

CFP Quarterfinal at the Capital One Orange Bowl: Oregon vs Texas Tech

Thursday, January 1, 2026

Miami Gardens, Florida, USA

Hard Rock Stadium

Texas Tech Red Raiders

Coach Joey McGuire

Behren Morton

Jacob Rodriguez

Postgame Press Conference

Oregon 23, Texas Tech 0

JOEY McGUIRE: Well, I want to start off by thanking Red Raider Nation for showing up today, man. It was really special. It's been an incredible ride this year, but it was really special to have so many Texas Tech fans. I'm sorry that we let you down. But I hope you've enjoyed every second of this year. Man, this is such a special team and I'm so proud of them. But thank you for that.

Hats off to Dan Lanning and hats off to the Oregon Ducks. Just an incredible football team. They played at a really high level today. I'm going to be rooting for them.

I told Dan after the game, I hope he wins the whole damn thing. They're a good football team.

I also thought, and a lot of people don't say it and I don't know if I've ever said it in a press conference, but I thought the officiating was as good as I've been a part of in college football. Hats off to the ACC crew today. They did a good job.

It's no fun being in that locker room right now. I've said it all year long. Been doing this for 31 years. I've never been a part of a closer group of men and never been so proud.

One thing that I told them, and I truly believe it, like when you do something that nobody has ever done, nobody has ever done what these guys did wearing this uniform, ever, so then the standard is set. That's where you start building something really special.

So I can't thank them enough. This is going to hurt for a long time. I know these guys are hurting right now. But can't be more proud of my football team.

Q. For Behren, start of the fourth quarter, obviously a lot of things had gone wrong offensively up to that point, but you do get the opportunity there in the red zone. Can you just describe what you guys were talking about and thinking kind of at the doorstep of that opportunity and then what happened on the interception?

BEHREN MORTON: Yeah, we got a time-out so we had a play that we wanted to run. I didn't have good eyes. They came out in something that I thought they were in differently. I thought they were in man, and I threw the corner route, corner fell off of it, made a great play. I thought we saw a really good defense today, but I thought offensively it's just not the standard of football that Texas Tech plays.

But like Coach said, a lot to be proud of this year. But today was tough.

Q. Behren, can you take us through your emotions right now? Obviously this is the accumulation of a big career for you.

BEHREN MORTON: It's tough. I love this university, everything that it stands for, and I've been a Red Raider since I was a little kid.

To get to do this this year has been awesome. A great group of guys. Man, it's just been so fun just to put Texas Tech back on the map. Lubbock deserves every bit of everything that happened this year. We can hang our hat on something. Obviously not the outcome that we wanted, but really proud of this team and the way that we fought through adversity this year. I'm proud to be a Red Raider.

Q. Behren, in terms of the offensive struggle today, would you say it had more to do with rust from the layoff with scheme with their defense, with the talent disparities? What could you put your finger on?

BEHREN MORTON: Yeah, I think that we had a great game plan. The whole month really we had a great game plan. We just didn't execute base plays. We didn't run our day one stuff that we'd run good.

I didn't do a good job of settling down and really focusing on the next play. But there was a lot of things that we could have done differently. Can't give them the ball. We've got to keep the ball on our side when we're on offense.

But just a lot of bad football on offense.

Q. Joey, the same question to you: What did you feel like it was that kept you all from being the kind of offense you all have been all year?

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah, you can't turn the ball over. It's a really good defense. It's one of the top defenses in the country. We knew that coming in. I want to give them all the credit. They did a great job defending us. I thought they did a good job of keeping the ball in front of them, not giving up a lot of big plays. We've been a big play offense, explosive offense. They kept the ball in front of them.

But you can't turn the ball over four times. I think that led to 13 points. Then the other part of that was we were not good on 2nd down. I didn't think we were horrible on 1st down, but on 2nd down we were not efficient at all, so it put us in some really tough 3rd downs, and man, they played really well on

defense.

Q. For Jacob, I know you guys are hurting right now, but can you talk about what it's meant to you to be with this group and be a Texas Tech Red Raider?

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: It means everything to me. I know that this changed my life. It's changed my family's life. It's not just me; it's everybody in that locker room. This double T has touched everybody in a way that -- this year was so special for us.

Today didn't go the way we wanted it to, but I'll always be able to look back on this year and be proud of the people that were around me. I kind of told them throughout, just a couple minutes ago, that they've got me for the rest of their life. I'm not going anywhere. I'm here for them always. They've got me forever.

The way this place and this university and this program has changed my life, I'm hoping to be able to do that for every single one of them.

Q. For Coach McGuire, I know you guys are hurting, but first playoff, first 12-win season, great recruiting class coming in. The future is bright for Red Raider football.

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah. People have asked me a lot, have you been able to reflect on this year and everything, and I never do that until it's all said and done. The next few days I'll definitely reflect.

I do think that we've set a standard that we're going to try to live up to. We're losing some really great football players, but you've always got to do something special, do something that the guys -- like Oregon is about to try to go to, and Miami. There's got to be a first, and this was the first group that was able to do that. No Red Raider team before us were able to do what we've accomplished this year.

