

TEXAS POSTGAME QUOTES

NOVEMBER 12, 2016

Texas Head Coach Charlie Strong

Opening statement:

We had our opportunities and made enough mistakes on offense and defense and the kicking game that with a game like this as close as it is, we just gotta find a way to win it. It was there for us to go get; we didn't get it. Told our players happy the way they battled. Happy we were down 17 to 3, battled back; got down to 24 to 13 and battled back. We were there, and we just gotta capitalize when we have those opportunities.

On what went wrong:

Well, you look down in the red zone and around the 20-yard-line area. We just didn't get the touchdowns that we needed. We missed some field goals and we had the ball down there again and the guy comes off the edge and creates a fumble. And so there's two scores there. And then when you hit a field goal, you like to get touchdowns there. But you look at our guys, and what you look for is how they just continue; Shane goes down, gets back up and comes right back in the game. But it was just one of those -- the pass, I would say, when it was 24 to 13, it could have been ugly for us, and our guys just continued to fight.

On the turnovers:

I just know at some point we gotta hit it. We didn't hit it today. Defensively we were able to get some turnovers, and we gave up some on offense. But you like to capitalize. And that was a good defensive football team. I don't want to take anything away from them. But it was there for us and we just didn't take advantage of it.

On Tim Cole's father's health:

Well, what happened before we got here, we were on our way to the stadium, Tim Cole's father had an issue and I think now he's in the ICU. And we told Tim -- actually told the whole team before we played.

On if he considered going for it on the fourth down before the half:

What I wanted to do, to try to get it to one. I think we were down four. Just try to get it to one when we go in. We hit the field goal, it was 17 to 13 and just didn't want to take points away from us, because if you don't get it, then you're second guessing yourself. And even at 17 to 13 and going in at halftime where we'd fought back, hit a 10-0 run, you'd like to sit here and say you know what could have been, but I'm glad we got the points where we were.

On if he's satisfied with the effort:

We battled. We played hard. You get down 17 to 3, you battle back and then you're 24 to 13 and you battle back. Even to the end we had the ball and had a chance to win it. Throw the Hail Mary and had the chance to go win it. We kept taking our punches and kept just coming back, and that's really what you like. You look at a young team, it's very easy, like I said, in the pass it could have gotten ugly, and it didn't get ugly. We just continued to hang in there.

On third down conversions:

Today I don't know exactly what we were on third down. But we got off the field in the second half. I think maybe they converted like one or two. In the first half through one of those tries we could have made some third down conversions. Then we start coming with pressure, start mixing it up with pressure, and that enabled us to get off the field on third down and force them to punt the ball. Offensively, it was always something that stopped us, where it was a penalty, calls that -- one time we had, what, third and two and ended up being third and seven. Had a lineman down field. But that third

down, both sides can improve. It could get better.

On the frustration of not converting turnovers and on what D'Onta Foreman said to him before the half ended:

I told him -- the second part it was five seconds, nine seconds. I said, even if we get the first down, we probably won't be able to line up because we had no more timeouts and get a play ran. The clock would have ran out. And I said let's take the points. And then there's a frustration, we gotta convert on third down; and the defense, we gotta get off the field. And you look at them today, they made some key third downs, but we were able to get the pressure, the one big sack by Jay Hall forced it to get the third down. With the third down I know on offense we can get it corrected and on defense^ .

On if there is progress despite the loss:

You look at it and you don't ever want to lose a game. It burns. It's burning them right now in the locker room, but we still have two left and we'll see how we take this game and use it to our advantage and just continue to get better. You look at us the No. 10 team in the country you can't make mistakes when you're playing against a good football team.

On the secondary in the third quarter:

The ball, what we did was man because we covered pressure the last three or four times, with zero blitz, forced him to throw one high and Haines came away with it. And then the next one he was able to get -- Wheeler did -- I mean I'm sorry. Freeman did an unbelievable job. He kept running and hitting the ball in the middle between the hashes, and he was able to flip and make the ball be thrown so wide that Haines came away with it, but you need to make those plays, especially on third down, to get us off the field, and I was happy to see him come down with the two interceptions.

