University of Texas Football Media Conference

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Dylan Haines

Q. Could you just touch on what went on in the team meetings the last couple days and what was said? There is a growing concern that some of the juniors and seniors could check out because of the talk of all the freshmen playing and everything. Could you explain why that won't happen?
DYLAN HAINES: Well, these last few days we've had these team meetings. We had a players' only meeting a few days ago and then when we got off the plane on Saturday we had another team meeting. So basically it was just opened up to everyone, coaches and players included. Just give everyone a voice on what they think is going on with the way we're playing, with the way games are turning out for us, with the way we're practicing and playing one game close and then we go out to TCU and just there is no explanation for it. There is no explanation for that.

We're not that bad of a football team, and there is just no way that anyone could tell us we're that bad. Because, like I said, we played Cal close, played Oklahoma State close, and put ourselves in a great position to win.

So we just gave the floor to the players, gave the floor to the coaches and we're still looking for someone to take hold of the team and just get us back on track. We have some senior leaders doing their best to do it, but to be a leader, you have to have followers and you have to have people that believe in the program, believe in the system, believe in the coaches and trust the other players. Right now that's just something that's not a hundred percent.

So we're just going to put TCU behind us now, look at the film and learn from mistakes. That was just execution. Give credit to TCU too. [Josh] Doctson made some great plays and there is not a lot you can do about that sometimes. But defensively just the uncovered routes, the explosive plays, that's correctible. We've just got to go look at that and get ready for OU this week.

Q. Is there a divide on that front between juniors, seniors and freshmen, sophomores?
DYLAN HAINES: A lot of people want to talk about these freshmen and this freshman class coming in and us playing a lot of freshmen. And that's great for them. But the team starts with the seniors and the juniors. They can't win the conference on their own. So we have some juniors and seniors trying to lead those freshmen, and some of them are resistant and hesitant to change because they haven't been a follower before.

Like I said, in high school they were the leaders and stuff. So we're just trying to get them on the right track and get them the right mindset to how you have to approach this and go out there and

practice to win games. Because a lot of them want to go out and play, and that's all they want to do and that's all they know because that's all they did in high school.

So we're pushing them to continue to improve every day and go out and take it day by day, brick by brick, and build on what you've been coached here so far and continue to improve.

Q. Dylan, Charlie said there were some players who stood up in that team meeting and said the loss is my fault. Who are those guys that are feeling so bad about something like that that they're taking full blame for it?
DYLAN HAINES: A lot of people like to take blame in that meeting. I think Jerrod [Heard] said on Twitter he tweeted I'm sorry. He wanted to take a lot of the blame for that. But we all told him, it's not your fault. There is no way I'm going to let Jerrod, and I told Jerrod, there is no way that's the majority of your fault or a hundred percent your fault or even 50% your fault because it's never on one player.

If you look at the TCU game, not one side of the ball played good, offense, defense, special teams. So a lot of people like, they stood up and said I think something that was said there was a lot of people sometimes on our team feel like this loss wasn't because of me. And then I think it was basically said that people need to realize that maybe I didn't have a part in the way the team performed.

So I think people just need to take accountability for their actions and just grow up and continue to play and continue to learn and just get better. That's what it's about. There is no one player that the blame is on. But a lot of people wanted to take blame for the loss, but that's just not the facts of it.

Q. Is that a good thing though that you're seeing some accountability that you've got freshmen quarterback wanting to shoulder the blame?
DYLAN HAINES: Yeah, it just shows he's mature and he's not going to put the finger on anyone else. He knows he didn't play up to his ability and that's why he tried to take the blame. But I didn't play up to my ability. Several people on defense didn't play up to their ability. A lot of people on the special teams didn't play up to their ability. So you can't put that loss on one person. That's what we told Jerrod and that's what the coaches told him and I told him. He's just got to kind of mature a little bit more and it's not the end of the world. He shouldn't hang his head.

We have OU next week, and that is the great thing about this game. Every week presents a new challenge, and after Saturday night it's over. There is nothing you can do about it. You can't change the past. So now you've just got to get ready for OU. If he hangs his head, he might not prepare as well as he can. So he's just got to get over it, and go prepare for OU.

