

Postgame Quotes
No. 11 Texas 41, UTEP 7
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TEXAS QUOTES

Texas Head Coach Charlie Strong – *courtesy of ASAP Sports*

Opening statement: It's always great to get a win, and we just we were, didn't play just consistent. And what I mean by that is that we had opportunities to put the game away, just too many penalties. And then we had an offensive line where we just offensively, we were never in rhythm because some of the guys that didn't play in this game were some of our starters.

But overall very pleased with the win. And we know we can always built on it; you always look for improvement from game one to game two. And we know we have a tough road test next week going out to California. We're going to have to play much better than what we played tonight. But any time you are on the road, you're going to have to pack your defense.

Defensively I thought we were able to shut them down. Gave up the one big run there, just out of a gap. We just need to get ready, get our injured guys back next week and get ready and get prepared to play California.

Q. Once Shackelford went out, we counted seven starters out of the lineup. Was that the ramifications of the Notre Dame game, the physicality, or did things happen during the week that you weren't expecting?

COACH STRONG: No, it was just from that game that we had a bunch of guys beat up. But what's good, we kind of sat our guys out and we were able to go out and even be effective. And guys that we filled in, I told our guys that, you know, we're in a position now where some of you guys been in the program and it's time for you to step up and help us and help this program. And they did. I thought we did a fairly good job up front of protecting the quarterback and being able to run the ball.

Q. Are you still impressed by Shane at quarterback in his second college game?

COACH STRONG: Yeah, Shane, one of the things he does is his preparation. He goes and he works on it the whole week. The good thing about him is he has a lot of guys around him now and you have some really good players.

Last week was No. 1 catching the deep ball, and then you watch Leonard today kept go out and go get one. It's just fun watching him how he continues to develop and just gets better and better.

Q. Before the season, you talked about not even being able to field the two offensive lines; if someone got hurt, you wondered who was going to come in. That you were able to sit ht at many starters, what does that say about the depth you developed in the off-season?

COACH STRONG: What I was preaching to our coaches is that we need to find 22 players on offense and 22 players on defense. And the reason why I made that statement is that those guys all practice. I said, we go out to practice, it's the two offense versus the one offense. Let them go play. You look at the offensive lineman tonight with the exception of Armanti (ph) and Shack, starting it off, Hodges being in there. You look at Alex Anderson, I was teasing him. I said, I never, ever thought you would be running out here starting a game and all the players started laughing just to loosen them up.

But just to see that and to see Rodriguez go out and play as well as he played, and then that second half, those young receivers, you saw nine on the field, you saw Duvernay, you saw Leonard, and you saw 4 out there catching the ball. We're just beginning to build it where we can get two-deep where if a guy does have an injury, you feel very comfortable with the next guy moving in.

Q. In two games, you put up 50 points last week, 41 this week -- what do you think he's been doing so effectively?

COACH STRONG: Just putting pressure on the defense and being able to -- when you can be balanced where you can run the ball and you have that added dimension where you can throw the ball deep, and a lot of our routes are vertical routes,

where you can run outside, then it puts so much pressure on defenses.

Now either you've got to run or load; if you want to load a box, then you have to be able to cover outside, and we feel like we have enough guys outside where we feel like we can win. And now if you want to back up and play coverage, then we can hand it off to 35 or 33 or 21 and let the big 'ole backs run.

And then the quarterback, Shane did a really good job tonight of pulling the ball and being effective with it. But he's doing a great job of just mixing up the run and pass.

Q. Was it part of the deal for Jerrod's birthday that he gets a couple touchdowns tonight, and what can you say about his growth so quickly in the position?

COACH STRONG: Well, I think about last week, and I think about the way the two quarterbacks performed last week, when you look at what Buechele and Swoopes did, and guys take another quarterback in Jerrod today who moved the receiver and had the two catches that he made for the touchdown, and that's the way he practiced.

