

# Big 12 Conference Football Championship Game: BYU vs Texas Tech

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Arlington, Texas, USA

AT&T Stadium

**Texas Tech Red Raiders**  
**Coach Joey McGuire**  
**Jacob Rodriguez**

**Ben Roberts**

**John Curry**

Postgame Press Conference

Texas Tech - 34, BYU - 7

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations on winning the Edward Jones Big 12 Championship title. We'll open it up with comments.

JOEY MCGUIRE: I want to start out with making -- when the Selection Committee starts looking at teams, I truly believe the Big 12 deserves two teams in the playoffs. When you look at BYU, they're 11-2, and their two losses are to the No. 4 team in the nation.

I have so much respect for Kalani. That's a really good football team. I hope the committee looks at it because there's going to be two-loss teams out there, but there's not going to be an 11-2 loss team. They did a great job throughout the season getting here.

For us, man, I'm so happy. Four years ago I sit in a room in Waco, Texas at the airport with Dusty Womble and Cody Campbell and President Schovanec and Kirby Hocutt, and they changed my life. Man, I can't say how much I appreciate you guys, I appreciate your friendship, I appreciate your belief in us.

Then I just can't say enough about Cody Campbell and the Matador Club and just forward thinking that he has to help us create this team.

These guys up here really helped us put this team together. These guys, you have Jacob Rodriguez, who slept on the floor as a walk-on to be a Red Raider; Ben



Roberts, he actually told me, I recruited him, and he committed to Tech. I was at the other school, and he said, Coach, I love you, man, but I'm a Red Raider no matter what. Whether you're the coach or not, I'm going to be a Red Raider.

And then this is a guy right here who was born and raised in Lubbock, Texas. He was actually my very first commit in my very first full class. As you all can see, they have elite mustaches.

Just proud of them. I'm so proud of this team. I think we've got the best coaching staff in the world. We've got the best administration staff in the world. We've got the best fans in the world. Proud of the way we played today.

Man, I can't wait to see where the CFP is going to put us tomorrow. We're looking forward to the bye. We're hoping and expecting that that's where we'll be because we're football banged up, and if you let us get healthy, I really believe we've got another gear.

With that, open it up to any questions for me or any of these guys.

Let me say one more thing. Take my hat off to our training staff. We've got the best medical staff and training staff in the country. You probably saw Ben Roberts goes down on one knee. He's from Eaton, so I don't know how tough he is. He's not from West Texas. We're making him tougher. His ab, hip was really bothering him. Mike and his staff got it loosen him up, and all of a sudden we got two picks by this guy in the second half. Hat's off to our training staff for getting him back in the game.

**Q. Oftentimes in this era, we have an issue with cohesion, especially in these big-time rosters. What have you done and what have you seen top players do to make sure this roster has been cohesive in offense and defense?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: The biggest thing, the leadership on this team are the guys that decided to come back. Jacob Rodriguez had the opportunity to declare, and he decided to come back.

We started putting this team together, I really asked a lot of them to bring all the new guys in and make them feel how special Lubbock is and how special our building is and how much we care about each other.

I think consistency is the key. They get the same guy every single day. They get the same coaching staff. The one thing about us, most important thing that we have is our players. Everybody in our building, their sole job is to help them be the best version of themselves. They feel that every day. We don't deviate. We don't. They get the same guys every single day.

I think whenever people started seeing that, they really started believing in what we were asking them to do and really became a special group.

**Q. Ben, Joey kind of alluded to it. You basically were part of his first recruiting class in an era of the portal, NIL, rev share. It doesn't seem like you sniffed the transfer portal at all. What is it that Joey brought to Texas Tech that kind of made you buy into what he was trying to do and getting to this moment?**

BEN ROBERTS: Like he was just saying, we get the same people every day in the building, and you know what to expect. He's working to grow us as men and as players every day. So there was no reason to leave him. I knew he was going to do what's best for me.

**Q. Coach, not only did you retain most of your defense, but a five-star receiver like Micah Hudson is coming back, that kind of helps recruiting too. Just on the offensive side of the ball where you were trying to piece together this offense and what the identity was going to be, how difficult was that, or was it pretty easy once you got the defensive guys to buy in?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: It starts with Mack and that coaching staff. That's the thing too, man. Year one for these guys, we've got two brand new -- an offensive coordinator and a defensive coordinator that's brand new to Texas Tech. And they did a great job.

It all started, too, with making sure our quarterback was coming back. He's had an absolutely crazy year. In June, he and I both said we're going to win the Big 12 Championship and we're going to walk out of Cowboys Stadium together.

