

University of Texas Football Media Conference

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(transcripts courtesy of ASAP Sports)

Hassan Ridgeway

Q. Hassan, how do you explain the mindset of the team? What is the mindset of the team right now, and are you guys in a fragile state after what happened Saturday?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Nobody likes a loss, but we've still got to move forward. Our season is not over yet. We've still got a lot of games to play, so we've got to keep focused and make sure we get to the next one.

Q. How do you explain Saturday, where you guys were?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Just a lack of focus. People came out there unprepared.

Q. Charlie kind of alluded to the fact that a few times he didn't feel like the team was ready to play. Given where you guys are, how could you not be ready to play and how do you make sure that doesn't happen again?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Well, people go in there and think that our mindset is just not on football at the time, and we're not focused, we're not prepared. How you can change that is you go out there and make sure the right people are on the field, people who want to be out there, people who are energized and ready to go.

Q. Do you think there were some guys or whatever that were not ready?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Me personally, I didn't see that, but we came out there and played, and it showed differently.

Q. How many steps back did the team take this week?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: We lost. I mean, how many steps that goes...we lost. I can't say much about that.

Q. Charlie Strong talked a lot about execution and about not executing. What does that mean? Why aren't y'all executing?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: People aren't taking care of the little details, small things that it takes to win.

Q. Why is that?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: If we knew, we'd be winning. I don't know.

Q. Are you guys in trouble? Is this program in trouble right now, where you are?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: No, we're not in trouble. I don't think so.

Q. How do you get out of those...how do you change the mindset of the program from here?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: You win. You win games. You go out there and play the way we're

supposed to be playing.

Q. How encouraging, though, is it you guys had a bunch of sacks, you made some stops? Were there some positives you can take from this loss?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: There's always some good, obviously. But the point of the game is to win. Even when you look back on it, it's not much good to come out of it if you lose.

Q. Was there a sign before the game that the team might not have been ready to go?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: Me personally, I wasn't aware of it. But that's because I'm in my own zone before a game. I wasn't aware of what was happening.

Q. Two more home games left starting with this Kansas game. What's the sense of urgency of getting back on track and putting it to Kansas and making sure the fans come early, stay late, and be loud?

HASSAN RIDGEWAY: It's always a sense of urgency when we're losing, so we've got to go out there and win. We've got to go out there and play hard.

Desmond Jackson

Q. Desmond, what's the mindset of the program after what happened Saturday?

DESMOND JACKSON: Get back to work and go play against Kansas. That's all we can possibly do about it. We know that wasn't our best performance that we've had. As disappointing as it is for the coaches and players, it's more disappointing for me because the next game we should have -- it's a game that we should have took care of our business, and we didn't do what we needed to do. We didn't execute like we normally do. All we can do right now is just go get our minds set and get ready to go against Kansas. That's the only thing we can do about it.

Q. Having been through everything that you've been through in the last year and a half, trying to overcome those mental hurdles, how does that happen Saturday? How did you guys play the way you played and really not come in focused?

DESMOND JACKSON: I just think that some guys didn't have the preparation that they normally have. I don't think that guys were as focused as they needed to be. I don't know the reason for that, but I think that as a unit we need to do things we were supposed to do. I'm not going to sit here and point fingers, because like I said before, if I pointed a finger, I've got three of them pointed back at me. As a team all we can do is tell guys some stuff. You just can't control that but we can control our effort. We can't control what they do but we can control what we do.

They came in, they were hungrier than we were. Give them credit where credit is due. They had a real good game plan and we didn't execute the game plan. But I think it's more saying that we didn't do what we were supposed to do.

Q. How easy or difficult will this be to bounce back from?

DESMOND JACKSON: All you can do is just get back to work. The season isn't over. We've still got games to play. As tough as the game was, we've got to go back and get ready for the next

one. As bad as that sounds, we can't really just sit here and moan or about it or grieve about it because we've got a couple games coming up, and the next game is Kansas. We've got to learn from our mistakes, learn from what we need to do. Guys need to step up and be the guys they know they can be and just get ready for the next game.

Q. How big of a step backwards does this feel like after getting a win over OU and beating Kansas State?

DESMOND JACKSON: I think you learn a lot about yourself through defeat. I think guys a lot of times -- sometimes the biggest things that you learn about yourself are through losses more than just victories. We had some success, and I think guys were a little complacent, and the guys weren't as focused as they needed to be.