Q. Are the meetings helping everybody getting to say what they want to say or do you guys just got to go out there and do it on the field?
DYLAN HAINES: I think the meetings help because they give everyone a chance to speak. I think when you have a normal team meeting in a football program it's the head coach speaking and maybe a few assistants if he lets them.

So it's rare that you get a meeting where the players are given the floor and the players are allowed to speak on behalf of themselves or anyone else about anything that's on their mind because the coaches have a good idea of what the program is and what they're trying to do with it. But sometimes they miss out on -- the players have some very valuable things to say too. I think that's what we realized when we have these meetings.

But we still believe in everything that the coaches are telling us. I think we've taken a lot of these meetings and we're just going to continue to improve and just get ready for OU.

Q. Coach Charlie Strong told us that he was opening up the position at kicker. So part one of that question is I know a lot of you guys are close to Nick [Rose]. How is he taking that? Part two of the question is does that concern any of the other players on this team that you are being held accountable for your play and your positions could become open midway through the season?
DYLAN HAINES: That's the first I've heard of the kicker position being open. But any time a player is not performing up to the standard of the position, I think that presents a great opportunity for others if they really want to take the position of a starting kicker, to go out and take it. You do that with hard work, you do that with practice and showing that you can make the kicks, showing that you are the best player. Because at the end of the day, the coaches are going to play the best player and that's how It's going to work.

I imagine Nick's just taking it and using it as motivation. That's what I would do if someone were at my neck for my spot. So I know he's going to go out there and work as hard as he can. I know Nick is a hard worker. He's out there every summer in the heat kicking. That's something not a lot of people can do is go out there four, five days a week and kick. So I know he's going to work his butt off to try to take the position back.

But that's, like I said, a great thing for some of the underclassmen and the walk-on kickers that we have. That's how I got my position was an opening, and I took advantage of it and I worked my butt off. That can payoff for anyone.

In regards to any other positions being open, if players aren't playing up to the standard of the position, then, yeah, it's going to be open. I think sometimes a lot of players think I'm the starter, so I don't really have to work. But that's why you say the standard of the position, not of the player, not of the starting player. There have been people that have played that position that have been great here. So it's like why can't you be great?

You've got to work your butt off. And if you're not, you're just lackadaisical about it and taking days off, then yeah, they're going to open it up to another player and probably a younger player. Because like I said, they're an investment with four-plus years here. I think that just serves as motivation for people to continue to work every day and get better and secure their spot.

Q. You guys played an incredibly tough schedule so far. Has the grind just gotten kind of worn you guys down or are you guys starting to embrace being the underdog now?
DYLAN HAINES: Well, I think for me I embrace it. I walked on here because I knew this -- I

mean, I loved this school. My parents went here. I knew this is the kind of schedule they played in football. I think if you wanted to go out and play kind of just a team with more losses than wins then you came to the wrong place.

So I think it just presents a great challenge. Then if you can go out and beat these teams and we're the underdog, I think this makes great strides for the program and great strides for this team. So I wouldn't have it any other way. If it were up to me, we'd be playing the number one, two, three, four and five teams the first five weeks of the season.

So like you said, OU, undefeated rival game. I think that's a game where anything can go. It's going to be a real physical game, great crowd. So hopefully we can go out and work our butts off this week in practice and go out there and get the job done.

Q. When you look at Oklahoma's offense, a bunch of play makers. What kind of challenge can they present for you?
DYLAN HAINES: Like I said earlier, number one, they're going to be a physical team. I think just what they're going to watch on our defense, they're going to try to run the ball and be physical up front, doing gap schemes and stuff like that and just kind of establish the dominance on the line of scrimmage. They've got a very good player at quarterback with Baker Mayfield showing how dynamic he's been. I know he's going to try to air it out.

But mostly they're going to do a lot of the same concepts that the other Big 12 teams are doing, so we're going to take a look at that. Just create a game plan to defend everything that we can. But I think it's going to be a great challenge and I think they're going to be a great team. Like TCU, they're going to make plays. Give credit to them, they're a great team.

But I think we're going to do the best we can to just be dominant up front, be physical with them and just perform a lot better than we did against TCU.

