q. What did Jay Norvell tell you after that TCU game and just kind of your hard work in that game and the way you played in that game to earn the start against Oklahoma?

LORENZO JOE: He just told me great job, way to be ready, and that's been my whole mindset this whole year. When my opportunity is given, I take advantage of it, and I feel like I did a great job taking advantage of it. He came up to me and said, hey, start the OU game. It really didn't matter to me whether I was starting or not. I just wanted to help contribute. But got the start, and like I said, it was a big win for us, and now we're getting ready for Kansas State.

Q. How did you get balanced during the bye-week kind of -- enjoying the OU win and celebrating what was a big accomplishment versus knowing that there's still a lot of work to be done and you're nowhere near where you want to be yet?

LORENZO JOE: It was a big win for us. We used the bye week, like you said, to get healthy, and it felt good to go back home and relax, and we worked hard during the bye week, but it was good to get off our feet and just kind of chill. Now it's just keep on building off that win and carrying that momentum to the remainder of the season.

Q. Going back to the beginning of the year, how surprised were you that you weren't even listed on the depth chart, and what did you take when that depth chart came out and that happened? What was going through your mind? Did you think you had done enough?

Were you really that surprised?

LORENZO JOE: Like I said, it was a selfish tweet on my part. I was a little upset, but I couldn't get down. I have great parents, they always say, hey, keep a positive attitude, and that's what I've been doing. It took care of itself, so I couldn't care less. As long as we're out there winning and going out there and competing every day, that's all I care about.

Q. How do you block out what you saw this week in OU versus Kansas State?

LORENZO JOE: Well, Kansas State, they're going to be hungry, especially after that loss. After the TCU game we were hungry for a win, went out against OU and got that win, so they're going

to come in here and they're going to fight hard. We've just got to keep on coming out here and working hard during practice, prepare hard, and like I said, they're going to be hungry for a win. We've just got to hit them in the mouth first.

Q. I would imagine watching film after Oklahoma, you got a lot of accolades for your blocking on the edge. What were guys saying about it, and you didn't have 100 yards receiving it seems like you made just as big an impact?

LORENZO JOE: It doesn't matter about the individual stats. Coach Norvell always preaches to us how important blocking is. That's what I was doing. I was just doing what I've been coached to do, and you know, not just me. It was all the receivers, the O-line was opening up holes for the running backs and the running backs were doing a great job of finding those holes, and receivers, they blocked downfield, and that's what we were doing and got the big win. That's what we needed.

Q. Charlie has made a point of saying that the players never gave up and doubted or questioned anything, but did it feel differently this week in practice, finally you getting that big win to give you an extra bit of confidence and belief?

LORENZO JOE: Oh, yeah, for sure. Like I said, especially after that win, we were excited, and we can't take any steps backwards, we've got to keep on moving forward, and we're going to keep on doing that. Still got the second half of the season to go, and we're going to keep on working hard every week and going out there and competing hard on Saturdays.

Q. Were you a Longhorns fan growing up and did you have a favorite receiver that you liked to watch and wanted to be like?

LORENZO JOE: I've always been a die-hard Texas fan ever since I was little. I've been playing quarterback ever since I was little, too, so I didn't really have a favorite receiver. My favorite player was actually Colt McCoy because I'm from Abilene, he's from Tuscola, right down the road, and I actually wore No. 12 in high school because of him. That was kind of the guy I looked up to when I was younger, and then of course Vince Young and stuff like that. But really haven't had a favorite receiver, but I guess if I did, it would be Roy Williams because he's from Odessa, and I'm from Abilene. We're in the same district, so we played against those guys. So probably Roy Williams.

Q. Did you get credit for the touchdown (after Swoopes' fumble in the end zone) against Oklahoma?

LORENZO JOE: I don't know. I really don't care. We got the win, so that's all I care about.

Q. What were you thinking when that ball was rolling -- it kind of seemed like everybody stopped.

LORENZO JOE: Everybody stopped, and I just saw the ball rolling, and thought, hey, I might as well go pick it up just in case, and I picked it up, kind of looked around, and I saw Tyrone celebrating, I already saw the ref throw up the touchdown, but I couldn't care less if I got a touchdown. We got the win.

