Texas Football Media Availability
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*transcripts courtesy of ASAP Sports

Marcus Johnson

Q. Is this team discouraged right now and are you scared of the direction it may or may not go?
MARCUS JOHNSON: I wouldn't say we're discouraged. You know, it's definitely a learning experience, and it's something that you don't expect, having back to back games with, you know, the difference being four points from being 1-3 and 3-1, but at the same time, you can't dwell on it. You can't continue to think about it. You just have to learn from it and move on. We've definitely watched film and we've learned that throughout the game and throughout different series that if we capitalize, the difference of three points one game and one point another game really wouldn't make much of a difference if we actually had that -- continued a drive and converted on 3rd downs and just little things like that.

Something that you have to go out and learn from, make sure you just practice it, and come game time, capitalize on it.

Q. Obviously there were 16 penalties on the game, which was a big issue really nationally. How do you deal with that during the game when calls are going against you? It's easy now to say, just get over it and move on, but during the game it's obviously really tough to get over.
MARCUS JOHNSON: It's definitely frustrating, because especially from last game, it felt like every big play, everything that happened, you have to look back and just say, well, did they call anything, and then everyone knows the two touchdowns that we had that were called back. But it's one of those things, definitely frustrating, but you still have to be able to capitalize once you're back on the field. You can't sit there and make excuses for it or blame anyone else but yourself. It is what it is. When you're out on the field, it's the same mindset. It is what it is, but you still have to make the plays you have to make.

Q. How bummed were you?
MARCUS JOHNSON: You know, I was bummed, but at the same time it was just so close, and when you put it in the refs' hands, sometimes it goes that way. But it is what it is.

Q. How important is the performance of the offensive line?
MARCUS JOHNSON: It's huge, and you can see the impact from when he was playing and then when he got hurt, and just the difference it makes. Just little things, and sometimes you don't really notice it when they're gone, but we definitely needed him out there, and hopefully he'll have a speedy recovery and be back.

Q. How excited are you to see Tyrone Swoopes in his new role in short-yard packages?
MARCUS JOHNSON: We were excited for him throughout the week leading up to that game.

We put the packages in and we knew it would really help the team and we would need it. He went out there and we did it. It was something we expected, but we needed the energy and momentum when he was out there.

Q. How did he (Swoopes) handle that transition from starting quarterback to now?
MARCUS JOHNSON: To be honest, I feel like he's worked even harder just to make sure he's prepared, and no matter what the situation may be, special packages, just having to go out and play, whatever it is, I always see him with his iPad looking over things, watching film, so it's something that's made him focus more, and definitely been a learning experience for him.

Q. What happened with the offense in the second half? Things really slowed down and you guys weren't able to move the ball.
MARCUS JOHNSON: Just like I said, not capitalizing, having three-and-outs, and just having different situations where we go out there and for whatever reason, we just -- we don't make the play that we need to make. We watched film, and it's just one of those things, as players we have to take it upon ourselves to make those plays or to find a way to extend those drives, and that's something we didn't do that second half.

Q. TCU is coming off a game where they gave up 52 points. Is that something you get excited about, knowing that this might be a game where you might have to outscore them?
MARCUS JOHNSON: Definitely. The offense is going to go out there -- the TCU offense is going to go out there and do what they do each and every week, so that's something that we expect. But at the same time, you know, they have guys that are thrown into positions and they have to make plays, so no matter if it's the people who are out there, if it's people who have to replace other guys from injuries, they still have great players on both sides of the ball, and we still have to be prepared well enough to go out there and go back and forth with that offense.

Q. Charlie said that losing maybe didn't bother the freshmen as much because they didn't really know what was happening, whereas the veterans might think, here we go again. How do you stay in the moment and make sure the team doesn't turn --
MARCUS JOHNSON: It's just putting too much work into it, just to take a step back or to question yourselves. We know what we've put into it, and the record is what it is, but you still have to go out each and every week and compete. In a game like Saturday coming up, facing a top-five team in the nation, and they're very talented on both sides of the ball, that's what you look forward to and that's why you go to big programs, to play other schools like that. I know for my team and myself, it's one of those things, just competing, being a player, having pride in not only the University but just your team, as well, and not letting them down in any kind of way.