He's a player that he practices so hard, and he has so much energy; and he is, he's always vibrant. He always have a smile on his face. And even in pre-game mill (ph), he's one of the guys, hey, gentleman rod, hold it down. Even this morning, when I said, hey, let's get three to Jerrod today, it's his birthday. And he looked and said, how did you know that. I said, don't worry about it, all right, so we'll see if you're going to do anything today. And he caught the late one today and got the late one there.

There's a really good connection between him and Shane. The first catch was a really good catch where he just went over the defender, and the second one he was open. And it's just fun to watch how he continues to grow. He's not a selfish player because you look at a guy like him who has played quarterback his whole life now, all of a sudden he's playing wide receiver and he's being productive, and that's what you like to see.

Q. Do you wonder or worry how the team would respond after a game like last week?

COACH STRONG: I was very concerned, what I told them: There's a lot of teams that are successful but there's very few teams that know how to handle success. I just watched, we had that short week, so I gave them -- we play Sunday, so I gave them Monday off. And then Tuesday, we had to do the film prep from the Notre Dame game and we really didn't get a chance to get on top of UTEP.

So then, you know, during the week, you felt like you was always a day behind with trying to play catchup. And so the preparation, I was just so nervous, because you say, oh, God, everybody is going to tell them how great they have done and they are reading it, now how are we going to respond. That's all I kept talking about is just focus and you haven't done anything yet; and are we gonna be just a one-game wonder; what are we going to do; how are we going to respond; how can we respond.

And I kind of put it on the seniors. I had a meeting in here on Thursday with the seniors, and I said, hey, listen, look, we have to get their attention. We have a young team, they have been told a lot. Probably a lot of you guys aren't missing class this week because you enjoy sitting in the classroom now, because everybody's looking at you saying how great you did.

But it was a challenge and I told the coaching staff, it's going to fall on all of our shoulders to get this young team going.

Q. There were times last year when you guys really struggled to throw the ball. What you're doing now system-wise seems pretty simple. Have you been pleased by how much it's opened up?

COACH STRONG: What we have, we have athletes out there now and you're opening up to a quarterback who can get the ball out. If somebody, if they want to try to press them, they fasten up the run pass, and if they back off, they can back down and catch the ball.

You look at the guys just continue to just be effective in two games. Look what PD has done, nobody ever heard of PD until this year and look how effective he is on punt returns, and then he catches the ball, he can make a guy miss. Then

he's able to move the ball and get the yards after the catch. It's just really fun watching, and the competition is so fierce because you could go out there, and you can go out there with PD, you can go out with Duvernay, you can go out there with Jake Oliver, and then you go outside with Colin and you can go outside with Burke; and Leonard making the big catch that he made; little Jordan coming in there making a catch. You just had so many weapons. But I think that what happens is the throwing game opens up because of how effectively we can run the football.

Q. What does a guy like Chris Boyd bring to special teams?

COACH STRONG: Chris Boyd? Oh, he gets down there, you see how effective he is. Now he had two penalties which I didn't like. I think the one, he covered punts and he's just on top of them and makes a hit and forced the two fumbles, we didn't get them.

But he's what I call a gunner and he's a guy that has no rules at all. He just goes to the football. Told him, I don't care if you cross five guys, you just get to the football and to make the tackle. I have five contained guys that just play off of him. It's just been fun to watch him and then he got some time at the corner position where he's able to play a little.

Q. Have you ever had this many weapons, playmakers, and is it going to be hard to double-team any of them?

COACH STRONG: You know, really, I haven't. It's been fun to watch it. We're just two games into the season, and we're only going to get better and the quarterback is throwing the ball well.

You have the one- and two-punch at the quarterback position, because you can open up and let Buechele throw it and also then also, he's effective enough to run the ball. And then you bring Swoopes in and ride it air it out and Duvernay, he can push it off, that's a heck of a throw that he made. And you look at it just at your skill position, what you have. And you look at your big skill at your running back position and offensive line-wise, we were able to play some guys tonight where they got some playing time; and now those guys that we did play, now they will be back and be ready to go.