Q. What's it been like since you came in? You got here, going through everything that Charlie has gone through and seeing the program develop over the last year and 10

months. What's it been like to go through this experience?

LORENZO JOE: It's been different. You know, shoot, I mean, I haven't really experienced a coaching change, so it was kind of different when I got in here and the guys before us telling us different things and stuff like that. But we just -- everybody is starting to buy into Coach Strong's -- all the things he's brought in, so we're doing a great job of doing that.

Q. What were they saying to you? What was some of what the older guys saying to you?

LORENZO JOE: Just how different it was from Mack Brown and Coach Strong and how things were kind of more laid back and stuff like that when he was there, and now Coach Strong, he's -- at practice every day, he's intense, so that's what we need to have as a head coach.

Q. I know you take one game at a time, but big picture, are you guys thinking bowl game and trying to get as many wins as you can to keep that bowl streak alive and help put the T back in Texas?

LORENZO JOE: Yeah, that's our main goal right now, get to a bowl game, get the seniors to a bowl game, and that's what we're going to do. We're just going to keep on working hard like I said, every week, preparing hard, and we're going to get to a bowl game.

Taylor Doyle

Q. I asked you the week of the OU game did you guys have it in you to be as physical as you could be and out-physical OU, and you did it. Where did that come from and how do you maintain it?

TAYLOR DOYLE: You know, going into that game we knew we had to play physical, and with the rivalry situation we knew that was going to be a big part of the game. Coach has stressed that. All the guys did it, and you know, you can see it in the game film at every position, guys were playing hard, playing fast, and playing behind the pads. So we just need to find a way to continue to do that and play like that week in and week out.

Q. As a senior leader, how do you get the guys to maintain that that aren't used to doing it on a weekly basis? It's kind of been inconsistent over the last few years.

TAYLOR DOYLE: Well, it starts in practice. It's something you have to do every day, and it's something you pride yourself on and make your identity. You can't do it in games and you can't do it when it's convenient. It has to be an all-the-time thing.

Q. How bad do you want revenge and redemption against Kansas State? They shut you out last year.

TAYLOR DOYLE: Absolutely. We're going into this game and we want to be prepared to play our game and play solid UT football. So that starts this week. That started last week with working through our bye week and focusing on fundamentals and technique and preparing, and now we just have to continue to game plan, and we trust that the coaches are going to put us in a position to win.

Q. How bad does it feel that you were shut out in Manhattan against the Wildcats last year?

TAYLOR DOYLE: You know, that doesn't fall in line with any of our standards we set for ourselves as players and coaches and as a program, so obviously it hurts, and we're ready to go out and play our style of football.

Q. Taylor, did you watch the K-State game? What were some of the thoughts you had on the team you're going to see Saturday?

TAYLOR DOYLE: You can count on K-State to execute and play solid football. They aren't going to make many mistakes, and that's what we're expecting going into this week. We know they aren't going to give us the game. We're going to have to play our game and out-execute and be more physical and play our standard of football. So we expect to see a talented team who's going to execute well and play well.

Q. With all the things that are being said on a national level and I'm sure by some of your friends, what's the last week been like after OU, to get that win and kind of get the program turned in the right direction? What have people been saying to you, that kind of stuff?

TAYLOR DOYLE: You know, we had a lot of fun celebrating after the game and the rest of the weekend, but going into our bye week we know where we're still standing in the conference and with our record, and we know the caliber of team we can be. That was -- we saw that on that Saturday, and we know that we're going to have to continue to work and continue to improve to play that football consistently.

This past week is all about getting better.

Q. I know your Friday nights are going to be focused on K-State and getting ready. Are you going to have a thing in your ear listening to Westlake-Lake Travis (high school game)?

TAYLOR DOYLE: I've heard this is a big one. I haven't seen Westlake play Lake Travis in a long time. I don't think that'll start this week.

Q. What impressed you about Paul (Boyette, Jr.) over there? He's a married man, but he had a great game against those Sooners.

TAYLOR DOYLE: Yeah, he has his head on straight and he's going to come out and play every day at practice and every game. We always know we can count on him to play tough football and do his job, and so we're fortunate to have him.

Paul Boyette Jr.

