Matt Rhule

MATT RHULE: Appreciate you guys all being here. Obviously we're hurt. Kids are beat up emotionally right now, pretty sad. They put a lot into that game. I think the biggest thing is they recognize they were good enough to win it. They recognize they were good enough. I tell them you're going to be there in the fourth quarter. I think they believed it. We had our chances. Just weren't able to do it.

I think they looked at it and saw the amount of times just self-inflicted wounds. I don't mean to take anything away from the University of Texas. They're a top 10 football program. But really proud of our guys. For our defense to shut them out in the second half was just an amazing step forward. For guys to go down, guys to step up.

We had that little run in the second quarter where we let some things get away from us. Maybe started with me. Just the emotion of some of the things that were happening probably got us out of whack. We got into halftime, calmed down.

Really proud of our guys in the second half. At the end of the day, we were 97 yards away. Denzel and Tyquan Thornton, found a way to get down there, had two chances in the red zone, weren't able to get the ball up and down.

But proud of our team. A lot of respect for their team.

Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: Cramps. I believe cramps. I come in, I go in there, I come down.

Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: I mean, kind of funny. Came in at halftime, it was very similar to the Duke game at the end of the half. But we had a different feel in the locker room at halftime. I think our guys knew, like, I don't mean this with any disrespect, they're a really good team, but so are we.

One of my players as he walked off, he said to me one of their players said to him, Man, you guys, we haven't played anybody that plays as hard and physical. I know this hurts, but you guys are a really good football team.

I have said, I've been saying that to you. Don't wait till after the fact to figure it out.

But again, it's a football game. They made more plays than us. But I'm proud of the plays we did make. I think just the fact that we got guys battling out there, fighting, guys are going down, other guys are coming in. I mean, we had some power football today, some spread football today, played defense, had some good special team moments.

I'm proud of them. But that's a really hurt group of young men right now. When you're the head coach, you know me, I'll hurt, trust me, but I'll get over it. I hurt from them right now because they knew they could have won that game.

Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: We started doing that last year at Kansas. We do it now at home and away. Sometimes I have an older guy say something, sometimes I say something.

Our message today was very simply, you know, let's make this about us, let's just go play like it's Tuesday at practice, let's just go compete. A lot of people since I got here asked me a lot about practice. I show a team every highlight on our players on our travel squad. The way we practice, the way we practice is you go against really good players. When you go out to play a top-10 team, you recognize, I can play against this guy.

My message to them was just make it about us. Let's go play together. That's the biggest thing I saw today, man. We played together. I'm sad we lost because just to think they had the ball -- the University of Texas had the ball second and five, we burned two timeouts. We burned the boat, said, This is it, and they made the stop. Unfortunately the punt got away from us, rolled down to the seven. (Indiscernible) out there playing a different position. Platt made a play. We get the ball down the field. I thought we managed the clock pretty well. We snuck the first down, came out, had two shots in the end zone.

But wasn't good enough, right? But that was the message.

Q. Did you make some key adjustments in the
second half?
MATT RHULE: Did the same thing. In the first half, they had -- I think they had two explosives the first half. One was that long, deep ball. Collins is a good player. We were going to play bump-n-run. We were right there with them. Thought we covered him. But, you know, he gained separation, made the play.

That's what you have to do against them, though. You know what I mean? Shane came in, two years in a row played Shane. Thought he played well. But we felt like, hey, they're not going to be able to run it against us, they're going to throw it. They made key plays throwing it. The second half they tried to pound the football against us. I thought our guys stepped up.

I thought it was really just a bunch of our guys, we did a great job on their screen game. Sometimes the tempo hurt us. At the end of the day when they moved the ball against us, it involved a defensive penalty. A facemask behind the play, illegal hand to the face.

There weren't many drives that were start-to-finish clean. There were a lot of penalty drives. I think we had seven penalties at halftime. I don't know how many we ended up with. Took on a punt, right? Going to fake the punt. They came out and they were in a defense that would not allow us to fake the punt. Take the penalty, we'll punt it.

We went from a penalized team to a non-penalized team in the second half. Hard to play great defense when you give up 15-yard plays.

Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: I don't think we were sloppy. I think there's a lot of close calls. I have to see the tape. Can't really comment on it. Yeah, I mean, that wasn't like it was, Guys, grab and hold. I think we had one holding call on offense, which was a play that was really supposed to go up the middle. Broke around and ran outside. That one happened. We rebounded from it.

Yeah, I thought we played hard. But, yeah, just some tough calls. I hate to comment on it without seeing the tape. I'll be happy to comment on it on Tuesday.