Q. Do you feel like regardless of records coming in for you and OU, do you feel like it's kind of a clean slate because it's this big rivalry? Do you feel like this is the opportunity to maybe turn things around for you guys and it maybe comes at the right time?
DYLAN HAINES: Absolutely. I think with any rivalry game if you look at it statistically, I think there are more upsets than rivalry game just because of the atmosphere and the way it is. You always have these top ranked teams just like Ohio State-Michigan or Notre Dame-Michigan and stuff like that. There are always these teams that just upset the other just because of the rivalry game and all the tradition and pride and all the history behind it.

I just think it gives us a great opportunity to go up there and kind of, like I said, the 11 a.m. kickoff, another big factor. Just early in the morning just kind of get out there, get a fast start, have the momentum going our way and just kind of run away with the win.

I think that was done a few years ago when Case McCoy started that game, and then they played just a hell of a game and they got the win there. We were the underdog there too. So just with this game being a rivalry game, yeah, I think it plays in our favor that we're the underdog and we're going up and maybe they might underestimate us. Maybe we can get the momentum going

our way in the game.

Q. In the games do you all ever feel like you're almost just waiting for something to go wrong?
DYLAN HAINES: No. I mean, I can't say that's the case for me. I mean, you're going to have mistakes in any game with any college football team. So you've just got to try to limit those to as few as possible. I don't think anyone's waiting for a mistake to be made. I think everyone goes out there and takes the preparation they've taken with the week's practice and try to put it to use.

Mistakes are going to be made, but you've just got to get over them and play one snap at a time.

Taylor Doyle

Q. Taylor, what you know about Texas and OU, how much more physical do you guys need to be to be competitive in this game?
TAYLOR DOYLE: Coach Norvell said it yesterday, the team that outhits the other team is going to win, and that's how the game has traditionally been played. If we want to have a chance, we have to be the most physical team out there. So it's all about preparing and letting the young players know, because they've never played in an environment like this, that this game is unique. If we want to have a chance, we have to out-physical the opponent.

Q. Do you all have that in you?
TAYLOR DOYLE: Yes, sir.

Q. Taylor, what is your relationship like with Baker Mayfield? Is anything he's doing surprising you? Anything funny you can tell us about Baker that you remember from being with him for four years and what he's like?
TAYLOR DOYLE: He's another Lake Travis guy, and I'm pulling for him every week except for this one. He's a confident guy and he can play football. He's done a good job of showing the world what he's capable of there.

Q. Do you guys talk a little bit?
TAYLOR DOYLE: Not this week.

Q. You talked about preparing for this weekend. How hard is it to prepare for?
TAYLOR DOYLE: It's all about moving forward and getting better. We know there are things we need to improve on, and we just want to take that physicality out to practice, and prepare hard this week so the game is easy.

Q. Do you feel like this being one of the most historic rivalries, it's like throw the records out the window and it's kind of a clean slate and an opportunity for you guys to use this timing to turn things around?
TAYLOR DOYLE: Yes, ma'am. This game is absolutely an opportunity. Traditionally it doesn't matter what the records are going in. It doesn't matter where your season's heading going in. This game has traditionally turned seasons around, and if Texas has been winning leading into this

game, you roll through this game and you're rolling the rest of the season.

So we have an opportunity to go play. We have to move forward and learn from our mistakes from this past weekend and use that as a platform to get better and be physical and play tough football.

Q. How's it holding up right now?
TAYLOR DOYLE: We have guys that we're confident in that can step in and play a significant role. As [Sedrick] Flowers said in previous weeks, some guys weren't prepared to play, and this week I feel like that wasn't the case. We had two guys go in and they were ready. They knew the opportunity at hand and they took advantage of it, and so it's exciting knowing that we have six or seven guys who can step up.

D'Onta Foreman

Q. How would you describe the locker room right now?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Right now we're just trying to come together. I feel like we're doing a good job of that right now. Just trying to move forward and keep pushing on to this week and keep getting better at practice.

Q. What was your take of the meetings this weekend that Charlie called? Did you feel like it helped? What did you sense from the team as you guys were in those meetings?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I feel like it helped a lot. I feel like a lot of people got to say what they wanted to say and got a lot off their chests and trying to help the team move forward. Trying to be positive about everything.