Q. How do you ground the guys after a week of celebrating OU and getting everybody back to knowing where you guys actually are?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: At the end it's being motivated, because hey, we didn't have the start that we wanted to and then we just took the Oklahoma game as a stepping-stone moving forward, and we've just got to go back to the drawing boards and let everybody know that we mean business, and that means taking extra film, doing extra work in the classroom, film room, doing everything we need to do to be successful for Saturday.

Q. Is that happening?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: Yes.

Q. How much did the Oklahoma game help you guys find your identity?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: It helped us find out what we can do, really, because we worked our behinds off in preseason camp, and moving forward, it's just really a stepping-stone, just letting the nation know that we do have an outstanding front on both sides, just moving forward, and we can go out there and impact the game on both sides of the line of scrimmage.

Q. K-State got the best of you guys last year. Seems like they've always recently gotten the best of the Longhorns. What makes that team so tough and how bad do you want revenge?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: I want revenge on them bad because I played in that game last year, and it wasn't a good feeling. But give K-State credit because those guys go out there and play their tails off for Coach Snyder. They have an excellent program at Kansas State. I'm not taking anything away from them. They're really, really good technicians. They do the Xs and Os of the game. They go out there and execute and play hard for the coach.

But for me moving forward, the game I participated in last year was not a good feeling, and the previous years were not a good feeling, and I know coming back here on Saturday at 11:00 a.m., I'm going to put on a show and we're going to put on a show and let everybody know that we mean business.

Q. What do you think made the difference in the performance against Oklahoma and against previous performances?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: I just feel like we played a total team effort on defense. It wasn't no miscues, wasn't no missed assignments. Everybody was going out there executing. And also, again, this was a kids' game. Everybody was having fun flying around and just being happy, going out here and playing a game that they were recruited for and that they loved.

Q. Is that something you guys have been talking about?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: Yes, sir.

Q. I don't know if you watched the K-State-Oklahoma game this weekend, but if you did, how hard is it to not look at that and see what K-State did and know that you're going to see a different opponent here than what they showed last week?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: Again, that's a good question because K-State always goes out and executes, and I know this past weekend they didn't have a good game, and I know me moving forward, you can't just go out there and scout them about what they put up against Oklahoma because they have a talented team. I know they got away from running the ball. They passed the ball a lot against Oklahoma, but that's not them. That wasn't K-State.

Q. They're kind of in the same boat as you are. You guys were coming off that TCU loss looking for some kind of pride in the program. They're kind of in that same boat, aren't they?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: Yeah, and I just feel like moving forward, this is going to be a battle of

the ages here because it's going to come down to which team wants it more, and I feel in my heart that we want it more.

Q. After the game I think it was Jerrod [Heard] that said you were taking too professional an approach to the game. You just mentioned playing a kids' game. How important was that to maybe put all that aside and just go play the game?

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: Just going out there and executing and having fun with your brothers. We practice all the time together, so why can't we go out there and play and have fun, just enjoy each other and have fun, cut loose. I feel like that's what we did in all three phases of the ball, just went out there and cut loose and had fun.

Q. Was it different in practice this past week? Not that you guys doubted yourselves, but you finally did get a big result and can feel good about yourselves.

PAUL BOYETTE, JR.: I think people just gain confidence through adversity. I know everybody was counting us out, but hey, everybody -- we can only control what goes on in the locker room. We can only control what we put on the film and put out there on Saturday on national television, and what we put out there was we know what we've got to do. We know how to do it, and we know how to go out there and execute it.

Marcus Johnson

Q. Marcus, can you explain how Lorenzo Joe went from off the depth chart at the beginning of the year to starting against Oklahoma and making the impact that he did?

MARCUS JOHNSON: Just staying focused, honestly. It's one of those things where it might not go your way at the beginning, going through two-a-days and just how everything unfolded at the beginning of the season, but always being ready for the opportunity, and when it came, he took advantage of it at TCU, and then from there he just continued to build on it and continued to grow as a player.

Q. How are you approaching the second half of the season, coming off that big win against Oklahoma but knowing where the team is standings-wise?

MARCUS JOHNSON: It was definitely a confidence booster, again, that we needed going into the second half of the season, but it's the same approach, continue to stay humble, just continue to work hard, continue to build on the success that we had against Oklahoma, and you know, different game planning in situations like that for different teams, and like Coach Strong said, just taking advantage of what teams give us and capitalizing when plays need to be made.

