

TEXAS TECH ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS



TEXAS TECH VS TARLETON

September 16, 2023

Jones AT&T Stadium

TEXAS TECH POSTGAME QUOTES

Head Coach Joey McGuire

Opening statement

"A couple of things, number one, I want to start off by letting Tarleton State and Jaden Smith's family know that we'll be praying for them. You play this sport, and you never want to see that. When anybody gets injured in any way, and you have to carry them off like that, you're so nervous about a lot of different things, so we'll definitely be praying for them. I was really proud of our team. We had three turnovers and had the chance to have a few more. C.J. [Baskerville] almost picked one right there at the end. We had three sacks. I thought the pressure was better on the quarterback. Still, we have things that we will continue to work on, especially with the quarterback we're facing next week. I was really proud of our guys. I know everybody's going to ask about the quarterback, so I'll go ahead and tell you that was my plan all week. That was going to happen no matter what. The only way Tyler [Shough] was going to stay in that game was if it was like 24-21 or something like that. It had nothing to do with Tyler or Behren [Morton] playing better, or anything like that."

On Tahj Brooks' performance...

"He had his career high of 19 carries of 159 yards on 8.3 yards-per-carry. We saw him getting really high last week. Out of all of his runs he probably had, I think he had one bad one in the first quarter. We ran an inside zone, and he passed it. That was the one bad run. I keep reminding him that he's 225 pounds, so he needs to make teams tackle 225 pounds vertically. You started to see that later in the game; You started to see him really get in a rhythm. The thing I love about Tahj, whenever guys come in at the next level and ask about him in this building, they all say he's a complete back. He's got really good hands. He's physical in the run game. He's extremely physical in the pass game and in picking up blitzes. He's playing right now at a really high level."

On Behren Morton and Tyler Shough...

"I thought Morton did a good job. I thought both of them did. I thought both quarterbacks made some good decisions. We have got to be more physical and continue to be more physical in the run game to take the pressure off of them. We still gave them three sacks tonight which is extremely frustrating. That's about staying on blocks and finishing blocks."

On the offense...

"This week coming in, we felt like we were going to be able to run the football. When they gave us a box that favored the run, we definitely ran the ball really well. Like that last interception that Behren [Morton] threw, we called run, they loaded the box, so we checked out and we did the check all the way across. We have to be better at that and all be on the same page."

Defensive Back Malik Dunlap

On how deep and competitive the corner back room is...

"Bralyn (Lux) is like a little brother to me so me and Bralyn have been locked in from the start. I got hurt in fall camp, and Bralyn had been ballin', so I had to respect that and turn my game up. So, it's made us all competitive."

On what he's seeing from the younger guys in the secondary...

"I like that they're eager to learn, like Chapman Lewis, Maurion Horn, and Jalon Peoples, so it's like they're learning from the older guys. They take down notes and get better every day."

On what it felt like getting two interceptions tonight...

"It's kind of like deja vu because when I went to sleep last night I woke up, and had a dream that I'm going to get two interceptions tonight. I thought it was real and woke up, but it happened tonight."

Running Back Tahj Brooks

On what he saw tonight...

"I was checking the right run keys and run fronts going against Tarleton State. I was able to do my job at a high level and have fun with my teammates. That's what we talked about this whole week, just executing our game plan."

On if the gameplan called for him to get more carries...

"During the week, we were focused on our gameplan and locking in on the little things. The little details that coach [Kittley] talked about this week on offense was being better on third downs. We did okay today. But we need to have the mindset of putting our pad levels down, running hard through peoples' faces, then waiting in the pass game."

On what the coaches wanted the running backs to focus on...

"For my position, it's about having high communication with the O-line and the quarterbacks. Seeing fronts and seeing blitzes off the edge, then playing complementary football with our defense. Like how our defense got turnovers today, we have to capitalize with touchdowns. That's just something as an offense we have to do."

TARLETON POSTGAME QUOTES

Tarleton Head Coach Todd Whitten

Opening statement

"Well, I think it's unfortunate we turned the ball for a pick-six. I thought we hung in there and played hard. I think it was 24-to-nothing at halftime, and our defense really held them to 17 points in the first half. We just couldn't finish any drives on the offensive side. We would turn it over and stall out. We got some things started a time or two, moved the chains a couple times but we couldn't finish. I think you have to probably credit, Texas Tech, with a lot of that. They have a really good football team, and they certainly caused our struggles, but you know, I don't think it's all bad. The main thing, I thought, was that we competed, and we battled really hard. For us to have been able to hang in there with these guys and be in the game, we would have needed to get a score and maybe a field goal there in the first half. We couldn't finish. But, you know, hats off to Texas Tech. I thought they certainly made plays when they had to, but I'm awfully proud of our guys."

On the positives Tarleton can take away from tonight...

"Anytime you come on the road and play a Big 12 team, there's just a lot of things to learn. This was probably a really good learning experience and game for us. We'll get back home tonight, meet with our players tomorrow, go through this, and try to clean things up a little bit, before we get back at it next Saturday [against Southwest Baptist]. But I thought we hung in there at times really well. On the first drive of the game, we got a three-and-out, and they answered right away with the pick six. But it's never as bad as you might think, or as good as you might think when you watch the film. My impression of our football team is that I thought they thought they played with a lot of toughness, a lot of grit and so certainly proud of them for that. We just got to make more plays."

On an update from wide receiver Jaden Smith

"I don't. He was moving everything out there; he was talking to us. The initial reports on the field were good. Now to make certain everything's okay, they're going to take him to the hospital and do an MRI and X-rays and all those things. So certainly, prayers up for Smitty, but I think what I saw out there on the field was positive."

Quarterback Victor Gabalis

On the difference in tonight's game...

"We just have to execute. I know our defense stood well, if we get things rolling [on offense], the defense has shown in the past that they are able to rally with us. Offensively, we couldn't get it going and couldn't execute. Biggest thing is you have to execute. Me and the receivers weren't on the same page at some times. I'm forcing throws at certain times and not putting our defense in a good situation. It just comes down to that."

On the team's mindset playing Texas Tech...

"We know what we are capable of doing and we just have to play to the best of our abilities every single day and every single snap. That's our mentality and that's how we are going to go throughout the rest of the season. We need to progress to get better every single week."

On playing a Power 5 program...

"These games are fun and you want to play well. That's how we are as players. That how it has been since high school. We are competitive with everything in life. It doesn't matter if it's on the basketball court, on the big stage like this or just a home game. We want to compete, we want to be the best of ourselves, and when we can't do it it's frustrating, because we know what we are capable of doing."

Safety Patrick Jones

On what Tarleton needed to do better tonight...

"Defensively we have to be able to stop the ball and get it down. We have to be able to execute. We did alright but there's a lot we have to work on. It was really just us missing assignments, missing plays, not being ready and not being lined up. And I think the speed got to us a little bit, but other than that, we just have to execute simple as that."

On what Tarleton needs to improve on moving forward...

"We just have to get back to our stuff. We didn't play Texan football today. We just have to be able to come out here and execute. Simple as that."