Q. Charlie was saying that this game kind of coming at the right time, whether it forces you to focus, get locked in kind of the way the team's approaching this?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Well, you know, it's a rival game, so everybody's ready. Everybody is ready to go out there with the game we had this past week…we're just trying to come back and show everybody that we are a good team and we can make plays and we can be good.

Q. You guys meet every Sunday following the Saturday. Did you notice a difference in the guys this Sunday following that loss? I know Charlie mentioned he's seen a difference. Did you?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Yeah, I've seen a lot of guys in there just hungry. Hungry to prove people wrong and show people that we are a good team and that we have playmakers and we have people on the team that really want to be here and really want to do the right thing. So I think that we have a lot of people getting on the same page and trying to push this thing right back in the right direction.

Q. What is your relationship like with [Johnathan] Gray?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: We have a wonderful relationship. We always talk on the sideline, at practice and just during the game when I see him. So, yeah, we have a good relationship.

Q. What's he talk to you about?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: About everything. We just talk about plays, talk about just pushing each other to be good at practice and don't let each other slack at practice. You know, we're a running back group, so we just try to be up-tempo at practice and make sure we do our part.

Q. Is he at all frustrated just because he's not having the year I know he wanted to have?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I really don't know.

Q. How do you feel about the fact you're getting more touches?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I guess it just comes with the game. I'm just really trying to do my part. I work hard on it. I go out there and do what I actually do and do it to my best ability.

Q. Coach Strong said earlier he had opened up the position and we're going to start looking at other candidates. Do you get the sense once a coach makes a decision like that that he's going to make the same decision about other positions on this team?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: You know, I don't really know. I think that's up to the coaching staff and what they want to do. I'm just here to do my part and try to push the team right back in the right direction.

Q. Have you sensed any kind of divide between the upperclassmen and the freshmen?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: No, sir. I think that everybody's on the same page. I think everybody clicks. Everyone has a great relationship, and I just think it's just time to bring it all together and just get this thing right.

Q. Dylan Haines was saying earlier that it seems like this team is just waiting for somebody to take over. Like no one has really emerged as a leader. Are you surprised that five weeks in you guys still haven't found a leader on this team?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Honestly, I feel like we have leaders on this team. Honestly, we have a lot of upperclassmen, and even younger guys that are saying stuff now. And we're trying to move back in the right direction. I feel we have a lot of people out there trying to do the right things, but we've got to keep pushing and keep fighting.

Duke Thomas

DUKE THOMAS

Q. Duke, how hard has this been on you?
DUKE THOMAS: It's been difficult. You play the game to win, and taking a loss is always hard for me.

Q. What needs to change defensively to get back on track?
DUKE THOMAS: I think we need to execute. The preparation is there. When we're on the field, the lights come on national television. We've got to get out there and make things happen, and we're not making the plays we need to make.

Q. I'm sure none of you guys expected or anticipated the start of 1-4. But now that a national title or conference title is out of reach, how have you adjusted your expectations going forward?
DUKE THOMAS: It's always been a one-game season. We're trying to win this next game and we've put that stuff behind us. That's all we can control is this next week. So just looking forward and trying to get the next win this Saturday and continue to build on that.

Q. What will you say to young guys about what they're getting ready to face when they go down the tunnel and see the stadium and all the stuff that goes into this game?
DUKE THOMAS: Just try to tell them about the atmosphere and what they're getting themselves into. Really just keep it simple. It's still the same game they've been playing. It's going to be a lot louder, but that shouldn't dictate the way you play. Simple as that.

Q. I know this team isn't in the business right now with pointing fingers, but when you look at the special teams mishaps in the past three games, did that hurt you guys as you try to look ahead to the TCU game, and just try to get through some of those blunders early on in the game?
DUKE THOMAS: Yeah, you can't put one thing on special teams. Because offense did this or defense did that, and that's means special teams doesn't even matter. It all ties in together. We all need to pick up our level of play, and with that will come some more wins.

