

Postgame Quotes
Texas 23, Kansas State 9
Saturday, Oct. 24, 2015

Texas Quotes

Texas Head Coach Charlie Strong

CHARLIE STRONG: It was really a great team win, and you look at the conditions that we battled through, and just to see our defense step up and play the way they played, and the way we started off that game, offensively we were able to get some drives established. Couldn't really throw the ball, but made some outstanding runs.

You look at (Johnathan) J-Gray, I think I don't know if he got 100 yards, but I know he was pretty close to it, and then at the end of the game there with our 18-wheeler, our big (Tyrone) Swoopes, and watching him just run behind his pads and run through people.

But we know this: We've still got to improve, we have to get better, and we're just looking to next week. We know it's going to be a tough road game for us, but we have to go on the road and we have to play well, and it's a one-game season, so the next opponent up is Iowa State, and we've just got to make sure that we just improve this week, fundamentals and technique, and just continue to build on stuff, be consistent, and just play with a lot of confidence. It just comes down now, it's all about confidence and guys believing in themselves.

Q. Regardless of the conditions, you kind of did what K-State has done to Texas for years and kind of beat them up front. How proud are you of the way you were able to run the ball knowing pretty much for the most part they knew the run was coming and you were still able to run it?

CHARLIE STRONG: We did, and they loaded the box with eight, and we knew we were going to get eight in the box, and we told our guys all week, there's going to be eight in the box. Somebody has got to stay on the block and make sure that our running backs can just run through tacklers.

And then defensively, we knew they were going to run the ball, so we needed to load the box, also. They had some runs that squirted out on us. But it's all about just being physical and playing physical and then dominating at the point of attack.

Q. How do you balance kind of the weather, being aggressive but not taking too many risks when you have a lead in a game like this?

CHARLIE STRONG: Well, you just have to be balanced and make sure that once you establish -- we established the run game, now let's stay with it. I know we're going to get in some third and longs, and I was just trying to balance it also with our kicking game, because once that ball crossed the 50, I said, hey, we're going to go for it, so if it's third down, give me half and then we'll get the other half on fourth down, just by the way the weather was and how it was going.

But we were able to just keep the drives going, and we get the one down there and get a holding call, get the holding call on their sideline, then we get a holding call with Bluiett on that one big run. But it's all about us just establishing the run and making sure that we can be balanced. We threw a couple of balls, but not many. I don't know; I know it wasn't much yards passing, huh?

Q. In a lot of ways this was a prove-it game, that that Oklahoma win was true and a sign of things to come. Do you feel like you did that today, and I guess what did you think of your guys coming out with that newfound confidence? How much did that help?

CHARLIE STRONG: It's all about confidence, and the guys have to just believe in themselves, and we didn't want that game, everyone saying it was a fluke. All of a sudden they're still riding high, and the way you look at it, you don't like to have open dates, but maybe that open date really did help us because now we were able to give them a couple of days off, kind of heal up, and then come back and where we could get our focus back on K-State, and that's what we were able to do. Starting on Sunday, I said, hey, you done had enough pats on the back, everybody done told you; you've seen it enough, now let's move forward.

Q. You've won 48-45 type games here before, but it seems like you enjoy these type of wins more. Is this kind of who you want to be as a team?

CHARLIE STRONG: Well, you like these more just because -- I just like those low-scoring games because I know this, when we get low-scoring games, the defense is playing good. When I get those 50 and 48 days, we're not playing very good. But it's all about just establishing our identity and just knowing defensively we have to go out and play. You talk about it all the time and you preach about it, but still, I know there's offenses that can move the ball up and down the field but you've just got to find a way to get a stop, and we were able to get those stops today.

Q. When the weather is like it was today, how much do you have to maybe not focus so much on all the details of the game which maybe weren't always pretty and just be satisfied that the guys were able to do enough to come out of here with a win?

CHARLIE STRONG: And that's what it was. Earlier I said that. I said, listen, guys, it won't be pretty today; it may be sloppy out there, it's going to be slushy, but we've just got to go out and just score when we have an opportunity to go score on offense, just get some points on the board and then make sure that they try to play catch-up with us because whoever takes over early and establishes themselves, then you're going to have to always fight from behind because now -- and it's hard to throw the ball.