It was really cool. His dad, Coach Morton, sent me a text this week and he said, just make sure I get a picture of you two walking out.

So we both waited. I told him this morning, I said, when we win this thing, wait for me. I'm not leaving the field until you leave the field. Don't do the same. We got to walk out together.

It's really cool, in the day and age that we live in, where all information is at your fingertips and anybody can say anything. We both at different times have been beat up for being a high school coach or being a guy that is injured and is not playing at a level. And, man, we came out on top today.

**Q. Coach, BYU came out, kicked you in the teeth, 90 yards in their first drive. What did Shiel Wood do and this defense do to adjust it to where you only allowed 110 yards the rest of the game?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: These guys will tell you -- we said it this morning -- one thing that we had heard yesterday or I had heard yesterday watching ESPN, they were talking about that they needed to start faster. We felt like we were going to get everything and anything, and we did. I think we got a reverse pass, double pass, reverse. They emptied the tank on that first drive.

The one thing we did make them do is drive the field, so they had to use everything. Then we settled in.

I think Shiel, that's one thing that makes him special. He does a great job adjusting. Once he kind of has your number, he can really dial in.

And these guys, the thing that we do really well as a team, they really listen. When you say, hey, we need to do this, this and this, they can adjust. We've got a really high IQ football team.

**Q. Got to ask you, Jacob, and then Ben, if you guys don't mind, what was it like seeing all that red today? Then Ben, talk about your hops on that second interception, if you don't mind.**

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: It was unreal. I think it was right before we went out for our first drive as a defense, and we're kind of looking out, want to get the crowd pumped up. And you look at what direction you want to get them pumped up in.

And I'm looking at 80 percent, 90 percent of the stadium is wearing red. That's huge to see. I know Red Raiders always travel well, and they've always have our back. It was great to see and great to hear.

BEN ROBERTS: When I ran out on the field, I didn't know where to look, just like he was saying, so I looked back at

the home sideline. Then like you were saying about the hops, I didn't think I jumped that high. I've been practicing -- I've been practicing that one hand in practice, and it finally paid off.

**Q. This is for any of you guys. I don't know if you hear this a lot in Lubbock, but the national narrative about Texas Tech, fair or not, is that's the best team money can buy. When you hear that, what do you say to that?**

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: If we are going to buy a team, why not be the best?

(Laughter).

**Q. Coach, this one's for you. Having won a state championship as a high school football coach in this building, how special is it to win at the next level and prove you can do it?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: It was incredible. We were coming up -- this stadium is just so beautiful, inside and out. And we were driving up in our buses, and you start seeing the stadium. I actually turned to Anthony Huffman, my chief of staff, and I said, check that out. I said, hello old friend. I'm back.

Man, it was cool. This has a lot of great memories. This was actually my 14th game to coach in this stadium. First time as a college coach, of course, but this is a special place.

**Q. Jacob, it's been a whirlwind of a week for you. The awards that you've won, the Butkus Award, the award today for defensive player of the game, Big 12 Player of the Year on the defensive side. If you could go back and talk to yourself when you were sleeping on the floor as a walk-on or on the practice field at Rider High School, what would you tell yourself? Is it worth it?**

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: I think everything's worth it. I think the amount of time and work that you put into what you do, I think just trusting in that process and believing in yourself and people around you. Doing the work only gives you opportunity. It doesn't give you any right to win or to lose. It just gives you the opportunity to be there.

I'm just proud of myself for putting in the work, but I'm more proud of the people I've been around and people I've gotten to experience in that time.

**Q. Jacob and Coach, Jacob first, I saw you looking around up on the stage after the trophy presentation. Just get your thoughts when you're standing up there soaking it all in? The same thing with you, Joey, when**

**you're holding up that trophy and the confetti is going everywhere.**

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, it was great. I was looking around. I was just looking for my wife. I really just kind of wanted to celebrate with her. She's meant so much to me in the 2 1/2 years we've been married. I think I really just kind of wanted to spend a moment with her and get to celebrate with her because of how much work she's put in this year with supporting me and being right there.

She's such a rock for me. And I'm just so thankful that she could be here for this.

**Q. Coach, you've been in championship scenarios. You've been in postseason scenarios before as a high school coach. How do you balance the looking forward and how to continue to improve versus looking at the now and celebrating the now?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: We'll go 24 hours. It will actually be a little bit longer than 24 hours probably, but they won't take long to get back focused. Once we figure out, one, who we could possibly play, we'll start looking at that.

The biggest thing is, looking at the schedule, I want to make sure these guys have some time, hopefully at some point they could go home for Christmas once we get our finals done and then get back and get back into who we're going to play and how we're going to practice.