On if he feels the team has progressed despite the 5-5 record:

I do. I really do think we have a really good football team, and I think we've made a ton of progress. You look at it, and not to make excuses, if you look at a freshman quarterback and a freshman center. You look on offense, you have Perk starting as a senior offensive lineman, and then everybody else are all young guys. Then on defense you're looking at Haines as your starter, your only senior back there. So you have a young group and a young group that continues to get better, and as the season goes on, we have gotten better.

And like I said, we're a different team than we were at the beginning of the season, and it showed today. When you're playing against a good football team and you go down 17 to 3 and you kind of hang your head and usually guys say, okay, here we go again, but it wasn't one of those here we go again. Okay, we're going to take the ball on offense and going to go score, which we did, and we're going to go stop them on defense and then we're going to get the ball back for our offense. And even coming out at halftime, I said, it's one of those games, guys, we gotta go take this game. They're not going to give it to us. We have to go take this game, and we come out there still had the opportunity there at the end there to go. You look at it, if you break down the second half and you're like, it was there for us. We needed seven points. And just to get them back and see what they would have done.

On the speculation surrounding his job:

I just look at just this team and what we've done. I can't worry about that, and I really don't worry about that. I just worry about the next game. I have a really good group of guys, and I know they're going to play for me. They're going to battle. They're going to give everything they've got.

Sophomore LB Edwin Freeman

On the feeling in the locker room after the game:

It's heartbreaking, but we just have to keep pushing and keep moving forward and go get these last two games.

On settling down after a wild first quarter:

Once they have thrown everything at you and you go back and talk about it in the locker room and talk with your coaches, you adjust and you're better prepared.

On his biggest frustration:

Just trying to get over the hump. We're close. We just have to get over the hump, keep pushing, and keep fighting.

Sophomore OL Connor Williams

On his frustration:

We had plenty of opportunities to score and plenty of opportunities to get the ball back, and we just didn't execute. Simple mistakes and simple execution errors are just keeping us from where we want to be.

On the mood in the locker room:

We're disappointed. Of course, it hurts. We're just trying to keep our heads up.

On failing to cash in on turnovers:

There were just a few execution errors and a few mental errors that kept us from getting the ball where it needed to be and get the easy conversions.

On if there is still a lot in front of them:

We're hopeful. We are taking it week by week, and we're going to keep our heads up and play a great game next week.

On D'Onta Foreman tying Earl Campbell's record:

That's a mazing. That's a dream come true for us. We're just so happy for him.

Junior WR Dorian Leonard

On having a hard time cashing in:

We were going against a lot of good players on that defense. They are ranked as the best defense in the Big 12. That's just one of those that you wish you could go and start over and try to get it back again.

On the defensive pressure:

They pretty much just told us to stay on and trust the process. If there was a couple extra people back there, it was just a good call by the defense at the right time in the game.

On the confidence level:

Being in this situation coming off a loss before, we know how to respond back to it. It's just one of those times you have to go around the locker room and make sure everybody's head is up.

Sophomore S P.J. Locke III

On the disappointment of the loss:

It does hurt. We had an opportunity to win the game. We just have to put the game behind us.

On the defensive effort:

It's just pride, pride in our preparation. We just have to find our identity never to give up. We were down in the game and we fought back. We trust in our offense, and our offense trusts in us. It's just one heartbeat.

On the upcoming games:

We just have to go back to the drawing board and put this game behind us. There is no confidence lost at all, just back to the drawing board. See what the game plan is and execute that.

On the third downs:

To me, I take full blame for those full downs. Those are the kind of plays I have to make. Those stops could have shortened the field for the offense at the end of the game. They could have had 20 yards to go. Unfortunately, that didn't happen and it all played out like that.

Freshman OLB Malcolm Roach

On holding West Virginia to one touchdown in the last three quarters:

We performed pretty well. We just kept fighting and tried to put our team in the best predicament to win. We just came up with the loss.

On if there is progress:

You can see it in spurts. We just have to learn to play harder, prepare harder, and the results will take care of themselves.

On West Virginia senior QB Sykler Howard:

The biggest thing is you have to take away the first read, just make him pat his feet and get nervous.