He made some throws, but really at the end of the day it's hard to throw the football in those type of conditions.

Q. When you start the season 1-4, even if a win is not pretty, do you just pretty much say a win is a win, we put together two straight, that's all that matters?

CHARLIE STRONG: That's all that matters right now, and I've talked to our players

about it, and it's a one-game season, and hey, let's get ready for the next one and just make sure that we just continue to build on it now. You've gotten one, you still have some momentum going, and let's make sure that we take advantage of it.

Q. As far as the passing game, do you feel like -- have you lost any confidence in Jerrod and has Jerrod lost any confidence in his passing?

CHARLIE STRONG: No, we haven't, and today it just was one of those games -- I don't know, he told me coming off, I can't grip the ball, so it was more like if he was going to throw a pass it was going to be a shot-put out there, and I didn't want the ball to kind of hang and all of a sudden we turn the ball over. We felt like we could run the ball. Even when he dropped back on third down, let's say, you know what, if the rush breaks down, you get the first down. Let's keep the drives going.

And you know, he made the throw down there to Bluiett, and then he hung one out to Burt, which it was knocked down, but then Burt got knocked out-of-bounds and he kind of threw the ball back inside and made a good throw to him.

But no, we have not lost any confidence at all. We've been able to win at the line of scrimmage, so if we can win at the line of scrimmage, let's continue to pound people.

Q. Norvell said that you're going to need Tyrone Swoopes to win some games, and he kind of showed up there late. Will that increase his playing time, and will you play him more early in games than you have?

CHARLIE STRONG: I've always told Tyrone, even when we made that change with Jerrod, I said, listen, there is no reason for you to hang your head. You're still going to be a part of it, and you never know when you're going to show up, and I said, it won't only just be in the short-yardage package, and he said, well, Coach, just give me some more clock, and I said, well, I'm going to give you as much clock as I possibly can. But you watch him at the end of that game and him running behind his pads and he's just so strong and so physical. Only thing we needed was a lead blocker, which we had.

The one that got me is that third and 1. And you said, why are they throwing the ball? I know you said that. Why didn't we? I knew Brian Davis was going to ask me that question: Why didn't we throw that ball. I'd like to know myself. I was like, hey, pound them, all right? Just run right at them. With Swoopes it's a first down. He's going to pull up a first down.

Q. It looked like K-State was going to get a short field and a one-touchdown game and then Dickson makes an unbelievable play there. That combined with the recovery on Rose's kick, nice to see your special teams do some positive things?

CHARLIE STRONG: Oh, it was great to see it, but then once that ball sailed over his head, I said, oh, God, here we go again. But he was able to recover it and then kick the ball, and him just getting the ball just kicked, it gave us a good roll on it. And then the sky kick, what was happening when we were kicking to the open end, the wind was catching the ball and kind of hanging it, so I said, hey, listen, just kick it to the right and let's just sky kick it out there and see if we can get it, and then Vaccaro made an

unbelievable -- he just ran down there and outran and fought and got the ball. Didn't get any points out of it. Would have loved to have established something and get some points out of it, but we have to continue to improve.

Trey Holtz is doing a great job of just -- because the balls that came back today on the field goals and extra points were just so -- we couldn't grip it so we made some unbelievable catches getting the ball down and being able to execute.

Q. Six starts for Jerrod now; how would you kind of assess what you've seen from him and what pleases you about him?

CHARLIE STRONG: He'll tell you, we know this, he can get better and he just continues to improve, and it's more the throwing game. We've just got to get him more throws. But we know this: He can beat you with his feet now, and just got to make sure that we can get everything where he continues to build as a quarterback and just see things, get us in the right plays, make the right checks. But if we just continue to just play well up front with our offensive line and kind of protect him -- it's all about protecting the quarterback, especially when you have a young quarterback like Jerrod, just don't put it all on him and make guys have to make plays around him.

Q. Obviously Tyrone Swoopes has worked with the change of pace, but even today it looked like Kansas State was a little bit prepared for what he was going to do. Are you going to have to expand his package to make sure people don't know what he's doing when he comes in the game?