I think one of the things that I lived by since I've been a player is that you've got to have that hungry mindset where you've got to play every game, whether you're a freshman or a senior, as if that was your last game to get a chance to play. It's a little tough right now, but you know, we can't really grieve about it because on Tuesday we've got to get ready for Kansas. That's the next thing we've got to do.

Q. This team is winless under Coach Strong when the opposing offense scores first. How do you guys set the tone for a game?

DESMOND JACKSON: I think you've just got to go in there with the right mindset. I think y'all guys do the stats stuff. I'm not really worried about that. But I know that as a player, someone who's been here for a while, there are some things you can't really control. When the other team scores first, you've just got to go back there and say, okay, you can't just grieve about it. Some guys might be like, oh, snap, they scored; oh, here we go again. But that's not the mindset that you need to have. Your mindset needs to be that you need to go in there and say, 'You know, they may score first but we've got to go back in there and get ready for the next play.' That's just one thing that my coaches have been telling us about. There are some things you can't control, but the only thing you can control is your effort and make sure that you understand where some things went wrong. That stat stuff, that's not really my concern.

Q. Coach Strong talked about a lack of focus, not being prepared. At any point did anyone try to get the team together and notice what was happening and try to change that mindset?

DESMOND JACKSON: We have guys that will tell you to get your mind set. But at the end of the day, you've got to be able to do that for yourself. You're playing for a team but you've got to make sure that you're prepared by yourself. You can't worry about what one guy over here is doing and another guy over here is doing. You've got to worry about what you're doing and make sure you're ready for the week. I think some guys don't completely understand that. But I think that as a team -- I know a lot of guys understand that, but I think there's a lot of guys that need to understand that for you to get ready for yourself, you've got to be self-motivated. You can't just let somebody motivate you all the time. You've got to be motivated inside.

Q. Do you guys believe you can make it to a bowl game?

DESMOND JACKSON: The next step for us is just playing Kansas. I'm just saying I think that's the next step for us. We've got to win the next game that's coming up, and that's against Kansas.

I'm not worried about that stuff right now.

Q. You say you're focused on Kansas, but do you think going into the Iowa State game, guys before that were talking about we're going to win out. Do you think some guys were looking too far ahead instead of focusing on what the task at hand was?

DESMOND JACKSON: I think that guys just need to be able to be focused on the next game coming up because that's basically -- to me, since I've been here, every game has been like a bowl game to me because you've got to prepare for it. I think some guys just wasn't thinking when they were saying that, but to me I think that every game should be -- like I said before, every game you have needs to be like your last game. I can't really worry about the future because the future is the future; I've got to worry about the present, just like you can't worry about what's going to happen tomorrow. You've got to focus on what's happening today, what's going on right now in your life.

Q. Only two more home games left. You've never lost to Kansas. How important is it to keep that streak against the Jayhawks alive and make sure everyone comes out and supports you?

DESMOND JACKSON: I can't even believe that. I've got two more home games being a Texas Longhorn. It's crazy. I can't even imagine -- since I've been -- since I was six years old, the first time I ever got a chance to play football, I've dreamed of just being able to put on a Texas Longhorn uniform. Throughout the obstacles and all the things I've been through in my life, man, I'm here, and it's just been an honor and blessing just to be able to put on a uniform. I just want everybody to know I'm thankful for the blessings that I've received.

Two home games left. I'm going to be trying my hardest to play my heart out like I always do. It's just next game up, play Kansas. I don't even know what time we're playing them. I just know it's going to be on Saturday, and I'm just ready to buckle up one more time and go out there and play.

Taylor Doyle

Q. Taylor, how do you explain where the program is right now and the step back you guys took Saturday night? How do you explain what happened?

TAYLOR DOYLE: You know, it's difficult to explain. No one expected us to play like that. We didn't expect to play like that. As a team we know we're better than that. We didn't perform the way we need to and we want to.

Moving forward, I think the only thing we can do is learn from the experience and just take that anger and that frustration into the practice field and then use it to be a positive and learn from it and focus on the fundamentals and technique and focus on what allows us to have success and build off that.