Junior RB D'Onta Foreman

On not getting the win:

Unfortunately, we weren't able to do that. We knew they were going to come in and be physical and tough. We really wanted the win and we didn't get it, so we're definitely disappointed.

On why the team was short of the win:

We had opportunities to close the game out on the offensive side. The defense really played great in my eyes. We just didn't execute the plays that we needed to execute. I can't really say why we didn't execute.

On whether the team wanted to go for the touchdowns instead of kicking field goals twice:

I can't say why the drives stalled. I definitely would've like to have gone for it. But I'm a team player. Whatever Coach Strong wants to do, I'm fine with that. Even with those two possessions, I really feel like we had the chance to win the game.

On why the team hasn't cashed in on turnovers:

I can't really say, but maybe we need to do a better job on those.

On this game being a season low of points scored:

They're really physical. I feel like they had a good defense. I can't really say why we didn't put up the points; we had a lot of great drives and we just didn't finish. I know that was a good defense but I can't say that they just stopped us. We really hurt ourselves.

On the pushing before the game started and whether he was involved:

Oh yeah, I was involved. Just two teams, really competitive, ready for a football game. As a leader of this team, I'm going to be in the front. After the game, we told them good game and they told us good game. It was just a heated battle at the beginning of the game. Nothing serious.

On what Earl Campbell told D'Onta after he tied his record for 100-yard gains:

He told me congratulations. He told me that he hopes he breaks it next week. He also said if someone breaks my record to make sure I come back and congratulate him when he does it. I told him I definitely would.

On what it's like to have that record:

You know, it's an honor, honestly. I know they told me to get the record you have to go 11 or 12 hundred-yard games, and I said, "Oh, I don't know if I'm going to be able to do that." Just continuously grinding, working hard. My offensive line was wonderful. I'm just so thankful to be mentioned with them.

On whether he feels like the team is a 5 and 5 team:

No, I definitely don't. We've grown so much. I can really see it. Today, I don't feel like the offense played to our standards, but I feel like we've grown as a team.

Sophomore CB John Bonney

On how this loss hurts:

It hurts, especially losing here at home. That's something we take pride in and coming up short after we've done so well really hurts.

On why the team lost:

Defense played well. We just have to finish games. I feel like that's been a problem with us. We just have to finish these close and tight game sand that's the main thing.

On whether not closing out games is a youth thing:

I'm not sure it's a youth thing. It's toward the end of the season, so all of that youth talk, you've got to kind of ignore that because everyone's grown up now and understands what they need to do.

On what head coach Charlie Strong said after the game:

He just said we're close. We've got to keep fighting. We've got another two games here, we want to get bowl eligible. We want to get into bowl season so we've got to keep our heads up.

On how the team handled the news of Tim Cole's father having a heart attack before the game:

We came together before we walked into the locker room and said a prayer. You hate for that to happen. We came together and said and prayer and went out there for him. You can't imagine what that does to a person.

Freshman QB Shane Buechele

On why the offense had a season low:

On the offensive side, I think we executed well. There were just a couple plays that didn't go our way. Penalties killed us on a couple drives. We've just got to keep getting better.

On whether he felt hurried by the West Virginia defense:

I didn't feel that way. I think our offensive line did a good job picking some of that stuff up. I think maybe that was the game plan, I don't know. They were a real physical defense and it showed.

On whether he felt like he had to get rid of the ball faster because of the physicality of the defense:

Yeah, I think a couple plays, we had some outlets to get it out quick and that's what we had to do when they were bringing some stuff that we couldn't pick up up front.

On whether he rebounded ok from the hard sack:

I was ok. You just have to get back up. I got popped and you have to get up from it. I just got the wind knocked out of me.

On whether that was the hardest hit he's taken in college:

I'd say so.

On red zone possessions where the team had to make field goals instead of getting touchdowns:

Something we've got to get better at. I missed a throw early the first drive to Colin. It's just all about executing and making sure we're smart with the ball and coming out with points.

Freshman WR Collin Johnson

On the rapport he's developed with Shane:

All of our hard work is really starting to pay off. We're starting to get better. We don't get complacent as a receiver group and also as our personal relationship. We don't get complacent. We keep trying to get better every week.