CHARLIE STRONG: Yeah, because what we've been doing is it's a power off-tackle play, and even with the one where he had -- where he threw the ball on the third down, he was wide open, and you see everybody ran to the line of scrimmage, ran to that side, and all of a sudden there he is and we don't make the catch there. But it's all about us just making sure that we do expand that package, because he can throw a ball, which now it puts a lot pressure on defense because they're not so quick to load the box when you've got a guy who can go extend it, especially without our receivers on the field.

Q. Has the offensive line kind of established the identity of the team right now? Do you kind of see them being nasty?

CHARLIE STRONG: Well, they've played two straight weeks where we've been able to control the line of scrimmage, and we've just got to continue to improve there. We got Perkins back today, which was a big help for us, because he just is so solid inside, and he just makes the whole line solid. But they're doing a really good job. They're staying on blocks and moving people at the point of attack, and we've been able to run the ball and protect the quarterback.

Q. With Jason Hall laying out Hubener on the first play, the offensive line establishing themselves, slowly but surely is this exactly what you want Texas to be?

CHARLIE STRONG: Well, you have to be physical, and you talk about it all the time, and we talk about just mental toughness and physical toughness and those things. You say it, then a lot of times they hear it over and over and over. But you do, you need to

have a physical presence to you. You look at J-Hall's size and you have a big safety there, so you expect him to make those type of hits, and then with our offensive line, you expect them to control the line of scrimmage and being able to move people, even though you have two young guys. I tell them all the time, I told Connor and Vahe they're no longer freshmen so we don't need to talk about that anymore, we just need to make sure we protect that quarterback. But you have to have a physical presence to you.

Q. Were you surprised -- it didn't seem like Coach Snyder's team was really prepared early on for what you do. They're usually so prepared. Early penalties from their side. Were they out of sync, or was it something you guys were able to do?

CHARLIE STRONG: No, I think he had them prepared because even when we was talking before the game, we was talking with the two of us just how critical this game was for both sides. He needed it and I told him I needed it more than he does, and I said, you need it but I really need it.

But I could tell that with his team -- even when we jumped out there, they were able to fight back and get back into the game and make it a game, because like you said, we were talking about, what, 16-0 now, and you have a seven-point game there with about five or six minutes to go in the game.

Q. I know you talked earlier this year about Hassan Ridgeway needing to get healthy. Can you evaluate his play the last couple of weeks, and how much better is this defense when he's at his best?

CHARLIE STRONG: When Ridgeway is able to dominate up front, then we're pretty good on defense. It comes to -- the thing he does is he can beat a one-on-one block. A lot of times you have to have guys, so he'll force a double team, so when he does force a double team, it allows the backers to run through, it allows the backers to roam, it allows other players to go make plays. But he's so big and so strong, and he's really quick for his size. He's not one of those guys in the middle where you get a big guy who can't move, who's kind of a slug in there. He's not a slug. He's a guy that can rush the passer, can beat one-on-one blocks, and just -- early he sets it for us because he's able to -- if he controls the line of scrimmage and we see him getting off, then it kind of -- the whole defense looks at him and then they start picking it up and then they start playing.

Q. The team had so much trouble wrapping up the quarterback early in the season, but y'all have recorded 11 sacks in the last two games. Is it something different that y'all are doing or is it just a matter of comfortability?

CHARLIE STRONG: A lot of times -- early the guys were just releasing the ball quicker, and so now that you can make them hold it, but we made him hold the ball today. We've got to get better pressure because sometimes he's setting back there, looked like we never got to him. But we've just got to continue to get better and make sure that we can pressure the quarterback.

I think Bryce got him one time on the three-man rush and then Roberson, we put him in, he ended up knocking the ball out of his hand on the backside. But it's still about that.

Q. I know your record is still 3-4, not what you want, but do you feel like you're a good team yet, or how far away are you?