Q. After Notre Dame and TCU, did you ever think that could happen again?

TAYLOR DOYLE: You know, we never go into a game thinking anything other than expecting to win, and so obviously we understand that there's going to be problems and we understand that

we're going to face adversity. But, we didn't expect to play like that. Moving forward, we need to figure out what went wrong and how do avoid that from ever happening again because there's no excuse. We need to play well consistently, and we didn't do that.

Q. Is this a sign that there's still a long way to go and there's still a lot of minds that need to change in their way of thinking before this program can really move forward?

TAYLOR DOYLE: I don't think so. I mean, even watching the film you can see we're close. Moving forward we just need to focus on the things that will allow us to have success, and we can't ever stray away from that, and finding that and finding it consistently is what we need to do moving forward.

You know, we just have to be the team we can be every week, and that's been a struggle so far, but we know it's there, and if we focus on the grind, the daily grind, day in and day out, we're going to have success.

Q. Do you know why it's not there?

TAYLOR DOYLE: It's just a lack of execution consistently. But moving forward, I mean, we have to be able to consistently play, and I think we're capable of doing that.

Q. You build so much momentum and things are going in the right direction; is all that lost or can you get it back and make it to a bowl game?

TAYLOR DOYLE: We can definitely get the juice back. Right now we're not focusing on the end of the season, we're focusing on every day individually and the upcoming game this week. We have to continue to move forward and we have to continue to focus on what allows us to have success, and that's working hard every day and focusing on the fundamentals and technique.

Q. You said earlier the words angry and frustrated. Are those the emotions the team is feeling right now and is there enough of it?

TAYLOR DOYLE: Absolutely. After a tough loss like that, there's plenty of anger and frustration to go around. What we need to do now is channel that into a productive place and use that to improve and to find a way to be more consistent and find a way to play like we can play every week.

Q. You guys ran the plays that were called, but what's your feeling about where the passing game is and what direction this offense is going?

TAYLOR DOYLE: We have the utmost confidence in our coaching staff, and we know they're going to put us in a position to win week in and week out. Our job is to execute and play with fundamentals and technique and just fight every play and do that to the best of our ability. So I know as a team we're confident in the things we're doing. We're confident that we can run the ball. We're confident that we can pass the ball, and we're definitely confident that our coaches are going to put us in a position to win.

Malik Jefferson

Q. Now that you've had a day or so to process it, how do you explain how that happened Saturday?

MALIK JEFFERSON: I don't have an explanation for it. Of course the coaches are going to do what they have to do, evaluate us and how we played, and they're going to come back and look at things that we're going to do in the future and put the best out there.

Q. Was the mindset wrong before the game?

MALIK JEFFERSON: It was a normal feeling. We were ready to play, and they just -- Iowa State came out and executed better than we did.

Q. How much of this is trying to change the mindset of the program and you guys learning how to win as you go through the process?

MALIK JEFFERSON: I think it just comes out of consistency. We just have to be consistent with everything we do because we tend to lose focus sometimes, but I feel like a lot of the guys are still prepared and ready to go every day.

Q. Do you notice a trend or anything that causes a lack of focus? How much in the locker room is there a lack of focus? Is the team divided?

MALIK JEFFERSON: It's not divided, and I'll tell you that everybody is focused and we're all on one task. I think we just get caught in the moment and that feeling of the opponent we're playing, to play down at their level, we should have came out there and executed the way we normally know how.... and take control of the game.

Q. How important is a fast start? Everyone talks about it. You guys haven't performed well when you've had your backs to the wall and scored second. How important is that fast start?

MALIK JEFFERSON: We fought the whole game, and we tried to put up points. Obviously they did what they did and defense did what we did. Of course we're all a team, so we're all out there fighting trying to figure out the problem, but it's not something we can answer as players. We don't have the answer, we're just going to go out there and keep executing and keep playing and get ready for Kansas.

Q. You just said we're Texas football, and Charlie said you're going to get the best from people because you're Texas football. Has Texas football lost the luster of this program because of what it's been the last five years?

MALIK JEFFERSON: Not at all. Like I said, it takes time, and that's what it's going to come down to, people who really want to buy in are going to buy in.

Q. Do you mean players?

MALIK JEFFERSON: Everybody.

Q. Do you think players are buying in?

MALIK JEFFERSON: I think they are. I think coaches are, too. I think it just comes down to execution, always.

Q. Did you ever envision this year being like this?

MALIK JEFFERSON: No. That's a good question, but no, I never thought it would be like this. There's always trials and tribulations in life, and ups and downs. I believe it's a learning process for me, going through a losing season. Next year you learn from it and get better.