Q. Do you feel like you just can't get a break right now?
MARCUS JOHNSON: As far as?

Q. In these games, you're so close.
MARCUS JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, like I said, it's a four-point difference within the last two games. It's tough I know for me personally missing the first three games with an ankle and everything. I was glad to be back. But you also, like I said, it is frustrating and it is one of those things where you put so much work into it and you would never expect that it would happen like

this. But like I said, you learn from it and you move on.

Q. For Daje, this is his last shot at TCU. Do you get excited about that?
MARCUS JOHNSON: Oh, yeah, of course, whether it's offense, special teams, whatever it may be, you know, he's like that every week, but especially with this team, and all the guys that he knows from the TCU team, it's definitely going to be one of those things where he wants to make his mark for his last chance playing them. Like I said, it's also a great opportunity with a team that's ranked 3 in the nation.

Q. You remember what they came down here and did last year. Is there still a sting from that?
MARCUS JOHNSON: Definitely. There definitely is. But it's also one of those things where, like I said, it's our chance to make up for all that, and it's our chance to change the perspective of how everything went from that last game into this game. Like I said, they've only gotten better, and like everyone knows, they had a great season last year, and what they're doing right now, but it's our opportunity to make everything right and to go out there and compete and win the game.

Q. Pretty good opportunity to turn things around?
MARCUS JOHNSON: Oh, yeah, definitely.

Q. From a player standpoint, when the fans are down and the fans are -- can you guys sense when the fans are still on your side?
MARCUS JOHNSON: Well, to be honest, that's one thing I've noticed throughout the past two, three games, that the fans have been very energetic, and they've been on our side the whole time. I've felt like it's been tough losses, but they're out there and they're cheering louder than I've ever really heard them cheer. It just seems like they've had our back. It's one of those things, like I said, it's disappointing for whatever reason that the past two games, it's been a four-point difference, but I can really sense the energy in the fans, and I can really sense that they have our back and they're out there cheering us on. They're helping us finish games like that, and we're going to need them for the rest of the season, and we're going to need them when we have other games that may be close like that.

Johnathan Gray

Q. Talk about the mentality of the team, not giving up and still got a lot to play for.
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Yeah, we've still got a lot to play for. I think the team spirit is still up. Like I always say, it's minor details that we have to fix in order to win games. We've got to get that situated, and guys are still ready to go out and play, and getting ready for TCU this week.

Q. Charlie said the concern has never been the freshmen; they're going to buy in…but more the psyche of the vets.
JOHNATHAN GRAY: I think the seniors and the veterans, our mindset is keep fighting, keep pushing. Our day is going to come. It's life. Things happen, and you've got to overcome them, and this is where I think our maturity shows and how well we respond to being down. I think,

like I said, the spirits are up right now, and guys are fighting for each other, and like I said, our break is going to come.

Q. Does this year feel different than when you've struggled the past couple years? Does it feel like you're closer to turning it around?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Oh, yeah, definitely. From last year we would be down on ourselves. This year we have more guys just fighting for each other, guys' mindset is keep pushing, keep fighting, and it's different from last year. You can tell that in the locker room, and guys are just ready to keep going out each and every week and fighting, and like I say, our break is going to come.

Q. You said after the game that people were mad, screaming. How do you take that frustration from these two heartbreaking losses and use it as motivation or fuel for the rest of the season?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: You do just that: You use it as motivation and fuel. We go out with a great week of practice this week, gear up for TCU and get prepared for those guys and just take what we went through last game and bring it with positive energy and motivation to go out and go get a win this week.