Q. Do you feel like this game is coming at the right time for you guys? I know I asked Dylan [Haines] and Taylor [Doyle] the same question. But is this a rivalry where you can kind of throw records coming in out the window and have it be an open slate and an open opportunity for you guys to use this neutral site as a turning point?
DUKE THOMAS: Definitely looking at it. That way we can build some momentum for the team. And really it's a pride game, and once you have a game like this, all that's done before really doesn't matter. You step into this atmosphere and you've got to bring your A-game, simple as that.

Going into OU, it will be way different than any other game we're going to play this season. Going into it, we've got to get the W. And with that, it definitely changes the way you feel about yourself. And that's why we need more confidence.

Q. How do you get to your A-game from what you all just did Saturday?
DUKE THOMAS: Like I said, I've got to execute. The preparation is there, the guys are making the plays in practice. We've got to make sure that translates to the field on Saturday. That's not what we've been doing.

Q. Your position group probably has seen more freshmen playing than anywhere else on the team. Is there any resentment there with the older guys and the younger guys trying to come in and take their spot or is everybody still together?
DUKE THOMAS: That's the way it is every year. Competition brings the best out of all of us. There is no resentment. We all love each other, but the best guy's going to play and everybody understands that. If you feel like you should be on the field, show that at practice or go meet with

the coaches. Anything you want to know you can find out. There are no problems like that in the DB room.

Q. Did you talk with Kris [Boyd] after the game or at some point about tweeting and just talk with him as a leader?
DUKE THOMAS: Yeah, definitely. I tried to figure out what he was thinking. He told me that's what he's always done. I said you can't do that here. It's not the same as high school. You're at the University of Texas, there is going to be a magnifying glass on you. Now he understands that. We addressed it, and I don't expect to see anymore problems out of him or anyone on the team doing that.

Q. Dylan [Haines] was saying some of the pressure to follow the upperclassmen, how hard is it to get those guys on board with what you're trying to accomplish?
DUKE THOMAS: It's not just them. It's people in general. If you try to lead you're going to have people that want to do their own thing across the board. You're trying to get everybody on the same page and try to have more leaders than just the ones we have and coming from different angles to get everybody on board.

Q. So everybody's on the same page right now?
DUKE THOMAS: We are. It's just that sometimes we have leaks in the system. We when you have so many leaders, it's hard to get so many people under control. So what we're trying to say is get more people in the same position as some of the upperclassmen or seniors or leaders that we have on the team to really get everybody on the same page.

Q. You have experience against OU from the past. It seems like a completely different offense, a new coordinator, new quarterback.
DUKE THOMAS: I haven't had a chance to look at the film. I'll start breaking down film today at 4 o'clock. So when I get in there I'll have an opportunity to see what's going on.

Hassan Ridgeway

Q. How jacked up and fired up is this team to see their nemesis, their rivals, hungry for blood and go out and bash these guys this week?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: We're always hungry to go against Oklahoma. It's a great, great game. I've played in it a couple of times and it's always been good, always a good environment.

Q. You looked anxious out there. Can Saturday night come soon enough for you and this team to go out and show up?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: No, it can't. We just want to go out there and show what this team is really about.

Q. Is this a good time for this game because it forces everyone to get locked in? You know what's at stake with this rivalry game? Does it help you forget the record and help you get your mind right for this one game?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Well, whenever Oklahoma comes around you're always focused on them and you're always locked in on them. It's a game that a lot of times they say your season

goes good when you beat Oklahoma or goes bad. It's a game that people have put a lot of emphasis on.

Q. What is the relationship like with the upperclassmen and the freshmen?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Same as any other players on the team. We're all a team. We're all one. There are no problems with us.

Q. Is there any divide or do you think everyone's on the same page?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: It's not a divide. I mean, experience off the field is the only thing I can say. Other than that, no, we're a team.

Q. How badly does this team need a win?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: As badly as everybody else in the country. You just want to win like everybody else. That's all we want to do.

Q. Everybody wants to win, but y'all really need a win right now.
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Yeah, I mean for a little confidence boost. The way we've been down, having some tough runs here, so I guess it would be a big morale boost to come out and get this W.

Q. Are you worried about the confidence and morale on this team?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: After the last two games you always have a little bit of problems with people's confidence. But as Coach Strong always comes in after the week of practice, he adjusts us, makes us focus on the next game and builds us back up a lot of times and has us focused on what we need to be doing. So I'm not worried about it. I know by the time the game comes around, we'll be ready to play.