This is a vet team. We're football banged up. We'll find out tomorrow exactly who's banged up and stuff like that.

But today was a big day for us to win this game, to be the Big 12 champs, but also hopefully get that bye to let these guys' bodies feel really good for our next opponent and when we play again.

**Q. I know you kind of have an idea because what you did at Cedar Hill, but do you think that your players appreciate what they've accomplished today? This is your first conference championship in Texas Tech history, since I believe 1955, so 70 years. And kind of on the humorous side, when these three guys came in, have you showed them the movie "Slap shot"? The minute they came in, they looked like the Hanson brothers.**

JOEY MCGUIRE: I'll find that and send that picture to all three of them. That's great. That's perfect.

Man, the one thing that we talked about and we said it as a team -- they've heard this before from me -- but when this is all said and done and I'm gone, I want people to say that

he loved them, he loved his players, cared about his players. It was all about them.

Then on the football side, I want them to be able to say we did stuff that had never been done.

They know that. Like they talk about it. Skyler Gill-Howard has really spoke that into existence, and we said it. Texas Tech has never won a Big 12 Championship, and we're now the Big 12 champions. We're the first, and we've done something nobody's ever done. And I'm proud of them.

**Q. Ben, can you discuss, I guess, the circumstances, how you got hurt? Then you were kind of out and in and back out again. Kind of what you were thinking at that point. And also describe how those plays unfolded, where you had two interceptions, and then you had a shot at another interception.**

BEN ROBERTS: That first drive I was feeling really good. I think it was the play where Bear scrambles, and I came back and hit him. I guess I was fully extended and kind of tweaked my low abdomen.

I kept trying to play. I just couldn't run full speed, and I didn't want to hurt the team. I was, like, put Brock in, and I'm proud of him for what he did.

I just did everything I could to stretch it out and fix it up. But the trainers really helped me at halftime. They got it all heated up and relaxed, and I was ready to go in the second half.

JOEY MCGUIRE: Freshmen.

**Q. Jacob, I hope you get to pack your bags to New York City because you definitely deserve it, but another guy that played a long time ago at Tech, are you the new Hispanic Zach Thomas?**

BEN ROBERTS: I love it.

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: I don't know about that one. He was great. He's been somebody that we've looked up to, and we got to meet him last year. I mean, he's the best there is. It's such an honor to be mentioned in the same breath as him. And looking forward to meeting him again.

**Q. Coach, the other day Coach Scott Frost referred to college football as broken because of the unequal application of NIL. This morning, Brett Yormark talked about working with Power 4 commissioners to kind of level out things. I wonder what you -- how you might respond to the changes that could be coming to that.**

JOEY MCGUIRE: The one thing I know is we have a great administration, and we've got forward-thinking people. So whatever rules are out there that they're going to put in place, we're going to be ahead of the game. We'll have a plan.

We keep talking about that stuff, but I think where it's broken is the calendar needs to be fixed. We should be playing on zero week. Everybody should be on zero week. It should be week one. Last week should have been the conference championship.

Man, this really cool thing that's going on in Texas right now. It's called the high school playoffs. They actually play every seven days. We've got a state champ back there. But they actually play every seven days. I would fix that stuff before I look at some of the other stuff. Because we're putting these guys in such a tough situation.

College football, if you want to talk about being broken, college football is not supposed to be played in the second semester. College football is not supposed to be played on January 19th. All the stuff that you can't fix that away makes the portal window easier on coaches and everything like that. If we want to get behind something and fix something, let's fix the calendar before we do anything else.

**Q. For Coach and the guys, this has been a long time coming, not only for the team, first 12-win season, Big 12 champs, but for the community of Lubbock, Red Raider fans, they've been so starved all those lean years. You know you're bringing so much joy. I've gotten so many texts from people. They're crying. They can't believe this is going on. What do you guys say to all the fans, not only who are here, but all over the world?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: You're from Lubbock, man. Go ahead.

JOHN CURRY: I've waited 20 years for this, and I know a bunch of Red Raiders fans have been waiting forever their whole lives. The amount of texts I've gotten also is just amazing. It's amazing to be able to be part of the team that finally brings it back to Lubbock.

**Q. With your experience in Lubbock, Texas, tell everybody who's never been to Lubbock, Texas, in one word what Lubbock, Texas, means to you?**

JOEY MCGUIRE: One word. Who wants to start it? Go ahead.

BEN ROBERTS: Grit.

JOHN CURRY: For me, my one word is just everything.

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: Hard-working.

JOEY MCGUIRE: Man, it's not one word. I'm going to tell you, it's the greatest place on earth. I'll be there for the rest of my life. I appreciate the administration for doing what they did last week. People think, well, that's just -- it's not.