Q. Just back on Lorenzo for a second, what was the film room like? Because I'm sure it's great when a guy has a 50-yard touchdown catch or a diving catch or whatever. What was it like the way he blocked against Oklahoma? I would imagine there was some pretty good stuff in the film room?

MARCUS JOHNSON: Oh, yeah, we watched it in the film room and we were messing with him, like, okay, 'Renzo, things like that. Like I said, we were happy for him, and it was one of those things, blocking, passes that come his way, he's been capitalizing and taking advantage of all those things. It's always great to have guys in the locker room, and especially for the receivers to

go out there and have success on the field. We'll continue to make sure that he's ready and we'll continue to work as a group to get better.

Q. Having been in this program a long time and seeing everything that's happened since you got here, with all the tension and national media saying what they were saying about the program, what's the last week been week and how different has the last week been?

MARCUS JOHNSON: Honestly it's just how crazy people can switch, how fast they can switch from oh, this and that to praising you and telling you how good you are, and it's one of those things where you can't get caught up in it. We keep it in house, continue to push each other as a team, but after the TCU loss we can't let outside factors dictate how we play, whether it be too high or too low, and we have to stay grounded and continue to work every week because you're going to get the best from every team that you go out against.

Q. How hungry are you against a K-State team that shut you guys out last year and have played pretty well against you guys?

MARCUS JOHNSON: Just going out there and redeem ourselves, going out there and making plays, and like I said, just going out there and fighting for each other. We can't really get too caught up in the fact that whatever happened last year. It was what it was. But obviously you want to go out there and play well for each other and for Coach (Strong), but we're not really worried about last year too much. We're just playing our game, honestly.

Q. How big is your role this week in keeping this team grounded after winning a game like Oklahoma and kind of getting everybody back to a sense of reality of still got to go do it this week and do it on a consistent basis?

MARCUS JOHNSON: Just bringing energy to practice, just continue to put in the extra work like I said that I've been doing throughout the season, and like I said, not getting complacent. You have a win like that and you tend to feel good about yourself and other things like that, but you've got to continue to have that grounded mindset and that mentality that it can all change in a week. We have to continue to stay on top.

Q. I know you have to be careful to stay in the moment, but especially for you as a senior, how much does getting to a bowl game and having that goal out there matter to you?

MARCUS JOHNSON: I mean, it's huge. Definitely ending my senior year on a bowl game and on that note is something that we're working towards. We know the work that put in, and it's going to be one of those things where we have to go out there compete each week. Like I said, we'll continue to get the best from every team, and I'm going to continue to put the work in. We're all going to continue to put the work in that we need to week in and week out and just go out there and make plays and put ourselves in that position to have a bowl chance.

Q. You talk about not getting complacent. Is that kind of easier said than done to get everybody to think like that?

MARCUS JOHNSON: Honestly, not so much. I think we've been through so much at the beginning of the season that we know just from one win that we had last week that that doesn't dictate who we are as a team, and we have to go out every week and show who we are. Oklahoma was definitely a start, but guys are hungry. They know what we have to do, and they understand that we still have to put the work in.

Q. Did you watch any of the K-State-Oklahoma game Saturday, and at what point do you say, we know this isn't the team we're going to get this week?

MARCUS JOHNSON: I watched a little bit, and I saw the quarterback got hurt. I only watched a couple plays. At that point it was late in the game. But obviously I didn't watch too much and let that be a telltale sign of what's going to come for us. They're definitely going to have a week where they watch the film, they learn from it, just like we had to learn from our losses, and they'll come out ready to play. Like I said, we can't let that game dictate how we see them or how we view them as a team because that's not how they're going to come out and play against us.

D'Onta Foreman

Q. How does it feel to be a celebrity on campus? You've got the golden hat; you guys are taking over the college football world (laughs).

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Yeah, you know, it just feels good to win a game like that, come out there after the week we had against TCU, to come out there and win that game. It felt good. I wouldn't say celebrities, though. I don't look at it like that.

Q. How much did the program change in one week?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: I feel like it changed a lot. I feel like a lot of guys have a lot of confidence. The team has confidence. I feel like it was always there, but you know, just the way we play, some of it kind of faded away. So I feel like everyone got their confidence back after that game, and hopefully we just keep it up.