Q. How important is Perk (Kent Perkins) to the offensive line, getting the offense going?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: He's very important, he's a big body, a very important guy, a veteran, has experience, and he's hurt right now, and we never want to see that happen. He's one of our key linemen on the team. It's another person that got to step up, has to help this team to win, and I think guys are getting ready this week to do that. Whoever steps in for KP, I think he knows what role he has to play and what he has to get done to help this team win.

Q. Are you able to tell when especially a young guy, a guy like Jerrod (Heard) is sick or not feeling well in the huddle, and how do you help to get somebody through that?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: They've got to get the bug out. Jerrod's stomach has been bothering him. That's just one of those things. You get sick, you've got to be able to get healthy the next week and be prepared for your team. We really couldn't tell in the huddle, but he's done a great job of just fighting through things. He'll be back, and we'll just go from there.

Q. What did you think of the installation of Tyrone for the short yardage plays?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: I think it's good. Tyrone is a big body. When he gets hit, he's going to fall forward, so using him on short yardages last game helped. We got a touchdown for him, and it helped this team.

Q. What happened to the offense there the second half? You guys weren't as productive as you were in the first half.
JOHNATHAN GRAY: I think guys got a little bit tired, got lackadaisical in our detail of work, and those things come back and hurt us. You know, and those were the things we talked about that we have to fix and get better and just overcome things.

Q. How much did it hurt dealing with all the penalties?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: You know, you've just got to go out and play in any circumstance. I

always say you've got to be mature and be able to handle those situations and go out and play. Unfortunately some of those things kind of hurt us, but you bounce back and get ready for the next week.

Q. How do you sit there and say you've got to be mature during those situations? How difficult is it when call after call on big play after big play -- how tough is it to overcome that?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: It's very tough, especially after some of those calls. We had big plays out there. It's hard, but like I say, you've got to be mature. We have to call up another play and we have to go out and execute it. You know, we tried those things, and we just kept getting penalty after penalty. You know, it's something you have to overcome. It's life, and it happens.

Q. Did Charlie do some push-ups or run or anything for his unsportsmanlike --
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Who knows what he did? We don't know. You'd have to ask him about that.

Q. Talk about going back to Tarrant County (back to home area for the game)
JOHNATHAN GRAY: It's definitely a fun game. Your family comes in, your friends, everybody is accessible out there. You always want to perform for your family and people in that type of game. I always love it, going back home, playing against people I played against in high school, playing against some of my friends I know. It's always a great feeling, and it's just a competitive game, and that's what you live for.

Q. Did they ever reach out to you, TCU, when you were in high school?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Yeah, TCU reached out. They were definitely one of the ones that wanted me on the team. You know, great atmosphere out there. I'm from Fort Worth, so it was a great recruitment process, but I ended up picking Texas, and that's where my heart is.

Q. If you look at what TCU has been doing on defense, they're not the same TCU that people expect on that side of the ball. How excited are you to go up against a team that just gave up 52 (points) and is missing a lot of players and struggling on that side?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: You know, they're going through that situation. I think they've got like six guys on the defense that's out. You've just got to go out and play. They strap on their cleats just like we strap on ours. You have no excuses. Somebody has to step up, somebody has to be prepared. Regardless of who's hurt, who's not, you've got to go out there and play, and we're getting geared up for those guys and getting ready.

Q. When you see them giving up 52 points, is that something that you get a little more excited about?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Oh, yeah, you find those things that they're giving up and you try to execute those in your game plan. You know, we'll keep watching film and see what more we can put up.

Q. How much does Thanksgiving last year still burn you guys?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: It definitely burned. It was embarrassing. You never want to lose like that. I think guys now are ready to go out and show that that wasn't Texas, and just go out there

and have a better game. I think for the seniors and the most part, we need to have a better game. It means a little bit more to us than the freshmen, and we have to go out and show that.

Q. Can you compare Jerrod (Heard) with the talent he's shown this year with (TCU's Trevone) Boykin?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: You know, I really haven't really focused on Boykin. We've focused on Jerrod, and Jerrod has brought great things to this team. He's a running quarterback and can stay in the pocket, so he does a great job for us. He gets the job done, what we need, and we'll keep going with him.