I'm a Texan. I ain't never been anywhere else. I'll never be anywhere else. I'm proud to be the head coach at Texas Tech, and this team's not done yet.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports



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**Texas Tech Red Raiders  
Coy Eakin**

**Lee Hunter**

**Behren Morton**

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Texas Tech - 34, BYU - 7

**Q. Coy, this one's for you. That catch you made in the first half, sprinting full speed, have to turn all the way around, land on your back, what was going through your mind on that play?**

COY EAKIN: We have a play and just kind of executed it. The corner just kind of dropped. I had him beat, so I was like, Behren, is about to throw it. Just kind of make the play that comes to you.

One thing I want to say before I answer any questions is God is good and God is great all the time. I pray for deliverance.

**Q. Lee, how would you compare the chemistry of this team under Coach McGuire compared to what you experienced in the prior season under Coach Malzahn?**

LEE HUNTER: I don't want to do no comparison because I got respect for both head coaches. But a team this close, I feel we work very hard at practice, and it's still hard work, hard day to day. I just enjoy playing with these guys, great guys.

Real love, one of the best teams I've been a part of because of the work we put in daily. It's fun actually playing football here at Tech on both sides of the ball. I'm just thankful. I thank God for everything.

**Q. Behren, Coach McGuire said that you and him in June told each other you would walk out of the**



**stadium with the Big 12 Championship and take a picture. What do you remember about that conversation, and what was the feeling like?**

BEHREN MORTON: Coach McGuire, early on this week, he told me we were going to do that. I knew exactly, we found each other, and we both got emotional.

Man, it's been a crazy, crazy ride. Spent all five years at Lubbock, at Texas Tech. I just love this university and everything it stands for. I think this town deserves championships to be brought back home. That's what we're going to do.

The standard is the standard. We're setting standard for now, but the standard is going to be upheld for sure.

**Q. Behren, early on I felt like the offense wasn't quite going. But then Ben Roberts gets an interception and score right after that. How important was that play for you guys to get the offense going?**

BEHREN MORTON: For sure, it was a big, big play. It really started off the momentum we needed for offense. We were moving the ball, but we weren't finishing drives.

Our defense is chaos. They're a great group of guys. I can't say enough about the defense for what they've done for the offense. It makes our job a lot easier. Ben played a phenomenal game. Very proud of him.

**Q. Behren, you're one of the few guys really in the country that's been with the same program for five years. I know you haven't achieved everything. But to do this in your senior season with stuff off the field, with the injuries you've been through, what does that feel like?**

BEHREN MORTON: Man, it's emotional for sure. I mean, my whole entire life has been Texas Tech. To bring back a championship that has never been brought home to Lubbock, that's something we can hang our hats on for the rest of our lives.

Man, it's a really cool achievement for sure. We're not

done yet. There's still more ball to be played. So really proud of the team. I mean, it's a team effort. I can't say enough about this group of guys.

**Q. Coy, when you were at Stephenville, you were most outstanding player in the championship game. Made a spectacular play in that one, made a spectacular play tonight. Is there some parallel there? Can you describe kind of the play from Stephenville?**

COY EAKIN: Kind of the same offense, but I don't really know. It was just kind of you step in somewhere and you feel comfortable. That's kind of how it was tonight. I thought we all felt comfortable tonight. We played like it.

That was just my time to make a play that came to me. It could have been anybody's, but it was just that time.

**Q. Lee, obviously you had plenty of options this summer, but this staff convinced you that you could compete for a Big 12 Championship here. When did you start to believe that that was really reality, and what is it like being here now?**

LEE HUNTER: When I came down here to Lubbock, it was just the facility was crazy and the coaches was just great. As I got in the locker room, when you meet people, some people put on, but when I actually got here, they was who they say they was. When I got in the locker room, they just said to me, hop on. I'm just blessed. I came to the perfect situation at the right time. I'm thankful.

I've got a little girl. I've got another one on the way. It's just like I'm thankful. I'm blessed. I love these guys. These guys work hard every day, and they stuck with me for life. Coach McGuire do a great job of instilling hard work in us day to day basically.

It's not over. We've still got more to get. We've got a great football team, but I'm thankful. If I can say this, I'm blessed and I'm thankful. I did it for my teammates and my family and everybody who loves this organization. I'm thankful for Lubbock. I love you boys. You're stuck with me for life.