CHARLIE STRONG: I think we can still continue to improve, and I tell our players all the time, they have to believe that they're a good team because once they believe it, then they'll start playing like it and they'll play like it all the time. But I said to them this morning when I was talking to them, I said let's get something straight, guys: I know we beat Oklahoma, but we're still sitting here at 2-4, so let's not get full of ourselves and let's not start believing what everyone is saying, or just don't buy into it. Let's let us continue to improve this football team and let us continue to get better because we can have us a good season. We can end up the right way.

But we have to continue to play, and we just can't go out there and just go through the motions.

We were warming up, and I called us up during warmup, and I had to tell them some things because I just didn't like the way we were warming up. It was kind of just going through it. Okay, it's wet, we understand that. What do you want me to do, move the clouds? I can't move the clouds. I can't stop the rain. But okay, so is it raining -- look at the far end. Is it raining down there? They're warming up pretty good, so let's get into it and let's stop going through the motions.

Texas Wide Receivers Coach Jay Norvell

On how Texas prepared for the rain: We made preparations throughout the week. You never know how bad it's going to be. You get forecasts all the time, and sometimes they aren't correct. We did some things the last few days to prepare for it; we actually did a few things this morning and made some adjustments in the game plan. The last drive, we put that in this morning, we never practiced those plays like that before. It's just a balance of using the best knowledge of the forecast and use the best judgment you can to prepare for it.

On how Texas has established their run identity: I think we've always wanted to run that ball. That's no question that it's something we've always wanted to do. We haven't done it as effectively as we have the last two weeks, but I think we've been patient with it and stayed with it. That's a big part of the running game, being able to stay patient. We played good defense too, and that's a big part of it. Our kids are doing a good job up front, our backs are running hard, our quarterbacks are a big part of our running game. Between Tyrone and Jerrod, they were over 100 yards combined and that's a big part. That helps take pressure off our running backs and our line to be honest. Those are all things that we've done a good job of the last couple weeks, and we can build on it.

On the physicality of the team: I think we really are identifying with that. Our kids love to run the football, they take a lot of pride in it. It takes a certain kind of mentality. I think

that's been the biggest thing for us with the way we've competed the past couple of times we've had games against Oklahoma and today. We did compete hard today, and I can't say that we did that as well collectively before that. So that's the name of the game. You have to really fight to win. The execution comes, sure we would like to do some things better, but I'm really proud of how our kids fought.

On Jerrod and the offense today: I thought he did a decent job. We would always like to do better, and we sputtered there in the second and third quarters where we made some plays and then we missed some blocks, but we've got to get better. We're not happy with our overall play, but we've been working well. The last two weeks are some of the best we've had since I've been here. If we continue to do that, we should see better execution.

Freshman QB Jerrod Heard

On thoughts on the weather: I didn't know what kind of game it was going to be. I thought it wasn't going to be bad because it wasn't really raining that hard. But when we came out there it just started pouring. It ended up good, though. We utilized the running game really well and we did get some passes off. But there was a moment in the second quarter where the ball really did feel like five pounds.

On the importance of being able to run the ball like you did today: Oh, it's very important and we told ourselves just to not worry about the water. If you get the ball, just hold tight and run for it.

On halftime adjustments: After halftime, we did still try to keep the ball running, keep it in our hands and move the ball forward. They did adjust, so we put the ball in the air a little bit and it worked out for us.

On what you learned about this team today: That we just keep fighting. Our defense played a great game and when you have a defense that you can rely on it just makes life easier for an offense.

Texas, DB, Duke Thomas, Senior

On play of defense: We got that confidence back, that swagger. It's really about taking that emotion and that pride we played with against OU and keeping it going the rest of the season.

On coming out strong early: K-State is a scrappy team. They don't make mistakes and they come here to fight. Coach [Charlie Strong] told us their record here. We wanted to come out strong and make plays early, so that was good to come out and make plays.

Freshman P Michael Dickson

On what was going through your mind: I got told a couple of things after the TCU and OSU games and I knew I had to wheel around to the right and get it on my foot. I think that's when the Australian rules kind of kicked in.

Did you think you had enough time: Not really, but I was just thinking I have to do it. It's time to take the risk in the game; I could have dived on, it that would've been a completely different result.

On what Ashby told you about what was going on today: The balls were water-logged and I was just trying to get his confidence up on the sidelines. That was the one bad snap he gave to me all day, all the rest were perfect.