Naashon Hughes

Q. Do you even look at the numbers that they (TCU) have put up as far as points, yards, et cetera?
NAASHON HUGHES: I don't really look at the numbers, just like the players themselves, like Green, the running back, and Trevone, the quarterback, and (Josh) Doctson, they're all great players, so the numbers speak for themselves and we know that they're a great offense, but we're ready for the challenge let's just say.

Q. You guys have probably heard on social media, fans, whatever, talking about how that officiating caused you guys to lose on Saturday. How difficult is it for a team to block that out so as to not look for excuses?
NAASHON HUGHES: Yeah, as far as last game, you know, we dropped the ball a little bit, so this week we have another tough opponent coming up with TCU. I mean, their offense is one of the best in the country, so I don't think we can dwell on the past. I think the only way to win this next game is to focus on how good they are and how to stop it.

Q. Have you ever forced that many turnovers in a game and still lost the game?
NAASHON HUGHES: Yeah, when I was in high school we had a couple games, like we played David Ash's team and I think we forced like four or five turnovers that game, and we still lost the game in the end. But it just shows this next couple games we can come together as a team and step up to the plate and really try to finish these games out.

Q. How big of a step forward has the defense made?
NAASHON HUGHES: I mean, that first quarter we laid an egg there pretty big, and you know, we all came together on that sideline and we told each other that we were going to do whatever it takes to stop this offense and get the offense the ball back and try to win this game.

Q. Is that something you guys can build on?
NAASHON HUGHES: Yeah, I think it's something we can definitely build on. With our first loss with Notre Dame, there was questions there, and then each week I think we've improved as a defense. So this next opponent coming up, we think we should just take the next step.

Q. How hard is it to see your coach struggle with losing a game that way?

NAASHON HUGHES: I mean, Coach Bedford, he's always an emotional guy, and that's how we all try to play the game, emotionally and as passionately as possible. Seeing him that hurt, it just drives us that much more for the next week to get the job done.

Q. Is it difficult to stay in the moment and not get caught up on the 1-3, now we've got to go to TCU and then we've got OU? Is it hard to stay focused on what's at hand?
NAASHON HUGHES: It's not that difficult right now because we have such a tough opponent coming up next, we can't really dwell on the past and we have to focus on the future if we want to be successful.

Q. They have a great offense and you guys have a pretty good defense. How does a pretty good defense match up with a great offense?
NAASHON HUGHES: I should have said we both have a great offense and a great defense, because I mean, I believe in each and every player on our defense, and I'm sure they believe in each and every player on their offense. But I think when it comes down to it, I'm willing to bet on my defense versus their offense.

Peter Jinkens

Q. How pumped up are you to see Boykin again and get after him after what happened last year?
PETER JINKENS: I'm pretty excited. He's a real good competitor. He's real poised in the pocket. I just can't wait to play him. It's always good to compete every week.

Q. He's a Heisman guy; what makes him so good?
PETER JINKENS: I mean, he's a playmaker. I mean, he's real poised in the pocket. He's real mobile. He throws good balls. I mean, he doesn't really make bad decisions that often. He's just a good player, good quarterback.

Q. How do you stop him?
PETER JINKENS: One, always stop the run is something we try to bring each week, but we just have to just play good defense. Just play good defense all around this week.

Q. Do you feel like the defense improved this last week?
PETER JINKENS: I feel like we did, the defense. I feel like we've gotten better each week we've played, so we have to keep building on that.

Q. Looking at offenses putting up 55 points and throwing it all over the place, how big of a challenge is that for you guys?
PETER JINKENS: It's a real big challenge, but I feel like if we just get in a good pass rush, everybody just knows to get in the right zones and just body guys up, I feel like we'll do pretty good.

Q. Is this team discouraged right now?

PETER JINKENS: We're not discouraged. I mean, you know, it's like things like that happen all the time. You've got to pick yourself up each week. We just have to keep encouraging one another and just keep our heads up.