Q. Is it hard on some of the freshmen, though, because you didn't expect this?

MALIK JEFFERSON: Yeah, they take it hard sometimes. You know, we're all used to winning, but it's nothing traumatic where anybody is going to be upset where their frustrations have to come out on social media or anything like that. A lot of guys are mature and they're going to do what's best for them and keep playing.

Q. We've heard guys use the words anger and frustration about games like Saturday and the way things are going this year. How do you stress it? Are there guys that do it verbally in the locker room and some guys do it on the practice field? Where do you channel your frustration?

MALIK JEFFERSON: I think you have to look back at yourself and find out what you did wrong to not help the team. That's the step it's going to take to get us better, when everybody individually puts themselves in the shoes of the game and what they could have done right instead of being a selfish individual. It can tell you a lot to be honest.

Q. Do you think there are a lot of selfish individuals right now that need to learn to become more of a team?

MALIK JEFFERSON: No, no. I think it's just guys making little mistakes that don't think about it at that given time. I don't think anybody is selfish on this team. I think everybody wants to win. That's a common goal. But I just feel like some people just get caught up in the moment sometimes.

Q. How big of a set back is this, and will it be difficult or easy to get the juice back?

MALIK JEFFERSON: The juice is always there.

Q. Two more home games left in the season. Kansas is coming in. How important is it to get the fans back out there, get this thing turned around starting Saturday?

MALIK JEFFERSON: The fans are going to show up. Everybody is going to be supporting us. A lot of people are really upset. I'm sorry I don't have an answer for you, but we're just going to keep playing Texas football and try to get this team turned around.

Peter Jinkens

Q. Does one game take away all the juice this team has, or what's up?

PETER JINKENS: No, it doesn't. I'm still confident in my team, my teammates and coaching staff. My confidence hasn't dropped. We've just got to do a better job of preparing and being focused as the week goes on.

Q. After Notre Dame and TCU did you ever imagine or envision that this would happen?

PETER JINKENS: No, I didn't. I felt like we were heading in a good direction, just played a few games, but we took a step back this weekend. We can't do anything but just correct our mistakes and just go back to the drawing board.

Q. Where exactly was the lack of preparation? In the film room? Was it in practice? Where was it?

PETER JINKENS: I would probably say in practice. We weren't that focused at practice I guess you could say. We just didn't execute the way that we should have.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about focus, execution, consistency with this team. How do you find those things?

PETER JINKENS: We've just got to work. I feel like we just have to be more consistent in my opinion. I feel like the focus is there and all that, but sometimes we stray away from that. But all in all, I feel like this is still a really good team and we can still do a lot in our next few games.

Q. You've got two more home games left this season. Will it be easy or difficult to get this thing turned around, get the fans back in it and make that push for another bowl game?

PETER JINKENS: It's going to be hard. I mean, the last few games, they were pretty tough opponents. We've just got to have the right mindset going into the end of the season.

Q. Charlie said that he wanted to see you guys play like you did against Oklahoma. Why isn't that there? Why doesn't that come out every week for all the guys? Is it just they're learning how to do it all?

PETER JINKENS: If I had the answer to that, I'd tell you, but I really don't.

Q. You guys have never lost to Kansas. How important is it to keep that streak alive?

PETER JINKENS: It's real important. It's my last year, and I just want to win the last of these games.

Q. How are you all going to figure out how to find that consistency?

PETER JINKENS: If I had the answer, I'd tell you, but I don't (have it).

Q. Does that worry you?

PETER JINKENS: A little bit.

Caleb Bluiett

Q. Talk about that flight home.

CALEB BLUIETT: Oh, man, that flight home was probably one of the tougher ones. I've been on a couple rough ones, but the past couple years have been really rough when we go to away games. First one was West Virginia a couple years ago. This one was -- it was kind of up there with it.

But I mean, thanks to the pilots for getting us home safely.

Q. How is this team feeling right now? Y'all were hot the last two weeks, and now it seems like you took a step backwards. Feelings and emotions of it all?

CALEB BLUIETT: As a team, we're just trying to get everything to where we're on the same levels and where we're rotating the same way at the same time. We're just trying to find our knack and get back on our groove.