**Q. There's a lot of talk around the state of who's the state flagship university. Obviously you guys right now are the only team that has clinched a CFP spot. To the next generation of student-athletes that are competing in high school 6A or 1A through 6A championships here next week, they're making decisions of where they want to go. What can you guys say about the culture at Lubbock? I know you guys have got Cody Campbell. He was here in the room a little bit ago. What do you guys say about the culture of Texas Tech? Why should they come?**

**There's so much competition in Texas. What makes you guys stand out?**

BEHREN MORTON: I think it's our coach, our leader for sure. Coach McGuire, he makes the ball roll. But all the guys, 120 of us, we trust Coach McGuire. I'd do anything for that man. He's a very special guy for me. Not just for me, but for the whole team. President Schovanec back there too.

It means so much. The community of Lubbock is a really, really special place that people could see. Maybe it's not wherever Dallas is or whatever, but Lubbock is a really, really special place, and there's really special people there.

I'm going to have relationships the rest of my life from Lubbock. I hope my kids get to go to Texas Tech. I hope my son gets to play for Coach McGuire. To bring back the standard of bringing back championships to Lubbock, it means the world to me.

COY EAKIN: I'll say this. I committed to Joey as a walk-on, and I had offers like other places. He said, as soon as you get here, I'm going to get you an offer as soon as I can get it to you. He held his word, and he's loved me every day since. Everybody's had bad practices or whatever, but he's not going to change up on you.

If you want to commit to a coach that's going to love you every single day and actually care about you, this is the place to be. I went to Stephenville obviously, and that's a football town. If you play high school football there, everybody's going to know your name. You walk in the Whattaburger in Lubbock, there's going to be people wanting to have your autograph and stuff. It's not like you're just another guy there. It's like you're on the football team? We're all around you. Community is going to be all around you in Lubbock.

**Q. For all three of you, what does earning this bye mean to you and the time that you're going to be able to get? What's your message of thanks to the coaches that have helped you along the way to this Big 12 Championship?**

BEHREN MORTON: For me, I battled with injuries really my whole entire career. Mike Ramirez and his staff have done a phenomenal job. Man, I can't say enough. It was great to hug him after the game. We've waited for this moment for a long time.

There's so many good people in Lubbock, Mike and the training staff, but also the coaches. We had a great game plan. We have for the last 12 weeks, 13 weeks now. I really can't say enough about the people and the facility.

It's a blessing to go to our facility every day. I don't dread going up there at all. The more time that I get to spend up there, the happier I am.

**Q. For all three, how has the defense made you all better players? Not just obviously with what they bring to the table, but how have they held you accountable and just made you better in your time at Texas Tech?**

LEE HUNTER: For the defense, just the players really. It started with J-Rod, Coach Shiel, Coach Wood, all the staff. They just instill hard work in you. You learn how to work hard, and the guys around you working hard on a day-to-day basis. It just becomes like a habit. Keep doing it and doing it and doing it. We've got some hard working guys on this defense.

COY EAKIN: It really goes back to like summer. There's leaders in every single group. It doesn't matter if you're skill, defense, DBs, there's going to be a leader there, and everyone is held up to a standard.

Like DeMarcus Ware said to us last night, iron sharpens iron. It really was all year iron sharpens iron. Ben had a great game. He's my dog. But he's been around Jacob Rodriguez and doing exactly what he does every single day and trying to outperform, and his day finally came. Iron sharpens iron, and everybody gets better together.

**Q. This question is for Lee. Early on in the game, it looked like BYU's game plan literally on offense was, okay, strength of your defense is going to be due to the line. Linebackers up the middle. They're going to go outside and run a lot of screens. What did Coach Wood do to adjust the game plan to disrupt what they were doing on offense and shut everything down?**

LEE HUNTER: The stuff that we do every week. Just went in the locker room and coached us harder. On the sidelines they coached us harder. He didn't change nothing up. He stuck with his game plan, and we executed for him.

**Q. For all three, you walk in there, you see all that red. Could you all three just give me some emotion real quick, what it was like?**

BEHREN MORTON: We knew that playing in the DFW area with the fan base that we have out here, we knew it was going to be rocking. Man, it was awesome. 85,000 people, the majority of them wearing red, it's a great feeling. It kind of feels like a home game.

Can't say enough for how we travel as a fan base too, but

it's really comforting having a fan base like us.

COY EAKIN: It feels like a home game, instantly, especially when a good play for us happens, the crowd shock was crazy.

**Q. State championship game in high school and today, you played here twice or more than twice?**

COY EAKIN: I played here twice.

**Q. Six touchdowns in two games. You kind of alluded to it earlier. Since you were not big-time recruit, how much have you thought about how maybe close you came to not getting to play for Texas Tech over the years?**

COY EAKIN: I didn't get a single offer other than a small D-I until after my senior season. It was kind of delayed. You've got to trust God in those situations, and it came about. Let's say that, now I look back on it, God works in mysterious ways. Let's say I had offers going into my senior year, at the time, I don't know if I would have picked Tech, and this is a place I love.