On the aftermath of the OSU game: It was pretty tough, I'm not going to lie. I was down for a couple of days, but I just had to get over it and punt the ball. I just wanted to get back out there. They didn't put any blame on me, they were just trying to build me back up.

Texas Wide Receiver Daje Johnson

On the weather and how tough it was to play in the rain: It was tough. This was my first game to play in the rain since Little League or something like that. We have been practicing all week on wetting the ball during practice, trying to get used to the ball being wet during the rain. Our team did well playing through it.

On nervousness of condition of the field: I felt pretty confident during warmups and it was raining then and I was catching pretty well, so I just tried to think back to how I caught those during warmups. I tried to build my confidence back up.

On having a blueprint for what you need to do to keep winning: We know that if we keep playing like we have been playing. That's what Coach Strong was stressing before this game. Just play like you would during OU, if you kept playing like that the results will be great.

On feeling like you could have thrown the ball a little bit more today: the first pass came out kind of shaky, so it was kind of scary to keep throwing it, but afterwards I think they saw Kansas State throwing it, I guess they changed their mind.

On the confidence of the team: I feel like this is the team that Coach Strong wanted to show for the first game, like before we ever started. You want everybody to see, but unfortunately we are losing right now and we could have been winning. But it is good that we finally found ourselves. We are becoming a good team on both sides of the ball, special teams.

Junior QB Tyrone Swoopes

On the mindset of the team: We're just putting games together. All along we've understood we've got to execute and put games together. When you do that, you build confidence. Everybody is confident and excited about the rest of the season.

On the physical nature of the team: We just kind of line up and run at people. Our offensive linemen have gotten real physical. We've got physical backs. We found our identity, and with that, we just kind of play with it.

On the offensive line's physical nature: They love it. What offensive lineman wouldn't love running straight at people? I feel like they love it, and they're doing a good job with it.

On personally running at and through people: I enjoy it. It's fun. When we go out there, everybody kind of knows what's going on, so our offensive linemen, the running backs, the tight ends do a great job of blocking it. We just go out and do our thing.

On opening up the pass game [with better weather]: Definitely just because with this kind of weather you can't put the ball in the air too much. It's slick. If it was better weather, we probably would've slung it around a little more.

On the mental makeup before running packages: Everybody is just worried about their assignments; worried about the guy they have to beat in order for the play to work.

Senior RB Johnathan Gray

On fun the offensive line is having: They're excited. They love it. Get off the ball and go smash people. They're doing a great job. They're fundamentally sound and guys are just excited to go out there and play. That's what we have to do for this team. To keep the train running, that's what we have to stay focused on.

On how much has changed in the past year: It's definitely changed from a year ago. Guys are more excited. Guys are more focused, more in tune. Guys just want to go out and win and love the game of football. We keep that in our hearts and keep that for the team then the sky is the limit for us.

On becoming a running team: That's what we want to do. We want to go out and smash mouth. When we get the run game going, we don't have to show everything. We've got good backs, good quarterbacks and a great offensive line and some good wide receivers, so we've got the job to do anything we want to do with this offense. Guys just have to stay focus and stay mentally sound and keep loving the game of football. The sky is limit for us, and we're going to go out and win games.

On having a 100 yard game: Finally. It was a lot of relief. Guys were clicking on all cylinders. The offensive line looked great. The team looked wonderful. They helped me get 100 yards, and we can keep it going. We've got enough backs to get 100 yards each game. We've got the offense to do it, so we've just got to stay focused and keep going.

On Junior QB Tyrone Swoopes: We call him 18-wheeler. He's doing a great job for us in his packages. Whatever the coach calls, we will execute to our best. We did that today, and we'll keep that going.

Texas S Dylan Haines

On how the defense played today: Yeah, I think we were absolutely prepared to play this team. I think a lot of things went our way today. I think we executed better than we have in the past few games. It's always good to have some weather like that; I think that helped the defensive side of the ball for both times. It was just an overall great win. I think every phase of the team played well today, but there's room to improve and that's what we're going to do for next week.