Q. How concerned are you that you guys haven't found that consistency yet?

CALEB BLUIETT: We're just trying to do our best, really. The consistency levels, it all varies because it's just some days we might not be on our best and others might. I mean, any time in this league, if you don't play to your best, then there's a big chance that you may lose.

Q. How do you change that? How do you get it where even when you're not on your best days --

CALEB BLUIETT: You just work hard. You've got to continue to work hard, put your head down and don't give up.

Q. Is the mindset of this team okay right now?

CALEB BLUIETT: Yes. None of us like to lose, but we understand that we have to go every day and do what we need to do to make the team better.

Q. Do you feel like the season can still be saved?

CALEB BLUIETT: Yeah. I don't have any doubts in my mind.

Q. Where is the confidence level right now in the passing game and with Jerrod?

CALEB BLUIETT: I don't have the answers to that question. I'm not in the same room as them all the time, but from what I've seen in practice with Jerrod[Heard] and Tyrone[Swoopes], they're both able to do it. We've just got to do it.

Q. Charlie said that this game Saturday was not an embarrassment just because of the way you guys fought and tried to get things going. Do you agree with that sentiment, or were you embarrassed?

CALEB BLUIETT: I don't like to lose, so I mean, even if we win, if it's an ugly win or a pretty win, it doesn't matter. I just don't like to lose.

Q. You guys have been pretty resilient in bouncing back from these losses. Do you think it will be easier for you guys to respond and get this thing rolling and pushing toward a bowl game?

CALEB BLUIETT: It just depends on how we prepare this week as a team, in practice, how we do in the film room. How we do on the practice field and how we study film will depict how we do this weekend.

Q. What was the offensive game plan this past weekend?

CALEB BLUIETT: Pretty much just run the ball and force the run, try to get guys moved off the ball. But from what y'all saw, it wasn't the most solid.

Q. How nice is it to come back home, Veterans Day game against a team you've never lost to, a lot at stake and a lot of ramifications surrounding this game?

CALEB BLUIETT: It's always good to be back home, playing in front of the home crowd, and Kansas is just our next opponent on this day. It's just the next game, so it's just as important as the last one.

Q. You mentioned the practice, getting it together on the practice field, and that'll determine how you guys play. Are there a lot of guys that need to learn that that's important, that practice is almost if not as important as game day, maybe even more so in preparation?

CALEB BLUIETT: Everybody is understanding that. There's no one really that doesn't understand that already. But if there is someone like that, maybe they should get on board. From what I've seen, everybody is kind of -- we're all sticking together. We all know what we need to do, so we're all trying to get there.

Q. It seems like for the most part today, guys just don't have the answer right now. They don't know why or how something like Saturday can happen. Is that fair? It just seems like there's not a real answer for how that happened.

CALEB BLUIETT: There is an answer. It's just other guys have different answers for it. We've just got to go out and execute better and just do everything for the man to our left and our right.

Q. When you guys lose like that and you come back on Sunday, does Charlie seem mad or is it the players that are mad? What's kind of the attitude, I guess? Who speaks out?

CALEB BLUIETT: Everybody does things their own way. There are some guys who decide to voice their opinion, but it's not much that can be said. We all felt the same way pretty much, so on Sunday, yesterday, we were all just sitting down, and we already had an understanding of how the other guy felt. There was nothing that needed to be professed out loud.

Johnathan Gray

Q. It's hard for us to understand some of the things because we don't get to see you guys angry and yelling and doing all that kind of stuff. Can you take us through where you guys channel your anger and frustration and how you guys get each other motivated after something like Saturday?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: We just have to look in the mirror and find ourselves. You've got to ask yourself, are you a person that's helping the team or are you hurting the team? All of us need a self-evaluation and figure out what's going on and figure out how we can help this team win instead of losing. I think guys are still mad, angry, but we channel that through practice and on the field. We have to do a better job of executing plays and just coming together and being organized as a team.

Q. You've been around a long time and been through some bad games. How does Saturday happen, especially after you felt like you guys had made the turn?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Right. I think we kind of took that team for granted. It's Iowa State, and we felt we had a better team, but we went out there with a lack of focus and a lack of execution, and they beat us. You can't go in with a mindset of we're just going to go blow this team out.

You've got to go out and fight. That's what they come in for. I felt like we didn't do that as well as we should have did, and we got beat. Now we've got to go back to practice and work harder.