Q. Do you feel like you'll be pretty much full strength next week?

COACH STRONG: Yeah, I will have those guys back. Bluiett will be back. Hunter will be back. Big Perk will be back. We'll get those guys back and we'll look at Shack this evening, probably looking at him right now, see where we are with him. But most of those guys, they will all be back next week when we go to Cal.

Q. Even before you guys kicked off, Oklahoma State lost to a MAC team. How good is it for your guys to take care of business given how nervous you were, and did you reference any of those games pregame?

COACH STRONG: I didn't get a chance to watch the Oklahoma State ending. But I talked to our guys about how teams that -- the teams that are supposedly ranked higher and have high rankings are struggling right now, so let's not go out and struggle. Let's go out and be effective from the start.

And I said, that you've gotta play where you're playing against yourself and you're not playing against an opponent. So you try to make -- see if you can't be better than you were last week.

Q. The guys on the edge --

COACH STRONG: What we did this week on defense, we came out and we just played -- I took Hager and moved him and him on the outside. Because one thing about him, you're going to get everything out, and he's going to rush hard, he's going to chase, he's going to play with a lot of effort and he's going to play with a lot of energy.

And even at practice, guys don't like to hit him. They will do anything not to hit him because they know he goes so hard. I was telling Coach Bedford, I said, you know what let's find a way to get Hager on the field. Let's just find a way and Coach Haley, we sitting there talking, and we said you know what, let's put him and 40 on the field at the same time and put our linemen in and we don't have to play so much nickel, just let's play five down and play backers and let Hager just come off the edge. Blitzed him a lot and made a lot of plays, and even Roach. Roach is so athletic. But him and Hager are similar because they play with so much energy.

And it's fun to be in a defensive line room when Coach Haley is going over it, because you look at those two guys and they are kind of like kamikaze. They are sitting there, man -- he's trying to tempo those two guys down because the other three,

they are going to go but not like those two.

It was just fun to watch him tonight, and you see, he made a lot of plays. Whenever you put him out there, he's going to make plays. Something's going to happen. It's going to be good a lot, but sometimes it may be bad, but it's going to be in our favor. Thank you.

Texas OC Sterlin Gilbert

On what the team needed to work on coming off of the Notre Dame game: It was about focusing on ourselves, that was our deal through the week, was taking care of us, be focused on us, and obviously your growth between week one and week two is you want it to be huge and, obviously, noticeable. So through the week we identified some things and just tried to work for steady progression and improvement in all areas of our game offensively.

On the state of the offensive line: The number one thing is I'm extremely proud of our guys, fighting through adversity and it's been that mentality, that's what we got so for those guys that were forcing the action tonight to be able to play. I'm proud of those guys for going out and fighting and battling and what it does naturally with that, you know you have to play other guys, you're in the process of creating depth. It's a long football season and so be able to create depth, up front especially, and being in a situation to play some of those young guys in those skilled positions. Its beneficial.

On the running game tonight: I mean I'll have to go back and watch film, again I'm just extremely proud of those kids, to fight through what they fought through and next man up and then you get a guy banged up during the game and you have to shuffle it around again and that's just huge for our guys to be able to battle through that and not only to be able to battle, but go execute come out with a win.

On the success he envisions for the team: I don't know if I would ever throw a number on points, but at the end of the day what you want to do is win and whatever it takes, we just want one more than they have and it's just happened that those have been the number these two weeks and we're extremely excited and motivated about what's happened over the last two weeks and we know we've got a lot of room for improvement. We're by no means satisfied with what's going on, I mean we're going to get back on it tomorrow and get back to work because we've got a great opponent coming up this week.

On how critical Shane Buechele's runs are: He did a good job in the run game, being able to expand and continue plays with his legs and his feet, so that's huge anytime that you can do that from that position.

On having so many productive receivers: I think it's good, and again, what we're in the process of that we were fortunate enough today was for those guys to get playing time so just continuing to create depth and get those guys game experience, which game experience is invaluable and we just want to continue to be able to be in situations and be able to put guys and develop great depth and have great depth in all those skilled positions.