Q. How do you play like you did against Oklahoma on a consistent basis?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Just work hard at practice, just go to practice every day and work hard. You know, remember the situation we were in, like even though we played good against Oklahoma, we still have a lot to prove and a lot to do. So just keep working hard.

Q. Is it hard to think you're 2-4? Has it been hard to realize that with the win you just had?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Yes, because I know we're a better team than that. Like I said last week, week before last, I feel like we're a good team and I feel like we can be a good team, we've just got to keep building confidence and keep coming together as a team and just listening to the coaches and go out there and win ballgames.

Q. With the confidence from the OU game but knowing you still have a lot to prove, how did you approach the bye week?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: We approached the bye week just like any other week, really. Just go out there and work hard and tried to improve on the little things. Yesterday we had practice, and practice went really well yesterday, and all last week it went well, too. We've just got to build off that, come into this week and have the same tempo, same intensity out there at practice, and we'll go out there and try to get another win this week.

Q. Is there any frustration that you're not the starter?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: No, sir. I do what I'm asked to do. I just go out there and play hard every game. That's all.

Q. Do you want that position or do you strive for it?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Everyone wants to start. That's something -- but I don't look at it as me being a starter. I know I'm going to get my reps in at game time, so when I go out there I just do the best I can do.

Q. You surprised some people from the outside looking in with your production this year. Have you surprised yourself with how well you've played?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: No, sir. I always had confidence in myself. I've always felt like I can go out there and be productive on the field. But I didn't really show it early a lot. I had to just continue to show, continue to build, and I knew it, I just had to go out there and show it.

Q. Did you hear coming into Texas when you were getting recruited, you weren't the biggest recruited running back. Did you hear that? Did it motivate you?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Oh, yeah, definitely. My brother was a bigger recruit than me. I was happy for him, but at the same time we're very competitive. So to hear someone say that he was better than me, that just pushed me to be the best. Then I heard like other recruits, and I wasn't really getting talked about like that. I knew that I was good, like my senior year, I did really well and I still wasn't being -- I didn't get the satisfaction that I feel like I should have gotten. I used that last year and this year to go out there and just show the world who I really am and what I have.

Q. Is there a week-to-week competition between you and your brother?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Oh, yeah, definitely. But we congratulate each other all the time. It's fun just being out there with him. We have our little friendly rivalry, but it's all fun and games, really.

Q. How hard of a time have your teammates given you for not getting in the end zone (on his long run against Oklahoma)?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Oh, man, we had that conversation all week. Really we're still having it. They said I should have scored. They said, 'I thought you were faster than that.' I am fast, but they were fast, too. That was all, but they were happy for me, just the run I had. It was a big point in the game, and I just went out there and did what I could do.

Q. After the OU game, I think it was Jerrod [Heard] that said y'all put the professionalism aside and just went out and played for fun and enjoyed it. Was that part of the struggle early was trying to be so square and right about everything that you do forget to go have fun and enjoy the game?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Yes, sir, I think that was a problem. I know for myself going at times in the game we were just trying to do everything right and not being relaxed out there in the game. I feel like going into the TCU game, I feel like -- I was telling Johnathan [Gray] before the game, I feel like today I feel loose. I feel like I'm ready to play. And even though we didn't have the best showing out there, I feel like I played well, and I just tried to carry that on to the Oklahoma game, so hopefully I can just continue to carry that and keep playing the way I'm playing.

Q. What did it mean to you to have Armanti [Foreman] get a tattoo of you and him on his back?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Oh, that was wonderful. Actually I got the same tattoo. It's kind of different, but I have the same picture he has on my back, too. It was something that he thought about. He came up with it first. He was just like, man, I really like that picture. I think I'm going to get it. So I went with him to get it and I saw how the lady did it, and I really liked it. I thought we should get the matching tattoo. We love each other so much, it's crazy the love we have for each other. And we surprised our mom and our dad with it because they didn't know we got it until afterwards, and they were really happy. They just see how much they love each other, so I guess we wanted to show the world, too.

Q. Who's been taking first-team reps at running back?

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Johnathan [Gray]. Well, I mean, we go -- we switch in and out with the first team, but he starts.