Q. How do you all let that happen when you're trying to get to a bowl game? How do you let that mindset shift and refocus?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: That comes from within. That comes with self-evaluation and self-motivation. Like I said, you've got to look in the mirror and ask yourself, are you a guy that's hurting the team or helping the team. Unfortunately we have some guys that hurt the team and they cost us, and we've got to go to practice, go to work and as a team get better, and come together and say we can't let that happen anymore.

Q. When you say guys are hurting the team, what do you mean?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Just focus. You hurt the team by not focusing, and that's where we hurt ourselves. A lack of focus can get you beat by any team, any day, and that's what happened to us, and we can't allow that to happen anymore.

Q. Do you notice that happening with people and call them out, or is it one of those deals where you don't feel it until you're actually in the game?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: It's just one of those deals where some people feel it, some people don't, and as a team you feel it out on the field, and that's what happened.

Q. How many people would you say didn't have that focus on the team?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: I couldn't give you a number, just pretty much all of us.

Q. Did you think this loss was an embarrassment?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: It was a huge embarrassment. Just not even the fact that it was Iowa State, it was just the fact that we went out there and laid an egg. We looked like we didn't know what we were doing, especially on the offense, and it cost us. It was an embarrassment for us and them. It was an embarrassment to this organization, and we can't let that happen anymore.

Q. How does Jerrod handle this, and where do you think his confidence level is at after something like that?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Jerrod[Heard] is still trying to motivate the team. He's a young guy but he's still trying to do anything possible he can to help this team, and that's what he's doing. We're all trying to get each other up and just figure out how we can win games day by day.

Q. Seemed like you guys were running the ball well, then you wanted to do the passing game and the passing game is not going well and then you changed quarterbacks. How did that happen?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: We go out and try to execute what the coaches call, and unfortunately we didn't execute either the run or the pass game as well as we should have, and that's something we have to figure out and go back to practice and pinpoint what's wrong and fix it.

Q. How concerned are you at this point in the season y'all don't know what's wrong?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: It's not so much that we don't know what's wrong. We've just got to figure out a way to fix it. Whether that's switching people around, whether that's switching up

what we do, like I said, we've just got to figure out how to fix it.

Q. What is the problem?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: Focus right now. Focus and execution.

Q. Is this just a matter of maybe some guys trying to understand what it takes, that maybe some of the younger guys don't get it yet, that they've got to learn that practice is just as important?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: We all have to do that. We all have to learn that practice is the next step to the game. We have to take practices like a game, and we all have to get that in our heads and understand that, and until we do, you know, who knows what's going to happen.

Q. You guys have never lost to Kansas. You're back at home. How nice will it be to come out and keep that winning streak alive against KU and show the world that you guys still got the juice?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: It would be real nice to go out there and play, win a game, win against Kansas, and know that we're that much more close to a bowl game. That's what we have to get done, and that should be our mindset right now is getting to a bowl.

Q. Have you ever been on a plane ride back that was as bad as Saturday?

JOHNATHAN GRAY: No, that was the worst plane ride that I have ever been on, but our pilot did a great job of getting us through the airways and getting us back home safe.

Sedrick Flowers

Q. Sed, after big games running the ball against Oklahoma and Kansas State, obviously it didn't happen Saturday night. What was it Saturday night that didn't work?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: It seems simple but it really was just execution. Afterwards watching film and seeing some of the plays we had and the play calling we had, the plays worked -- we were set up at times where it was like, all right, there's a crease here, the runner may hit it full speed, but one guy fell off the blocks too early or the guy wouldn't get there on time and it just was a tackle for a loss or a tackle on the line of scrimmage. The play calling and everything, it was set up for us to take advantage of the defense, get yards, but we just didn't execute fully.

Q. How concerning is that knowing where y'all stand in trying to get to a bowl game that the execution wasn't there?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: It's concerning. I don't feel like we prepared as well as we should have during the week of practice for this game, and that showed in the game. For it to be something like that, we've just got to take practice more serious for these last four games in order to get it done.

Q. Is that from top to bottom? Is that seniors to freshmen? Or do you notice sometimes it's just learning how to practice the right way?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: I felt like it was everybody, really. There were times where during practice I would look around and see guys, they were joking around a little too much. I tried to

say, 'Hey, calm down, we have practice right now, everyone get serious.' It just kind of continued throughout the week. People would just play around or wouldn't take play serious.