Q. Last week you were talking about the players-only meeting, and a lot of you guys were saying that you were especially resilient following that second loss, and I think a lot of guys expected you to perform in the fourth quarter. What makes you guys think you'll be able to do it in a game in Dallas against OU?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Well, one thing that can happen with a loss like we have had, it can go up or down. The couple times we lost, we came back out with fire. If this loss burned as much as it burned me, and if it burned the rest of my teammates, we'll go out there and show them what we're all about.

Q. What do you see in the Sooners this year? They're undefeated, top 10 in the nation, do they look real and legit?
HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Well, I haven't played an Oklahoma team yet that wasn't legit. They're a pretty good team all around. So it's always going to be great to go out there and play against them.

Tim Cole

Q. Talk about the linebacker corps matching up Samaje [Perine] and Baker Mayfield?
TIM COLE: I feel like our linebacking corps is pretty confident going into the game against running backs. Coach does a great job preparing us, and just teaches us to come out there with a great attitude and running downhill. So I think it's always an advantage for Texas.

Q. Have you been on Twitter in the past hour and seen what's going on with your teammates?
TIM COLE: No, I haven't really. I've been in class.

Q. The freshmen are kind of -- it seems like the locker room is a little divided from what we're seeing on social media right now. What is your take on what the vibe is like in the locker room?
TIM COLE: From what I've seen in the locker room, I think it's been pretty good. I think it's just a misunderstanding from the whole Twitter standpoint, because from what I see in the locker room, we're pretty much all on the same page.

Q. What's been said in the team meetings the last two days that makes you feel like this team is together.
TIM COLE: We've seen how far we've come and how hard we've played the past two games, and at TCU you might not see that. But from Oklahoma State and Cal, we know where we can be and what kind of team we have. We just have to minimize the mistakes and come out and be more consistent from the first quarter to the fourth quarter.

Q. Dylan [Haines] was saying earlier the seniors and juniors are trying to get the freshmen to practice hard every day and not just worry about games, but worry about Sunday to Thursday. Have you noticed that's an issue with some of the freshmen? Just trying to get them to understand what it takes to practice.
TIM COLE: I mean, it's not a problem. They're learning. So as juniors and seniors we have to take them under our wing, so it's just like lead by example. We're going to prepare every day. So they see us do that and they follow along. It's a learning experience.

Q. Do you get the sense that they want to be led?
TIM COLE: Yeah, of course. As a freshman, you don't really know what to expect. So you look up to the older guys who have seen and done a lot of things, who have been here for three years, so you kind of look to that for guidance.

Q. Maybe the perception of this freshmen class is they think they already know a lot of things. They're a little more -- I don't know if cocky is the right word, but they're a little more advanced than they actually are?
TIM COLE: They're just a confident group. That's what you need coming into college. They're very talented in their abilities. That's all I can say about that.

Q. How frustrating and, again, I don't want to put you into a situation where we're pointing fingers here because I know there have been phases of the game that have been off from week to week. No three phases have really clicked. But how frustrating has it been for this team, especially when you're trying to put points on the board and it's just not there and there is an opportunity to go into overtime and possibly win the game? Can that be frustrating for both offenses and defenses that are really out there trying to play the four quarters and finish the game?
TIM COLE: Most definitely it's frustrating because I know what our special teams can do and what they're capable of. Because I've seen them kick field goals all the time, and I've seen our punter punt lights out. But I wouldn't just pinpoint that on the special teams because it's phases of the game where the defense could have gotten a stop, and stopped the offense from scoring or the phase of the game where the offense could have scored to prevent it where it wouldn't have come down to special teams at the end of the game. So I wouldn't just pinpoint it on special teams.

Q. How is Nick Rose doing now that Strong has told us he's opened up that job for competition. I know you're friends with him and he's working to get his confidence back.
TIM COLE: Nick Rose's confidence is still there. He's more than ready and capable for the competition. He's just going to have to continue to do his job.