On the fourth down play where Johnson came up short:

I've got to be more aware. It was a young mistake. I can build off of it and learn. It won't happen again, so I'm going to learn from that.

On what his viewpoint was of the final play:

I've just got to make that play. It is what it is. I ran my route. I caught it and thought I had it personally. I've just got to be more aware and get that extra yard and what not.

On whether he thinks the Longhorns are better than the record indicates:

We're a good team. Coach always says our record doesn't define us. We've just got to keep getting better every week and we can beat anybody. We proved that with Notre Dame and Baylor. We've just got to keep building on every week. We always feel like we can compete with anybody, so we've just got to keep getting better.

On whether this loss was frustrating:

Every loss is a frustrating loss, but we've just got to take advantage of our opportunities and build on it. Like I said, it is what it is. We've got to build on it and try not to make the same mistakes next week and the week after that. We've got to try to get this sixth win.

On why "things haven't flipped" for the team this year:

Like I said, football is a crazy game. We just have to control what we can control and keep getting better. Wins come a dime a dozen, so you've just got to keep getting better.

Senior S Dylan Haines

On losing tonight:

It's very tough, I think something that you do look at though, West Virginia's defense played a really good game. They were able to stop our offense for the most part and I think hats off to them for that. We did get four turnovers but at the end of the day we gave up cheap touchdowns and we have to make teams work for those a little bit more so its just something we have going into film to get corrected and hopefully change these last two weeks.

On his tweets and the pressure he feels:

No, I wasn't thinking about that. I kind of go out there every week with the same mentality, to go out there and play my best game and that's what I do every week. As far as the tweets go, I'm not looking to comment at this moment. I sit there and talk about it all day.

On why some problems haven't been solved:

I'm not sure. Obviously when we do get turnovers, you know OU game we got turnovers but weren't able to capitalize off of those, I don't play offense though so that would be a question for someone else. I think just sometimes we don't take advantage of that momentum, the momentum swings, and it looks like other teams are able to do that so maybe its just bad luck and I don't really know what it is but if I find the answer I'll be sure to let you know.

On third down conversions:

I think as far as that defensively, we just have to do a better job disguising because if you look at their defense they do that really well, we can't tell if they're going to bring seven or drop eight so I think there were times when we were showing our hand a little to early or checking if they were able to get a better play call and I think that's just something we have to look at.

Offensive Coordinator Sterlin Gilbert

On today's loss:

It's disappointing. We knew coming in they were a really good football team, they're really talented in their standing and their stats. I mean they are what they are and they're really talented and we knew they were going to be good on the defensive side of the ball and we were going to have to grind it out today and fight and battle to get anything but there's some things we can pull from this game that we can grow up with and we just didn't execute at times and missed some things and had some missed assignments but things will clean up and we're just forward focusing, and just really focus in on next week.

On the last drive:

I think there was about 1:25 on the clock when we got the ball, no time outs so got a plan for those situations and executed it well to get all the way down where we were at when you don't have any time outs. You have to believe you killed and give yourself a couple of shots at the end zone, I mean you get down there and that's about all you can do when you get in that situation.

On D'Onta Foreman:

I'm trying to replay the whole deal right now, I mean I remember we hit D'Onta a couple of times underneath and I think one time he was trying to get out and can't quite get out, I guess he was tackled in bounds and that affects you a little bit but at that point you're trading yards for time. You just have to keep at it keep fighting.

On the pressure Shane Buechele was under today:

It's like I said, we knew they were the best defense that we've seen this year and those guys just do a really good job. They're activating, they're applying pressure but at the end we saw some thing come at us today and we just have to execute and be able to be efficient.

On the two field goal attempts:

There were a couple conversations and just decided that was what was best at that point in the game.

On West Virginia's defense:

Hats off to those guys. Those guys are really good, they're a good football team, really stands you on defense and we knew coming in we were going to have to fight and battle for whatever yards or points we could go get to battle for it and finish with. We just have to execute better and we'll see some things and continue to grow and come back to work and be ready to fight.