Q. At what point did you notice last week that there was that lack of focus?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: I saw it the first day of practice, really on Tuesday. You know, we had an alright practice on Tuesday, but in going into Wednesday and Thursday practice, it just wasn't what it was supposed to have been. It wasn't as crisp. It wasn't as fast as it should be.

Q. Two more home games left. Do y'all just come out like gangbusters and show the world that you can keep that winning streak alive against Kansas?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: Yeah, if we go out in practice and prepare how we should and do preparation and take that serious as it is, we can go into these games and we can compete how we have against K-State and against OU. It's really all a matter of just going out and preparing.

Q. Of the road games you've had this year you've scored 10 points offensively. Why are the struggles so much more emphasized on the road?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: Once things start going down for us and they're at home, we know they're playing well at home, it kind of just -- it boosts up, I guess. I really don't know why it's as bad as it is when we're on the road. We've got to find out why as a team and fix that.

Q. Does it concern you that it seems like y'all don't have the answers that you're looking for?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: No, not really, because we have time to fix it. It's not like it's right now or else. We still have some time before even our next away game to figure out why and fix it.

Q. How do you think y'all will figure it out?

SEDRICK FLOWERS: Just talking with one another, and at practice preparing better, really.

Duke Thomas

Q. Duke, seemed like after Oklahoma and K-State you guys really turned a corner. What happened against Iowa State that you guys couldn't get it done?

DUKE THOMAS: I feel like during the week the preparation wasn't there. It wasn't equivalent to the Oklahoma game, K-State game. Like we've always been saying, it's a one-game season. We've got to take every game serious. We're in no position to overlook anybody, and that's pretty much what I think sums it up.

Q. How big a concern is that at this point, that even at 3-4 you still weren't -- everybody wasn't preparing well?

DUKE THOMAS: Concerned? It's a big concern. We lost the game because of it. Going into this week, leadership has got to be there to make sure everybody is on the same page and the preparation is there so we can execute during the game.

Q. The coaching staff noticed during the week that there was a lack of focus or lack of preparation?

DUKE THOMAS: Oh, definitely. It's obvious, but during the Thursday practice we ended up --

the players on defense got together. We met again, watched some more film and we caught up. We tried to catch up, but we had to be on point every day of the week throughout practice for us to execute on Saturday, and it wasn't there this last week.

Q. How do you change that moving forward, getting everyone on board? How do you prepare and go out and work?

DUKE THOMAS: Definitely be more stern, (have) mandatory meetings. We'll make it happen. Every day it's going to be a grind. I'm going to push more people. I'm going to try to connect with more people and try to make this happen, but really a lack of execution and really just preparation. The game plan was there, people were in the right position to make the play and it was just lack of execution. It wasn't there for us.

Q. Duke, how do you keep the players in the right mentality when you're on the field for so much time?

DUKE THOMAS: I don't know. I love the game. I don't even think about that. There's a lot of passion in me. But I don't know, I just make it happen. I guess it just comes off of me. It's energy.

Q. Were you tired by the end of the game?

DUKE THOMAS: I wasn't tired. I usually don't get tired during the games. When we play the way we were playing, we look tired. When you're not having fun, you're not winning, it looks bad. Execution makes all the things that you're saying come to life. When we make the plays, we won't look like that on the field.

Q. Where is the confidence level of the team?

DUKE THOMAS: I still think we're completely confident. Coach (Strong) always tells us what kind of team we are. When you watch that tape, that's not us. We know the type of plays we can make. We've seen us make the good plays. We were just out of position, not making the plays we're supposed to make, lack of execution. We know the answer. But, it didn't happen for us on Saturday. This week of preparation, we've got to make it a lot better.

Q. Was it embarrassing?

DUKE THOMAS: It was very embarrassing. Defense, we know what we're capable of. We know what the score should have been. We know what we should have held them to. Really just having that loss, especially Iowa State at home, we knew it was going to be a tough game, and we didn't come prepared. It's as simple as that.

Q. People were overlooking Iowa State, maybe looking down the road a little bit?

DUKE THOMAS: That's definitely been a problem. We've got to play Texas football, and no matter who we're facing, we can't look down anybody. We're in no position to look down anybody, simple as that. Every game is a big game for us. It's a one-game season, and going into the next game we've got to make something happen.