On the confidence on defense: Absolutely. Confidence is preparation, and that's what we have been taking to heart. We've been preparing not better, but harder. We've been taking things more seriously after we started the season 2-4. We just kind of sat there and looked at ourselves and said 'we're not a 2-4 team, that's not where we should be.' So we just took the extra step and we've shown that over the last two games. You saw that with the win over Oklahoma and the win here. We're just looking at the second half of the season now; the first half is done. So now we're just trying to roll through the rest of the conference undefeated.

On how the weather impacted the game: It's obviously difficult. I dropped two that I could have had... I could have had three picks on the day, but ended up with one. It's always going to be hard for the receivers to get their hands on the ball. I think overall though it helps the defense out just with the way the offense has to handle the ball. The weather is on both sides of the ball, so it kind of makes you more excited to play. You know, when it's raining out there and you got the water all over the facemask and stuff. It's just a different atmosphere and we took it with an excitement and passion. We went out there and played our butts off.

On if this win validates the Oklahoma win two weeks ago: We take it one game at a time. I don't know if I would say that it validated it, but we're the real deal, and that's our mindset. Whether Oklahoma, or people want to say that they didn't play good, or we played out of our coverage, that's whatever. You look at the scoreboard and that's what counts. Like I said, we're just going to take it week-by-week, and I think that we can go through the rest of the Big 12 undefeated. We have a lot of good games coming up. We took care of Oklahoma, dropped one to TCU and then a close one to Oklahoma State,

but like I said, that's in the past. We're just looking forward to these next few teams and I think we can win every game.

On winning against Kansas State by being physical: If they told us that was one of the things they preached [being physical], I think we've lost six of the last seven against them. We knew that was the game plan coming in and I've watched K-State since I was little, so I know that they're a team that's just going to line the ball up with two tight ends and two running backs and just try to out-physical you, and that's how they are. I think we had a good game plan going in and a lot of our people up front played well, which made it easier for us. And like I said, the weather is a huge factor. We knew, especially with the weather, that they were going to line up and run the ball, and we were successful stopping that. And it feels good to get a win against a team like that.

Hassan Ridgeway DT #98

On rating the defensive performance: Rate it? It's an "A". We won. That's how you rate it.

On the poor weather conditions: Well when you have rain or weather problems like that, that obviously has an effect on the defense. That helps us out, because now they can't throw the ball as well. We know they're going to run the ball. That's good on us.

On this being the type of defense he expected to have at the beginning of the season: This is how we know we could play. That's it.

On what the "light bolt" has been for the defense this season: Honestly, just going out there and playing for each other. Just knowing that. Trusting the dude next to you. Just playing for that person. Just trusting each other I think.

On why it took so long for the defense to start playing this well: Every team moves at a different pace. I mean, once we get our groove, we've got our groove. Got to keep it going.

Texas, LB, Peter Jinkens, Senior

On power style of play: I feel like if we are the most physical and tough team on the field, then it is going to be pretty hard to beat us.

On pass game of K-State: When we knew that they weren't going to throw the ball that much, then it gives me more time to focus on the run and getting to the quarterback because I don't have to worry about the pass.

On difference of team after OU game: I believe so. I feel like everything that we have been through didn't do anything but make us tougher and harder.

On power defense and ball control offense: This is exactly what we wanted to be. At the beginning of the season, things weren't clicking like they were supposed to, but as the season has gone on, we are where we want to be now.

Texas Offense Guard Kent Perkins

On importance of the running game today: It's always important. It was raining so we knew that we had to run the ball most of the time, so in practice we ran the ball most of the time. We practiced making the ball wet for the center to get used to it. It worked out well.

On the performance offensive line: We have been getting better. The key thing for the O-Line and you know the guy next to you. You built that bond and you are all on the same page, that's when things happen like today.

On watching the TCU game (out because of injury): I hated it, not being out there. I am happy that I am back and able to do everything I can do, but it definitely sucked not being there.

On the rally of the team: Basically, the biggest thing for us, O-Line wise, is to eliminate all the mistakes. We try to be perfect every time.

On the difference on the Offensive Line this year: It's a matter as a whole, like getting in there studying on film, holding each other accountable for missed assignments, eliminating all the mistakes.