On keeping everyone happy: You know what it is, is you got guys that are unselfish and all those guys they're ultimate goal is to win and when you got a room full of those guys then you got a really good football team and you got a chance to get the result at the end of the day that you want.

On Shane Buechele staying calm: I think it's natural for him, I mean it's something that definitely comes from our room that we're coaching and talking about never too high, never too low, always in the middle but it's really part of his personality. He's pretty natural with it so within that you just kind of continue to coach it and be aware of it. He just continues to do a great job of growing and learning except by no means do we have a veteran quarterback. I mean the guys just a two game starter here at college football so he's got a lot of room for growth and improvement, the thing about him is that he is really honed in on it, he's a student of the game, he's really motivated to be a good player.

QB Shane Buechele

On the offense tonight: We started a little slow, but I liked the way we finished. We just have to start fast, continue executing with our tempo, and just play like how we finished all four quarters.

On dealing with success after the Notre Dame game: We can be happy with that win, but we have to move to the next one. We have to prepare well each week and try and go out there and get a win.

On sophomore WR Jerrod Heard: He did a great job tonight. I love getting the ball out in his hands as well as every other receiver we have out there. He's a great receiver, and like I said, just getting the ball out there and letting him do his thing is fun. He's done a great job, and he's a great athlete. He learns well, and he learns quick. He's done a great job.

On the offensive line tonight: They did a great job, and they were tough. They did a great job throughout the game when they were in, and they did a great job with pass and run block.

On his preparation throughout the week: The preparation is always there. The whole team does a great job watching film, just getting in that film room, and look at how everything is going to happen with their defense. Our offense and coaches do a great job with it as well.

On how critical running is for his game: I didn't know I was going to run that much tonight, but it's kind of fun to get out there and run a little bit. I have to learn to get down.

WR Jerrod Heard

On his transition to WR: The transition was fun. It's really easy. All you have to do is beat the defender down the field and go catch the ball. It's not that hard, but it's fun and I enjoy it.

On if he was determined to get a touchdown this week: I was so mad the whole week. I was practicing high knees every time I caught the ball near the end zone. I was really anxious to get in the end zone and get my first touchdown as a receiver.

On the depth of the offense: It says a lot. It says a real good thing about what our team can do depth wise. It really just makes our confidence go up high.

On his adjustments: As far as when I used to play quarterback, knowing where the receivers were going to be, I kind of take that same mentality. I know how Shane will want me and where he will want me to be, so it wasn't that hard to make that transition.

On freshman QB Shane Buechele: I'm definitely impressed. As a young guy, just to keep his poise, especially with last week, going through something that's such a high-low game and keeping his poise, it really shows everyone in the locker room who he is and what he stands for. We have total confidence in Shane when he's back there, and we try to help him out as much as we can.

Senior S Kevin Vaccaro

On how the team handled itself tonight: Coach was talking about how often teams look past an opponent like this after winning a huge game. We started off slow, but we kept it together.

On if pointing out flaws helps make a better team: It's important to be consistent, and that's what Coach Bedford was telling us, to stay consistent and not be a one-night wonder. I'm proud of this team. I think we're down the right path.

On what he liked most about the defense tonight: I think we played hard. Of course we gave up one big play. We just have to execute that better. We wanted to keep a score off the board, and we didn't, but we'll learn from that and onto the next game.

WR Jacorey Warrick

On the depth of the team: I just think last week was just such a fight. Guys' bodies just gave it all they had and gave 100-percent, so it was probably just better for them to rest up. It's a long season, and we're going to need everybody. That's why it's good to have depth, and it gave an opportunity for some other guys to get in and get the field. We're going to need everybody this season. The depth is amazing right now, especially in my group. We have guys that can run, we have tall guys, we have shifty guys, we have physical guys, so we are overall a pretty complete group.

On coming out strong his senior year: Whatever it takes. I'm just honored and glad to be here and be a part of this team. We've been working hard, and now we're seeing that 2-0, so we're headed in the right direction. We don't want to get complacent. We want to take it one game at a time.