But today will hurt for a long time, but we're going to learn from it. We're going to keep getting better.

Q. Joey or Behren, there's going to be a lot of conversation around the layoff and teams now being 0-6 after the bye. Defense didn't seem to skip a beat, but was there anything you sensed in the offensive struggles that caught up to you or maybe in the prep that 20 minutes off the field you would have liked to have done differently?

JOEY McGUIRE: Man, the tough thing is if we use the layoff, then we're going to use an excuse. And we believe in this program you don't make excuses and you don't let anybody make them for you.

We've got to do better. If this is going to be what the College Football Playoffs is, then we've got to find a way to be better to win that game.

But I think more than anything, it was a mixture of playing a really good Oregon defense and us not executing at a high level. I think whenever you're in these games and you're playing teams that's every bit as good and every bit as talented as you are and vice versa, then you've got to execute at a high level, and I think that was the biggest thing.

Now, I'll piggyback off of Dan and we'll see what everybody else says. We're in a world that makes no sense. But that's where we're at, and you've got to find a way to be better to win this game.

Q. Joey, through the course of the season, you guys proved you were the best team in the Big 12 by a pretty significant margin. Today, from your perspective, was it a bad day, or did they

present something from a size-speed quotient that maybe the Big 12 hadn't prepared you for?

JOEY McGUIRE: No, I mean, I know stats are a little bit different, but they rushed for -- they were rushing for over 200 yards against Big Ten teams and they rushed for 64 yards today. I know some of that was in sacks and snaps and stuff like that, but we still did that.

I do think, and Behren will probably say the same thing, I think defensively that was probably the best defense we've faced this year. I do think they did a really good job schematically. Their defensive coordinator, defensive staff did a really good job of giving us some issues.

But I go back, and whenever you turn the ball over -- let's say we turned the ball over four times, if you look at the 4th down conversion, there was really one that was like a competitive gain that we didn't get, so that's a fifth turnover. The score was 23-0. We were desperate, so they get that last touchdown that we didn't hold them out.

If you look -- and they scored, what did we say, 13 off of turnovers? We didn't play good enough. It really wasn't the patch on anybody's arm. That's a really good football team, though. If the quarterback decides to go in the draft, he's probably going to be the first or second guy taken.

It just comes down to execution, and we didn't execute at a high level.

Q. David Bailey showed out today. What did he show NFL scouts today?

JOEY McGUIRE: Well, I think he's showed all year long, I'm sitting there and I'm an NFL team, if I'm not taking a quarterback or a left tackle, if I'm a team that's going to take a defensive player, I don't know what defensive player out there you would take over David Bailey. I really don't.

I've been around some special guys. I got to coach a really special one as a position coach, and then we had Tyree Wilson. Honestly, some of the stuff that he does I've never seen a guy do at that level. If I'm an NFL team and I want to take a defensive player, I'm taking him first overall.

Q. If I told you this morning that their quarterback, who you just said is going to be one of the first picks in the draft, didn't have a touchdown pass, would you take that from your defense?

JOEY McGUIRE: Yeah, when we went in at halftime it was 6-0. We missed a field goal -- we've got one of the best kickers in the country, and he's made some long critical field goals this year, and we just pushed it to the left.

But if you would have woke up this morning and told me it was going to be 6-0 at halftime, then I would have taken that, too. I knew this was going to be a dogfight. We really did. If you look statistically at the two defenses, you've got two of the best defenses in the country going at each other.

Yeah, I would have taken the 6-0 at halftime.

Q. Following up on that, considering it was 6-0 at halftime, for either Joey or Behren, when you guys went in to regroup and plan out the second half, was there anything you wanted to go to to try to get yourself going? Considering it was only a one-score game at that time, were you still looking to hit with a big play?

BEHREN MORTON: I think we were just trying to find a good play that we could get in rhythm. I felt on 1st down we were trying to find our rhythm, and we didn't find our rhythm for a while. Coming out

in the second half, we just talked about execution. We've got to execute. We didn't execute in the first or second half, and that gets you beat every time.

It just really comes down to executing the base plays, and we did not do that.

Q. Jacob, for you guys on the defense, in terms of how you wanted to approach Oregon and perform against them, did this meet your expectations in terms of how you wanted to slow this team down, this kind of offense? How did you view them from your perspective?

JACOB RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, I think we did a good job of matching up and kind of knowing exactly what they wanted to do. A lot of the errors were on our part, self-inflicted, just us not communicating as much as we wanted to and being in the right position.

But man, I was super proud of our guys flying around, hitting and going at the ball. It was just kind of how it goes sometimes. I know we had a few drives start on our side of the 50, and it's hard to play defense like that.

But I'm really proud of our guys for doing what we did. A big plan for us was -- they're really explosive. They've got guys who can go all over the field. If we just get the ball down, we'll live with a 20- or 30-yard gain, if we can just get the ball down and play the next play. And you kind of saw that on a lot of the long drives. They'd have some explosives, and then we'd be able to step up and do our job and make them kick. That's all you do is just give our guys a chance.

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