As soon as I stepped on campus, I was like, mom, this is exactly where I need to be. Everything worked out how it needed to go. McGuire instilled in us early on like, hey, we're going to go win it one day, and we kind of just bought in. It's just a blessing to play here in general.

**Q. Lee, being from the 251, Mobile, and coming to play in AT&T, how does it feel?**

LEE HUNTER: I'm just blessed to have this opportunity. Like, I'm thankful. I don't really know what to say.

**Q. You guys have various, different backgrounds. Behren being here five years, Lee coming in this past off-season. What have you seen from a cohesion standpoint, on everybody putting money aside and ego aside, getting on the same page about winning a National Championship?**

BEHREN MORTON: That's what Coach McGuire preached. He told me this off-season, we're going to go get some guys, and we're going to go win this thing. When he got hired back four years ago, he said, Behren, just trust me. Stick with me and trust me. And I have ever since that day.

When he said we're going to go get these guys, I said, let's go, Coach, let's build this culture and the standard for Texas Tech. We all trusted him. Lee trusted him. Mello trusted him. Brice Pollock trusted him. The list continues



of guys that came in and bought in. There was no selfish, no, well, I'm getting this amount of money; I've got one year left, this season is about me. None of that. That has not been at all in the locker room.

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I think that's what really, really makes us click is because we don't have guys like that on the team. Guys just want to win football games at the end of the day, and that's what we've been doing.

**Q. With your experience in Lubbock, Texas, for somebody who's never been to Lubbock, Texas, describe it in one word if you had to tell somebody what Lubbock's meant to you.**

LEE HUNTER: Football.

BEHREN MORTON: Rowdy.

COY EAKIN: I'd say rowdy, too.

**Q. Coy, obviously there's been so much talk again of the guys who came in and all that sort of stuff. For somebody like you, who was a developmental guy, wasn't a scholarship player coming in, how did the team come together? How did guys like you, who weren't necessarily promised a lot to come here, handle that, and how has this been able to become such a cohesive team?**

COY EAKIN: First of all, if you put in the work, it's going to pay off. It didn't pay off for me until my final game senior year. Same thing here, it's kind of paying off towards the end of my career here at Texas Tech.

On the cohesive part, just like Behren said, there's a lot of money being thrown around or whatever, but it doesn't feel like that at all. We walk in, and it doesn't matter how much you make. If you don't make a dime or if you make the most on the team, we're all happy someone scores. It doesn't matter who it is. The player doesn't care who makes it.

We're all there for each other. C.D. and Reggie, if they go have a game, I'm hyped for them, you know what I'm saying? If it's J'Koby's game, I'm hyped for him. It's never been jealousy or envy of anybody else. We have one goal, and at the end of the day, it's to go win football games. If we can do that, we're all happy.

THE MODERATOR: Coy, we get to present to you the Allstate® Most Outstanding Offensive Player.

Congratulations. We'll see you in the college football playoffs.



# Big 12 Conference Football Championship Game: BYU vs Texas Tech

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Arlington, Texas, USA

AT&T Stadium

## BYU Cougars Coach Kalani Sitake Postgame Press Conference



Texas Tech - 34, BYU - 7

KALANI SITAKE: Congratulations to Texas Tech and the coaches, the players and their fans. Well-deserved Big 12 Championship.

You can't make a lot of mistakes like we did. We've learned it again -- this is the second time this year -- against the best team in the country. I've said it before, I think they're the best team in the country, and I'm confirming it, they're the best team in the country.

Joey has done an amazing job with this team. It just so happens that we had to play the best team in the country twice. And they created a lot of havoc. And we fought as much as we can, but towards the end we can't make the mistakes we did and expect to come away with a victory or even have it competitive at the end.

So credit to them. Really proud of our guys, the effort. Thank you to the fans. BYU fans showed up. And, I mean, it was record attendance. So I want to tell the BYU fans, just get ready. Hopefully we'll be back soon.

But we're in our third year in the conference. Really proud of where we've been and how we built this team. We obviously have some more work to do, but I think playing the best team in the country twice will give us some good lessons to learn. And just really proud of the way they played.

I thought, looking at everything, all three phases, just fundamentally really sound. Well-coached team. Amazing environment today in the stadium.

Thank you to all the Texas Tech fans and BYU fans for bringing all the energy. It was a lot of fun. We need to make it a little more competitive at the end.