On the passing game this season: Everyone keeps their spirit high and is upbeat about the offense. In the past, it would be if you get one pass thrown to you, you don't know if the next one was coming to you. Now, we don't worry about it. We're just so much locked into the tempo. I think that's just kind of on the backburner of your mind. You're going to get multiple opportunities to make plays in this offense.

RB Chris Warren, III

On whether he was surprised that Foreman wasn't with the team during the game: I expect him to be back for Cal. If he isn't, he isn't; if he is, that's great. He's a very good player and I feel like he contributes a lot to this offense.

On the variety of Shane Buechele's abilities: It's good because when defenses respect your passing game, it opens up the box and gives you the ability to run the ball a little easier, but I feel like just having myself and D'Onta [Foreman], it makes defenses try to stop the run more and makes us pass and try to put it on Shane's shoulders, but I feel like Shane can do that. I feel like he's a pretty good player.

On how exciting it is to see Jerrod Heard's success so shortly after he switched positions: It's really exciting. He's always talking about it and how fast he is and how he can catch, but it's good, though. He just plays around, but he's good. He's athletic and you guys saw last year when he was quarterback. Just having Jerrod out there as a receiver is a real help because it gives us another weapon.

On what makes Jerrod Heard so good at the receiver position: Athleticism and previous knowledge at the quarterback position. I think being a quarterback behindhand helps him see stuff a little easier.

LB Malik Jefferson

On doing well without a lot of the starters: That was pretty impressive that the offense maintained to keep doing their jobs. You know that's the best part about this team that guys can be ready to play at any given moment. We didn't stress that factor last year but this year we're going to really stress that.

On going on the road against Cal: We'll be ready. It just takes preparation like we do every week and we all have to be in our playbooks. We all have to be ready for this week because we're going in as the big dogs. So it'll be surprising to be out there for the first time in California and playing against that Cal offense.

On the mentality of the team: It's a lot more of a mature team and the guys are really prepared. We're studying, everything we know to do. We study our routes because we don't want to slip up.

On the depth of the team: You know it's big when guys come in and play for starters that are out. So what we stressed this whole year is about having depth and so having two's and three's that can give us plays because you never know what's going to happen in a gam situation so those guy's stepped up and I'm very proud of what they did.

LB Breckyn Hager

On the mentality of the team after coming off big win: Basically that we were playing against ourselves. That we had to do everything we could to get better, to get this win, and focus on this game only, nothing on the road. To play as a team and just master our craft.

On the chemistry of the defense: Since camp, we've become a team. Whether its just hanging out all day, we all love each other. We don't want to let each other down. We're plating for each other out there. The worst thing I can do is let my teammates down. Anything else is irrelevant. I'm playing for those guys out there; they're playing for me. And that's what's starting to happen.

DT Paul Boyette Jr.

On how he feels after starting the season with a 2-0 record for the first time since 2012: I feel good. I think this game was just a game that we should have handled. We started out kind of sluggish and slow, and like I told coach [Charlie] Strong, he didn't have to say that much to us since the seniors were going to step up and get everything going in the right direction for the second half, and that's what we did. At the end of the day, we just have to be able to know how to handle success.

On why the team started the game slow: I think it was just a tough week in general. Again, it was a short week since we played on Sunday and for film, we only had one game on UTEP because they have a new offensive coordinator. But at the end of the day, that's not an excuse to come out and start off sluggish so we just have to know how to stream focus and play with a phenomenal effort, and that's what we did in the second half.

On what he attributes the success on defense to: I think it's just everybody binding into the system; everyone knowing their role and everyone knowing their assignment and alignment. That's what coach [Brick] Haley harps on in my room about. He polices my room and makes sure everyone knows their alignment and assignment because it starts up front with the front seven and it goes from the front seven to the linebackers to the corners and the DBs. It takes everybody at all levels at the front, the defensive backs and the linebackers to know what our assignment is and what our roles are to go out there and be successful.

On what happened on defense during UTEP's Aaron Jones' 51-yard touchdown run: Somebody didn't do their assignment. At the end of the day, everybody has to go back and know their role and know their assignment and be in the right spots.