Q. Everything else that's going on outside, how cool is this week and this game Saturday?
TIM COLE: It's exciting. I mean, growing up, you've watched Texas-OU, so you get pumped for this week. I wouldn't say it's different, but it's definitely a different vibe. This week you expect Oklahoma to be a great team. They've always been a great team. So you've just got to be ready for the competition.

Q. What's it like going down that tunnel (at the Cotton Bowl)?
TIM COLE: It's surreal. It's different when you play at home because the crowd's for you. When you go to Texas OU, it's split. So their fans are rowdy, our fans are rowdy, their players are rowdy, we're rowdy too, so we're just ready to go out there and compete.

Q. Is this game coming at kind of the perfect time where you know what's at stake in this rivalry and it can get everybody refocused and you can kind of forget about the start to the season and just focus on your hatred for Oklahoma?
TIM COLE: I think any week after a loss you just look forward to the next week so you can refocus on what you want to accomplish. I think as a team, we know what we want to get to. So this week is definitely a great week to start that and showcase what this team is capable of.

Q. Looking back on the Texas-OU games that you've played, does anything stand out for you?
TIM COLE: Yeah, sophomore year just seeing Chris [Whaley] go out there and score a touchdown on defense, that's great. And Daje [Johnson]'s crazy punt return for a touchdown. Just everything falls into place, and you work so hard that week. It was great to see everything we put out there just fall into place.

Q. When you say Twitter is a misunderstanding, what's that mean?
TIM COLE: Sometimes things get tweeted and taken out of context. People misunderstand what

was said. So once that gets understood about what was actually said, you can get a better understanding of where that was coming from.

Q. Do you get the sense that this is counter-productive for them to be responding on Twitter when you have a players' only meeting where you air your grievances and all get on the same page? It almost sounds like none of that clicked.
TIM COLE: Well, definitely like as we say, sometimes you've got to learn how not to respond to certain things on Twitter, because we're high-profile and anything we say is going to be put out there. So you've got to learn how not to respond to everything that's said.

PAUL BOYETTE JR.

Q. How jacked up are you to see the Sooners? How bad do you all want to pound these guys and show the world that Texas is back?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: I think this is another opportunity for us. It's a great opportunity. There is nothing bigger than the rivalry. Especially growing up in Texas, and watching Vince Young and Colt McCoy running around there and bringing back the Golden Hat, so it's a great experience.

Q. What do you see in this and how explosive is this OU offense with Samaje Perine and Baker Mayfield?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: They're Oklahoma. They're very talented just like we are, and I feel like they have a good team just like we do.

Q. How do you feel about the tweets that are going on behind all of that?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: I'm not a real big social media guy. Sorry. I can't answer that one.

Q. Is there a divide in the locker room?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: No.

Q. Is this week coming at the perfect time? You guys are struggling, but if Oklahoma forces you to get your mind right and refocus, is this the perfect timing for this game?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: Yes, because it gives us the ability to regain our focus and know that this is a big game ahead this week and it's Oklahoma. There is no other team in this conference that's better than Oklahoma.

Q. I know you guys have had some time to think about these last couple of weeks. But you personally, when you look at this team and how close you are with some of them, can you put your finger on what's wrong with this team right now and why you guys can't seem to get all three phases of the game on the same page?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: All I can think is it's the little things and fundamentals of the game and technique. It comes down to preparation. How you prepare yourself during the week, really.

Q. The juniors and seniors are trying to get the freshmen to understand you have to practice Sunday through Friday and get mentally prepared for a game. It's not just going

out to play. Have you noticed that's a problem with some of the freshmen? Just learning the full understanding of what it takes?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: I mean, that comes from high school. In high school nobody really has to practice. And then at this level you have to go out and practice Sunday through Friday or Sunday through Saturday, and at the end of the day you practice the way you play and that is the preparation of the game.

Q. Have you noticed that's an issue with some of the freshmen?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: No, not really.

Q. The freshmen apparently took issue with that statement, and after you guys had a players' only meeting last week and you guys had two more meetings this weekend they responded to this very publicly. Do you think that's helpful as you guys try to right the ship and you have another tough game on the road?
PAUL BOYETTE JR.: I think everybody needs to just stay off of social media really. That's me personally. We just need to get back and regain our focus and know what the task at hand is. The task at hand is beating Oklahoma on Saturday.