



# UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

## DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

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## #11/14 TEXAS TECH RED RAIDERS (5-0 • 2-0 Big 12) at -/rv HOUSTON COUGARS (4-1 • 1-1 Big 12) Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025 • TDECU Stadium • Houston

### HEAD COACH WILLIE FRITZ

#### Opening Statement

"Poor performance by us. I did a poor job getting our guys ready to play. I thought we were ready, but we didn't execute and get out there the way we needed to."

We talked about the plan to win all the time. We didn't do a good job at that. We certainly didn't control the running game. I thought we tackled extremely poorly and offensively. We didn't get bodies on bodies when running the ball effectively throughout the game. We played okay in the kicking game. We had some foolish penalties, and the game got out of hand in the fourth quarter, so it wasn't an opportunity to really finish.

Disappointing, but as I talked about on Monday, they're a really good football team. Very well coached and very talented. We knew we had to play really good, and we didn't play really good."

#### On what happened to Conner Weigman

"When we get done, I will go talk to the trainers and find out exactly. They didn't feel like he could stay in there and play. I'm going to talk to them and the doctors and get a prognosis exactly where he's at right now."

#### On how early turnovers set the team back

"Well, it's tough. Our defense did not answer the bell quite a few times. You have to respond offensively, and we didn't do that. I don't think we tackled well throughout the ball game. A lot of times, you get the ball on the perimeter or force the player to jump inside. It would have been nice if we had it and played some of those snaps because of the turnover. We have to play better offensively. We put a few things together, but we just couldn't sustain drives and some big shot plays."

#### On being able to sustain drives and settling for the field goal in the first quarter

"We talk all the time about four-point plays, touchdowns instead of field goals. We just didn't execute when we got the ball down there. I thought it was a really nice catch by Koby Young, but we didn't get the touchdown out of it."

#### On how to move forward after the loss

"I'll have a talk with the guys about it. It's the first time we have to deal with a loss this season. We've got to self-reflect on what we did well and what we did poorly."

Obviously, I did a poor job. I'm going to find ways to improve this week. For us to win, we're not going to roll the ball out. We're going to play well in all three phases. We don't have to play perfectly, but we have to play well, and we did not do that tonight."

#### On turnovers in the first half

"I don't know. I would just say lack of execution. We emphasize this stuff more than anybody in America. First play of the game, we have to play lateral when we don't catch it cleanly. It was close, obviously, but I don't know. This

was a big ball game, and I think the kids were excited for it. In the grand scheme of things, I didn't prepare them as well as I needed to.

#### **On Texas Tech's defensive line pressure**

"They did a good job. They're big, physical and quick. They got defensive ends that got tremendous movement and speed. They do a good job of rushing on the edges, and they have big fellas inside who can move as well. Very good defensive line."

#### **On the penalty on the kick catch interference**

"Just from looking at the guy, he has an opportunity to catch the ball. You have to let him have that opportunity. I guess they thought we were in there too close after he bobbled it. It looked to me like it hit the ground. I'm going to have to look at it a little closer. They were definitive with their call."

#### **On being in striking distance after halftime**

"We were hoping we would get something going out of halftime. They were kicking us in the second half. We just didn't get going in the third quarter."

#### **On Zeon Chriss' swinging momentum**

"Yeah, for a little bit it was. We had a big play, a lot of main coverage. We got loose. Amare [Thomas] scored that long touchdown. A 2-point play and I thought we had some good momentum going. We just didn't capitalize on it and keep the momentum on our sideline. Next time we had the ball, we were three and out. Take away the series after that, we just didn't take advantage of it."

#### **On how Zeon Chriss responded**

"He came in early and did a great job. In the first series he was in, he did an outstanding job. He led us down the field for a touchdown and a 2-point conversion, but he had some difficulties with protection and being able to set his feet in the pocket. Sometimes he could've set his feet and didn't. I'm really going to have to go back and look at it and see, but there are some good things he did. There was some stuff he did that was alright and some stuff he did that was not very good."

#### **On the turnover as the first play of the game**

"It's terrible. We worked on that play, and we just didn't execute it. It certainly doesn't get you started well, so that was not good."

#### **On schemes limiting Tanner Koziol**

"No, I think they just did a good job of pressure and tight windows. When you're going to throw the ball, you have to be able to protect and protect average with pinpoint accuracy. Sometimes, we didn't have both."

### **HOUSTON SENIOR RUNNING BACK DEAN CONNORS**

#### **On the struggles on offense**

"I think it's just that momentum is a big part of the game, starting fast. The first drive didn't go how we wanted it to go, but I just have to see what I can do better. That's all I can control. I need to get better for my teammates and then find ways to make my teammates better."

#### **On running against Texas Tech**

"They're a good football team, and we knew up until this point that they were going to be our biggest test. Kudos to them, they played really well."

#### **On whether the offense has found its identity**

"I think identity is going to be formed throughout the season, whether that's injuries or the teams you're playing. If we stay stagnant, that'll end up being negative. I think you're always just trying to mold it and always trying to get better. I think our identity is just that we're a tough football team, and we're going to go out, and we're going to play all 60 minutes."

## HOUSTON JUNIOR DEFENSIVE LINEBACKER KENTRELL WEBB

### **On forcing Tech into three early field goals**

"We were feeling good. When you get a good team like that into their own goal line area and you stop the four-point plays, it's big, so it was good for us to feel early. We were just waiting for our offense to pop off."

### **On whether the eight-point drive sparked life into the team before halftime**

"For sure. We had life up until 0:00 hit the end of the clock. Our coaches are preaching to keep fighting and a play will pop off eventually. Sadly, it didn't, but we just got to keep going."