Q. How frustrating is it when all those calls are going against you?
PETER JINKENS: You've just got to roll with the punches. Nothing we could really do but just keep playing.

Q. How much does that suck away the momentum, especially from the big plays you guys had?
PETER JINKENS: We can't go back and change it, all we can do is just go forward from here.

Sedrick Flowers

Q. How pumped up are you guys to see the defending Big 12 champions and show them who's boss in this state?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: I mean, we're just pumped up to get a chance to play them again. Coming off of what happened last year when we played them, we're not pleased with the performance we had last year. It's not as much as showing anybody who's the big dog in the state, as far as getting a chance to redeem ourselves from our last year's play.

Q. What makes the most sense for the offensive line right now when you start looking at the absence of right tackle Kent Perkins? What do you see in terms of experience? What could be the quick solution?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: Really just the guy who's coming up next, just to be ready to play, really. I mean, it can be anybody to take the job for a spot right now. If you don't prepare as everybody did for this game, how Perkins was prepared, how can you be ready to play?

Q. What did you think about Tyrone getting some play?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: I was excited for him to see him get up there and play how he does. He's a high-energy guy. You saw after the run, I thought he got all those yards, after he scored, how pumped up he was, how excited to get back out there. I felt like the package we have with him in there is a great package. Everybody gets their blocking assignment done, he runs there, he's running hard. He's not going to be taken down by the first guy. He's a big strong runner, so he got out there and he's going to make one, two guys miss or fall off and he's going to get some yards.

Q. How do you handle going from a situation to a starter to having Tyrone in the game?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: I feel like he's handled it pretty well. I haven't seen him complain once at all. He stays upbeat. He does what the team needs him to do. He's an encouraging guy. He's coaching up Jerrod. If he does something wrong in practice, he's coaching him up, hey, look at this, look at that, so he can get better. He's keeping everybody on their feet, keeping everybody up, and not letting anybody slack off in practice.

Q. A lot of people talked about all the penalties you guys had. Was there a point in the game where after a big play you kind of went, oh, man, is there going to be a flag or anything? Were you ever concerned about it?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: I mean, myself personally, I didn't take it into consideration because if you think about that every single play, that's going to be in your head all the time, you're not worried about the actual play. A penalty did happen, and it was like, okay, let's go. It's a penalty, what are we going to do to come back from that mistake. I didn't really think about, well, we got the penalty, is it going to be on the next play, or oh, this play is good. I didn't really think about that.

Q. Was it tough mentally to stay in it when call after call after call is kind of going against you?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: It can be. I mean, there was times where it was, okay, well, we hit a play here and there and then the penalty -- a flag was flown, but for the most part I tried to keep the O-line, the backs, like okay, let's go, everybody get lined up, wait for the referee to put the ball down for the next play.

Q. What happened with the offense in the second half compared to the first half? Second half you guys didn't really move the ball. What was the difference between first half and second half?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: I would just say OSU did a really good job with what the game plan was. They came into the second half, they geared up more twists and they brought more blitzing stuff. I mean, they executed. That's all I can say.

Q. When you're going up against a defense this week that gave up 52 points and not as strong as they've been typically, is that something you get excited about as a offensive lineman?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: Yeah, you could say that, but I mean, I'm really more excited about just getting ready to play. Those comments from them about us last year, you know, that some of the D-line said about us, I'm ready to get back in there and just play, really.

Q. Charlie said in situations like this, it's easy for the freshmen to stay strong because they don't know any better but it's important for the veterans to have a good mental psyche. Do you guys have that? Do you feel like the veterans on this team are strong mentally?
SEDRICK FLOWERS: I definitely do. I mean, there was times, take the game against Cal. We were down 21 points, and it's easy for like a freshman, oh, we're down, the game is over. No, you've got to keep your head into the game and keep your nose down and keep grinding. I feel like the team kept everybody together and kept everybody close together so we all played one and played for the next guy and got the job almost done.