Q. Does anybody work harder than him on the team? It seems like his leadership and his work ethic are kind of a step above everybody else's.

D'ONTA FOREMAN: Johnathan works hard every day. I have to give it to him. But I can't really say that he works harder than everybody else because there are a lot of people out there that work hard. So I mean I don't look at it to compare anybody. I think a lot of people work hard every day, but he definitely stands out, yes.

Q. What do you see in these Kansas State Wildcats? How tough are these guys? They shut you guys out last year.

D'ONTA FOREMAN: You know, I feel like they're a good football team. The game that they played against Oklahoma this week, I don't really look at that. I feel like they're a much better football team than that. I feel like we were a much better football team after we played TCU, too, so we're just going to go out there. I feel like it's going to be a dogfight. We'll go out there and play hard, continue to practice hard, and I feel like we can get out of there with a win, but that's just confidence.

Johnathan Gray

Q. How much better did it feel to be Texas football players the past week?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: It felt great. You know, guys were focused during Oklahoma week, there was a lot at stake. We had a sit-down with each other and said, this is going to determine our season here, and guys went and played, had a great game, and I think things are turning around now. We're still 2-4, but there's a lot of motivation going forward through the season.

Q. You know how this works, though; easy to stay on that high and not get focused in on K-State. How do you get those young guys to tune in and zone in?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: They've got to become mature. That was last week, or two weeks ago. You know, it's a new day, new ballgame. Got to get ready for K-State. They're going to come in with their best. How they played against Oklahoma, that's in the past. They're going to come

prepared and ready to play against us. Guys have to stay more in tune with the offense and defense, and just keep playing.

Q. How do you carry that momentum over into the second half knowing you guys control your own destiny?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Keep working, watching film, making guys better at practice, and just staying in tune with football in the season. You know, sometimes you can get sidetracked by that, but that's where leadership steps in and maturity steps in. I think we have that right now on the team, and guys are just focused and wanting to keep proving that Texas is tough and Texas is trying to fight through it and can get through it.

Q. What about seeing this Kansas State defense that shut you guys off last year?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Yeah, that happened last year. You know, we went in there and just couldn't get things going. Like you said, it's a new year. We'll go back and watch film and see what we can do to work on and just make sure we execute plays and be focused when we step up to the plate with them.

Q. In a weird way can you guys relate to what K-State is doing right now in the sense that they got blown out by OU?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Not really. K-State didn't get the backlash like we get it. You know, they lose a game, it's okay, K-State lost. We lose a game, leadership is out the window, what's going on with Coach Strong and all this stuff. But you can't be focused about that. You know, like I said, it's a new day. Guys got to stay focused and be prepared to go against a team each and every day. We've just got to go in there with our minds right and our foot down and go.

Q. Does it relieve the tension around the program winning that game? I know you try not to worry about the outside, but there's so much on the outside and now all that is kind of gone?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Yeah, like I said, guys were focused. We knew we were getting bashed and all this stuff. We knew we had to go in and prove everybody wrong, but it was more so about each individual. We came together. We said, 'Hey, this is our season, we're going to take over. We can't worry about anybody else or anything, what's being said, and we've got to go out and play.' Guys did just that. I think it's a new mindset in the locker room, and guys are just focused on football, nothing else, nothing less. That's what we need to help us get through the season.

Q. There's so much talk about the D'Onta-Armanti battle with so much competition going on. Is there one between you and D'Onta where you're trying to hold on to your starter spot?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: There's definitely a competition at each position. You know, D'Onta is on a roll right now, and we're happy for him. He gets in, he does what he's supposed to do. When I get in, I do what I'm supposed to do. That's the coach's decision. Both of us are playing our tails off to help this team win, and you know, the coaches feel comfortable whoever is in will get the job done.

We'll see.

Q. Even when you guys were losing, y'all still came in here with confidence. You have this win now; is there more confidence now on this team?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Oh, yeah. We said we had to play with confidence. We can't get down on ourselves in bad times, and as long as we can fight through situations and band as brothers, we can get through anything. That's what we're doing right now, and we feel comfortable with each other.

Peter Jinkens

Q. How do you keep everybody grounded after such a big win? What do you say to guys to let them know they've got to focus in now and not worry about OU?