### **On the message to the younger players after such a loss and how to move forward**

"There are wins and losses in life. Like I said, you're not going to win every game. I've been in college for four years, and I haven't won every game."

I was telling the freshmen... you're not going to win every game. Just keep your head up; it's not the last game of the season. It was a good football team, and this hurts. We've got lots of games left in the season, and we'll possibly see them again."

## TEXAS TECH HEAD COACH JOEY McGUIRE

### **Opening statement**

"I have to start by thanking all the Red Raiders for showing out in Houston. We just talked in the locker room, and our players were just blown away by the support and everybody standing up. It was a great environment for us, and we appreciate everyone showing up."

We're excited to be 5-0. Never apologize for a victory. I felt like there were a lot of times we had to settle for field goals. We felt we could have scored more points, but there were teams that went on the road that were expected to win that didn't. Our team handled the adversity, so I am proud of them. It will be fun to get back home for homecoming next week."

### **On the defense grinding out two Big 12 wins on the road vs good teams**

"I won't play that style when we're playing clean football. We didn't play clean football tonight. It's something that we haven't been able to do. We haven't played well on the road. We went into an undefeated Utah team and handed them their first loss, went to Houston and handed an undefeated Houston team their first loss. Any way you can win, you have to do it."

### **On the changing point for the offense**

"If you go back and look at the good things we did, running the ball well and we had a shutout in the second half which is good. But then, you look at the other half of it that is going to keep us on edge and focus on how we could get better."

We had four drops, with two being touchdowns. We had them locked up and had to settle for field goals. We had two pre-snap penalties from the one-yard line where we would have walked into the end zone and instead settled for a field goal for one of them. The other one, although we scored, you don't want to score that way. That's the frustrating thing that we have to get better at."

I thought defensively we played really well again. We stopped the run and were able to get after their quarterback, and that's the key. With the front that we have, if we can stop the run, that makes a big difference."

### **On getting senior quarterback Behren Morton involved in the game**

"That was something we had coming into the game. With some of the stuff like the inside zone, adding it to play 11-on-11."

### **On the importance of the 69-yard touchdown late in the first quarter**

"It was huge. There were so many times where we could have broken it open, and then we lost the momentum, having to kick the field goal. That was huge with him [Cameron Dickey] really breaking it open. When we can get a

lead, it is hard to attack our defense because you are going to have to go out of your game plan. Having to push the ball downfield and holding the ball longer, that's when we can really start to hit the quarterback."

### **On J'Koby Williams' versatility tonight**

"Those two guys [J'Koby Williams and Cameron Dickey]. First, J'Koby is one of those guys who is always smiling and loves football. He is a fun guy to be around, and pound for pound, he is probably the strongest. If he is not the strongest guy on our team, he is one of the strongest guys. He probably weighed 182 today and he squats 500 pounds, benches 300 pounds. He is a load.

Those two guys play off each other so well. They do so many good things, and they celebrate. It is fun to watch. I'll go back and watch the TV replay, and I'll promise you that Cam is probably celebrating J'Koby's touchdown, just like J'Koby is celebrating Cam's long touchdown."

### **On what Jacob Rodriguez has meant to the Texas Tech program**

"It's awesome. Whenever he picked that one and hurdled that guy, he told me to remind Mack [Leftwich] that he was a quarterback in high school so if we need some wildcat runs with him, he can do it.

He is the quarterback of that defense. He can get everybody lined up. Right or wrong, he gets them lined up. He gives everybody such confidence because he is very assertive, and there is not a lot of guessing. He is going to make the call and get us going, and he plays like his hair is on fire."

### **On Jacob Rodriguez' injury**

"It was his calf. At first, I thought it was cramps, but it wasn't. Mike [Ramirez] brought him up and did some work on his calf, and he was able to kind of release it. It just got tight. We were able to put him back into the game."

### **On Texas Tech coming out with decisive wins against previously undefeated teams**

"They care a lot about each other; that's what we talk about all the time. We always say that the film is a miracle. Whenever we turn on the film tomorrow, it's like looking in the mirror and we can ask ourselves, 'Did we play as hard as we could?' It's going to visibly show up, so you're going to know if you did or you didn't. The people around you will also know if you did or you didn't. They're holding each other accountable when they play at a really high level.

### **On how Behren Morton prepared for tonight and handled his previous injury**

"He did a great job. I think he had a big run and a handoff off too that ended up being a big play. Our players are really unselfish, and it's hard to know your role, but everybody has a role. When your role changes, you better be ready. When your number is called, you better be ready. That's what Will Hammond did, and he knows his role right now. I promise you, if something happens and another player's helmet comes off and Hammond's got to go in the game, then we're going to rip it, run our offense and do what we do.

I was proud of Behren. He feels good and you can see it. We felt like we could run him tonight and he moved well in the pocket. He threw for 345 yards and didn't turn the ball over which allowed us to take care of the football."

### **On the defense and their performance**

"I think we just keep at it, and they will be. The thing about those guys is the depth that we can play with because we can play five guys in the interior. We play four heavy, but whenever you're talking about Lee Hunter, Skyler Gill-Howard, Jayden Cofield, Dooda [E'Maurion Banks] and A.J. Holmes Jr., you're rotating fresh bodies in there, and there is no drop off. Those guys play at an extremely high level and then on the edge.

We felt that coming in this year with the defensive front that we have that we can do a lot of things. It's fun when you can get pressure rushing four and you're able to cover the way we cover because we can rush four and still get pressure."