It got away from us, but I was proud of the way our guys played. They didn't give up. We put our defense in tough positions. Those guys kept battling. So we'll build from this and get better, but really, really proud of our team.

But with that said and done, I'll have to watch the film and everything, but it was an honor for us to be on this field and to be part of the Big 12 Championship game. And we could get used to this. So I'm hoping that we can be back again soon.

And looking forward to building -- we have quite a bit of young guys on our team. So the unfortunate part is that this is our seniors' last time, so they won't be able to play for another Big 12 Championship. But they've done some wonderful things in getting our team ready for it.

And they're still leading. We still need to get better and still find ways to -- we will play again in the postseason. Where, we'll just find out.

But congratulations again. I'll finish by saying in my statement, congratulations to Texas Tech. Just confirmed, they're the best team in the country.

**Q. Considering that both of your losses came at the hands of the same team this year, and a top-four ranked team at that, do you think the playoff committee should take that into consideration compared to other two-loss teams?**

KALANI SITAKE: I think if you look at what Texas Tech has done, they're the best team in the country for a reason. Their only loss came when they didn't have their starting quarterback. And so that's difficult, and on the road. But you look at when they're a full-strength team, they're dangerous.

So, I'm not on the playoff committee, but I can tell you one thing, who has played the best team in the country twice? We have. Does that mean that you're not one of the best 12? I have no idea. I'm not in that committee. I don't make the decisions. But others will find out.

That's the great thing about the playoffs, everybody else will find out what we had to go against. And I'm really proud of our team, so I can't really speak for everybody else.

But from seeing them twice, and even as the games went and watching them and their response to some adversity, they played really strong. I'd love to have a third chance at them. But that's a really good team, and Joey's done a great job with them.

**Q. How injured was Bear Bachmeier after that big hit he took in the first drive? And how much of an impact did that play into not taking many shots down the field through the air?**

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, I mean, he was banged up, you know? So when you have a lower-leg injury that causes issues for you to throw the ball. But that's not an excuse. I mean, I think -- was it Ben that made the one-handed snag? Come on, man. They made some amazing plays, great defense, and offense was efficient.

I thought overall they just had a great game plan and they just executed. They never panicked. Just really impressed with the poise and composure they had. Like I said, when they're full strength and their quarterback is full strength, they're a dangerous team.

**Q. On the touchdown to Eakin, did he step out of bounds? If so, did the refs give you any explanation if it was illegal touching or if Evan forced him out?**

KALANI SITAKE: I don't know. Listen, I'm not going to have ever complain about the refs. We had an amazing reffing crew today. They did a great job communicating. You know, we're biased, I'm going to yell one thing and Joey's going to yell the other.

But I thought overall the refs did a great job of communicating to us when we had a P.I., and when we were asking questions. They did a great job. I didn't have any issues with the way they reffed the game.

The explanations were all there. On that one, how am I going to say anything? I'm on the other side. I can't see it. To be honest with you I was trying to find the replay. They're not going to show all 22 on the field. But that had nothing to do with anything. We just needed to make the play.

**Q. What did you see from your defense today? Put in some tough situations, just overall thoughts on the defense?**

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, it's a tough spot. I think it can be deflating a little bit when you get that many short fields. They made the play on that fourth down, a great play by them. It was a legal screen. We just have to anticipate that better.

But I think that the dangerous thing about this team is they can do so many different things. And with their quarterback, he's so active -- he can throw side arm. He can spin the ball really nicely, and they have great targets at receiver and tight end. And their two backs, those guys know how to run the ball.

It's just a difficult thing to defend. And you have a physical O-line. You can't give them short fields, and we kept giving them short fields.

I like the response from our guys. Did I expect them to make a stop every time? Of course, because that's what we're trained to do. But it's hard to do against the best team in the country, you know?

But I'm proud of the fight, and at the end, just thankful that Joey and them decided to kneel the ball and show sportsmanship. It was a classy move. And our guys, it was a hard-fought battle, and really proud of the way the guys are. And we wish Texas Tech luck as they go on. They're in the playoffs. I mean, they deserve a first-round bye. So, a dang good team.

**Q. What is your sense of your playoff hopes now?**

KALANI SITAKE: I don't know. This is the first game. So I don't know what's going on in the other games. But I know -- like I said, who's played -- they're the number one team in the country. I don't know what the other rankings are. This team is really good. So you go play the number one team in the country twice, one in Lubbock and one in a neutral site, which is the same state. I thought our fans showed up and made a lot of noise. I'd love another crack at it.

But they do that to everybody. If you watch the film and you see what they do, they basically grind it out, and they end the games like they just did against us.