PETER JINKENS: Because we're still 2-4, so I mean, it was a great win, but at the same time, like we're still 2-4. There's still a whole lot more work to be done.

Q. What's the last week been like? Did you feel the tension around the program kind of go away and people smiling at you and waving at you and that stuff?

PETER JINKENS: Yeah, a little bit. It was just good to get a win. But like I said before, we've got to stay focused and not worry about what everybody else is saying for now. Like I said, we've still got a whole lot more work to do.

Q. How much do you all kind of ride that momentum, though?

PETER JINKENS: I mean, we can ride it, but that should be our standard all the time. We need to hold ourselves to that standard and just need to have good games like that all the time because I know that's what we can do. We have to be able to put it all together.

Q. There was so much talk about Malik (Jefferson) before this year started and early on this year. Were you kind of like, "Hey, I'm here, too, don't forget about me?" You've had some great games so far.

PETER JINKENS: Oh, no - Not at all. I'm not really big on that kind of stuff. But, he's a great player. I feel like he's going to be a great player to come here in the future. I'm fixing to leave (as a senior) anyway, so he can have all that. I don't really need it.

Q. Where have you taken your biggest step this year do you think?

PETER JINKENS: I feel like being more of a leader, being able to make plays. I mean, I haven't had the year I wanted to have, but it's just life, so...

Q. Did you watch any of the K-State-OU game Saturday?

PETER JINKENS: Yeah, I watched it, but that's not who K-State is in my opinion. I played them the last three years, and they're a real good team. I wouldn't judge them off that game, because if you look at it, when we played TCU, we got beat badly, so I wouldn't think too much of that game.

Q. They're kind of in the same boat as you; they're coming off a blowout loss. Do you kind of see them in that same light?

PETER JINKENS: Yeah, and they're going to come here amped up and ready to play. We just

have to stay calm and be focused in on our assignments because they're a really good team, so we can't let that game cloud our judgment of them.

Q. Why have you all had such trouble with K-State? What is it about them that's different? What do they do so well?

PETER JINKENS: They have good execution. I mean, they're a real good football team. They're real physical. But if it's one thing, I'd say that they don't make many mistakes.

Duke Thomas

Q. What's the biggest message you give to the team this week going into K-State?

DUKE THOMAS: Knowing they're a hard-fought team. Don't look at what they played last week as any measurement of how good that team is, and really just been looking at the other game tape because we know what they're capable of. We played them last year, the same team that tried to -- they beat us last year, and we're not going to underestimate them at all.

Q. What makes them such a big challenge for this program? Texas has really struggled against K-State over the last really 10 years.

DUKE THOMAS: I mean, really just talking about K-State, they're just a really good team fundamentally. They don't make many mistakes, and they capitalize when you make a mistake. Another thing, they hold onto the ball, they usually win the position battle, and it'll be good for us to make sure we get off the field on 3rd down and really try to get the ball out of their hands.

Q. How important is it for you all to not get too high or too low coming off that big win over Oklahoma? You guys are still 2-4.

DUKE THOMAS: Yeah, that's the reality of it, but like I've always said, it's a one-game season. That's a long time ago. If you're still worrying about that game, you need to move on. Really that's our mindset right now. We're going to K-State knowing that we've got to get another W and keep this momentum going.

Q. Did it feel like the tension around the program was kind of sucked away and things are kind of looking a different direction? It really felt like from the outside perspective of national media members and people saying stuff about the program before OU, seems like after that win things have calmed down a little bit at least?

DUKE THOMAS: Yeah, definitely, like you just said, the outside perspective. From us, from the inside, that had nothing to do with it. We always knew what we were capable of. So really from the outside, like you said, it definitely changed the way people were talking about us, and that's good to hear.

Q. Is it good for y'all? Is it easier to walk around campus?

DUKE THOMAS: Definitely, of course. I mean, hearing the outside stuff, you try and stay away from it, but you definitely hear it and it definitely gets to you every now and then. And for us to know that we have that capability and being able to show it and execute the way we did Saturday, move forward from that and really do it every weekend.

Q. Do you feel like you guys kind of got a monkey off your back?

DUKE THOMAS: Yeah, like I was saying, just hearing everybody from an outside perspective, it's really having a different angle on the way they view our program, and like I said, for us, it's just the confidence, and really just moving forward and making it happen every week.

Q. This is your third straight 11:00 a.m. kick and you've had two complete opposite results. How important is it to set the tone early?

DUKE THOMAS: Like we did at TCU, had a three-and-out, and after that it went bad. After that last Oklahoma game, we got a three-and-out and Coach came to us and said, we can't have the same result we had last week, and really for us that's just our confidence. That's us playing together. That's us keeping that intensity and not letting down, letting go. You've got to keep that swagger, keep that confidence going, and just really do the things that we do each series in and out.

Q. Does it take an active mentality like that to prepare for TCU and Oklahoma and take it forward to this one?

DUKE THOMAS: Yeah, it definitely is going to take an active mindset when you're doing that because I feel like when we talked about it, when we talked about not letting it go to that, everybody got that urge, everybody got that, 'Oh we can't let this happen' attitude, and that was good for us during that last game. We've definitely got to keep that going.

Q. How tough is it, though? I mean, it's easy to say we've got to keep going week in and week out, and every week you see guys get upset. How tough is it to get guys jacked up week in and week out?

DUKE THOMAS: I mean, it shouldn't be tough. You play this game for a reason, you love this game. But upsets and things of that sort, every game it's who's the best team on that Saturday, who's the best team on that day. And really that's what we're going to try to take the attitude to, and come out this next Saturday, coming out at 11:00 a.m., we want to try to be the better team.

Sedrick Flowers

Q. How much confidence do y'all have now heading into the second half of the season?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: I mean, I feel like we're pretty confident. It's pretty rough the first half, all the losses, you know, people -- all you hear every day on media and everything like that and on TV, everybody is beating us down, talking bad about Coach and things like that. But through it all we kind of just stuck together. The team is all we got, so we kind of stayed together and pulled together. We came into the game and played the game how we wanted to play and showed everybody how we can play. Then, just going through the bye week and having more than a week to work on ourselves. Giving guys that are nicked up (a chance to rest), get them well again and working on technique and working on plays that are fundamental for us and getting better. It was good for us.

Q. Now that you don't necessarily have the motivation of people talking down about you and kind of putting you down, how do you bring that same focus and energy into the next game?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: People are still talking down on us. We're not having the best season, you know, as far as our wins to losses. That's motivation, that's still there because we're not having the best season. But I kind of play just for the love of the game, just to go out there and play football. Some guys play because people are talking down on you. I play because I like football.

Q. How do you kind of keep that going, ground guys and make sure that they forget that OU is over now, try to focus in on Kansas State?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: Well, you tell them. You let everybody know that OU, it happened, we played good, enjoy what happened. But I guess three days, you're going to live with that for three days and go into Sunday and we have to practice up again, and you have to forget about it. Don't forget about how you played and how you prepared, but forget about all the patting on the back and all the accolades you got because those same people that are talking down on you saying you weren't a player or you couldn't do this or couldn't do that.

Q. You well know the struggles you guys have had with Kansas State over the last five, ten years. What is it about their program that makes them such a challenge?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: Well, I mean, they really just play their game. They don't deviate from that. They're a 4-2 on defense, and on offense they get the ball and hold it all game if they can. They bleed the clock out for everything it's worth, really. They get the ball, the first possession is 15 minutes, and the offense on our team gets the ball with eight minutes left on the clock. They hold the ball the whole entire game, and they get that game plan and they stay with it, really. That's what makes them successful in my eyes, and they do a good job at it.

Q. As one of the older guys on this team, how do you make the younger guys understand that the team, K-State team that just lost 55-0 to the Oklahoma team that you guys just beat is probably not going to be the Kansas State team that comes to play you?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: Exactly. You point that out. You point out what happened with OU, or even with us, how we played against TCU and we go out and play again OU, and what happened to OU, they go out and play K-State, and if you're K-State -- you let them know that just because a team has lost that you're not going to end up embarrassing them. Or a team lost, period, to another team that you've beaten, doesn't mean that you're going to go out there and they're going to lay down for you or you're going to go out there and you're going to play them how the other team played them. You've got to let them understand and know that you've got to go into this week of practice and you've got to prepare like it's any other game. You've got to go out there and give it all you've got in practice. Then when you get to the game, play how you can play and ball out.