I like who we are and I like what we've been able to do. I think we have a great resumé. But I've got to watch the other games, too. I just know that when they're doing comparisons, hopefully they put it out there and make it fair. At least put us in the graphic; that would be nice.

**Q. Second quarter, you go for it on fourth down, fake punt. What went into that decision in your own territory?**

KALANI SITAKE: We thought it was going to be a good play. I mean, give credit to them. They had one player that sniffed it out, and I mean we were aggressive, tried different things.

I like it. I told K-Pop and I told our coaches, don't practice something if we're not going to call it in the game. We called it. It didn't work. I think we forced a missed field goal. So no harm, no foul. We're good.

I like being bold and aggressive. And usually the fortune will go our way. But you have to give them credit. They made an incredible amount of plays and forced some turnovers. We have a tough team, man, but they were really aggressive and they made some big-time plays and big-time stops.

It's hard for us to advance the ball when we're not converting third downs or we're putting ourselves in third-and-long. It's hard against this team. We didn't convert a couple of fourth downs, and then obviously the turnovers. But I was proud of the way our guys played and the way they fought.

**Q. Are you concerned about Will Ferrin and his having missed a lot of kicks recently and the special teams woes you've experienced?**

KALANI SITAKE: There's a bunch of different areas going into kicking the ball. I wish they could just kick it and put it on their tee and kick it. But there's a snap, a hold, a protection that goes into it and the nerves. So I think it's easy for us to criticize kickers. I've seen some amazing kickers in the Big 12 miss field goals. And on both sides that happened today.

But I think the environment can play into that, and we trust him. He's won games for us, and he's going to be our guy. We've just got to get him ready for the next one. But there's a lot of different parts that go into it.

**Q. You said lessons were learned potentially against the best team in the country. Just initial thoughts, like, what was the biggest lesson you learned going two times against this team?**

KALANI SITAKE: Well, the game felt different than the first one. Let's be honest, the first one was really hard. This one I thought we were competitive and we were in it, and the turnovers started happening towards the end. And then it just got away from us. We could do a lot of things differently.

I like that we were physical. They couldn't just run the ball

up on us inside, and so we were physical up front on both sides. I thought they tackled really well and obviously forced some fumbles. They forced a couple of fumbles and had a couple of interceptions. And I think that was the difference in what could have happened.

I felt like we held it to one-score, two-score game for a while, and all of a sudden the negative things started to happen and it just got away from us.

Listen, this is a really, really good team. They're the best team in the country. I wish more people would be saying that.

**Q. How did you feel about just the overall week of preparation leading up to the game for a second time against this Texas Tech club? And did you feel like maybe there was anything lacking coming into the game today?**

KALANI SITAKE: No, I thought we started off fast and with a lot of energy. We got the lead early. I liked the way the guys -- I mean, their mindset was good. We were physical right away and went into halftime with a score being 13-7, still felt good about where we're at. And that first drive coming out, I think we missed a field goal and had a good drive.

The stuff that we did is really hard to do against this team, and we just made too many mistakes. You have to capitalize. You have to convert third downs and turn them into first downs. And when you have moments for points, you just have to make them.

Otherwise, this team will figure out a way to just squeeze it out of you, man. And that's what championship teams do. That's why they deserve to win the Big 12 Championship, and so we've got to learn from all these things. But they just beat us a different way than they did the first time.

But it was really cool. Like I said, it was an honor for us to be here. But that just can't be the only reason. We've got to learn from this and build on it and be a lot like them. I think they put a lot of pressure on teams to make mistakes and maybe stress them a little bit. And that's just great coaching and great veteran leadership on their part.

**Q. How concerned are you for whatever the next game ends up being with that lower leg injury with Bear, his availability going forward, how concerned are you with that?**

KALANI SITAKE: Yeah, always concerned. But I mean, that's not the reason why we lost. I mean, it is part of the reason why he wasn't able to play his best. But I mean,

he's going to be hurting a lot more tomorrow, you know?  
But I thought that wasn't -- we made a lot of mistakes. It wasn't just Bear. He wasn't the reason why we didn't score enough points. It was a lot of different things.

The fumbles forced because we didn't have the right protection going. And I thought Texas Tech had a great game plan for trying to eliminate the quarterback run game. So we just didn't make enough adjustments to that.

But, like I said, they just kept you guessing on a lot of different things and a well-coached team. You just weren't going to get anything cheap on them. They basically covered all the areas and dotted their I's and crossed their T's. And that's when you can tell they're a well-coached team, their culture that they have and everything that they're doing. They're a dynamite team.

And so that was a really cool experience for us. But I think there's a lot of things we can learn from this game still.

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