Q. You talked about two explosives in the whole game. You look at some of the other games, you only gave up two big plays today.
MATT RHULE: We weren't able to really hit the quarterback. We hit him once or twice. They did a nice job keeping some drives alive. We played a lot of base defense today. We didn't pressure, didn't do a ton. We played man. We played bump-n-run.

Feel like we matched up well with this football team. Our linebackers looked from the field like they probably played their best game. Blake Lynch is becoming Blake Lynch. Jordan Williams. Clay kept going down, but he kept getting back up.

I think not giving up the explosive runs, then I guess just the one deep ball. I thought those were big things. Right before the half, I mean, I can't remember everything that happened, so please forgive me, but trying to run the clock out, we got a first down. Let's go to two minute. We throw a pickup.

I think there was just a lot of sense of those kids wanted to win so badly, there's a lot of, I'm going to go try to win the game. When you're young, sometimes that's what you do. That wasn't the message I gave before the game. The message was just do what we do, go play.

I thought at halftime we settled down. Still a ton of things we gave them. Punt the ball, goes 20 yards. Believe me, I told the team in there, every one of us can look back and say, starting with me, Boy, I wish I had done this differently.

The message we're trying to get across is we control how we win or lose, we control how we play. A game like this, everything counts. All the way down to the cramping, right? Can't get into a game like this and not play your best players in the fourth quarter. You can't cramp.

They'll learn from it, rebound. As I told them, they have one more chance to play a top-10 team in West Virginia.

But we're getting better. We're getting tougher. We're starting to figure it out. I told them, I said, That's the good news. Wait till we figure it all the way out. Not many teams are going to be excited to play us because we play kind of a physical brand.

There was a time in the third quarter where we took over the game physically up front, just not able to make the big play. Credit to their defense. Their defense is difficult to defend against. They made big plays.

Q. What did you see from Charlie on the last drive?
MATT RHULE: Yeah, I think Charlie was trying way too hard in the first half. I thought he settled down. I thought the last drive was beautiful. Even the last play. I mean, the last two plays we don't block somebody. I hope I don't have a tone of blaming the kids. I'm so proud of the guys.

Charlie coming off his back edge, he at least gets the ball up in the air. That's kind of who Charlie is. I know he'll continue to battle and work to get better.

... when all is said, we're done
Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: Oh, yeah. I mean, I'm not here to comment on officiating. I was upset about many things at that point. I felt like we had that play. I said, There you go. That's our ball. That's what we needed, right? We needed to step up and make a play.

I think they said -- they said it was confirmed. So I just assumed it was pretty clear. I'm looking at the Jumbotron. I assumed when they looked at it on the replay, it's confirmed, beyond a shadow of a doubt, right? Yeah, so, was it not?

Q. Hard to say.
MATT RHULE: Yeah.

Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: He had what looked like a pretty tough injury. He was in a lot of pain. His mom and dad weren't here, so I feel for them.

I'm always like the kinder, gentler person in the press conference. That kid was in pain. I thought it was very, very professional of Tom to walk out and check on him. I thought it was very, very kind of the Texas crowd. It's a good thing. We're an hour and a half apart, we want to compete against each other but do it the right way. Giving him an ovation was good. Broke his arm in a couple places, so he was in a lot of pain. Our doctors did a great job right away, getting it air casted, fixed up.

Q. What did your team learn today?
MATT RHULE: That we beat ourselves, that we're in control whether we win or lose. It's the same message. I say process. Process means, like, don't beat yourself, just go play. You know what I'm saying? Go out there and play like you belong. Walk on the field and believe that you belong because of our practice, how we prepare.

I thought in many ways we did. But we'll look back and say to ourselves, My goodness, if we didn't do this, this, this, and that. Again, it takes nothing away from them. They're a top-10 team. We watched them play a lot of people. We'll turn the tape on and say we're a pretty good team. We're a work in progress. Anyone can say you're two or three plays away, but you're still away.

I think the biggest thing is that they're getting closer, right? They're getting better. I want the seniors to leave here knowing they helped turn it. It want to the young guys to know it's inevitable. If they keep doing what we ask them to do, we'll be a really good team. We were a really good team today for a lot of the game. Not all the game, but we were an okay at times, but a really good team for a lot of the game.

At halftime, I said, I'm not going to talk to the officials any more, worry about a thing, I'm just going to coach our football team. I've always been the type of guy, I like to talk to the officials a lot so our players don't, they feel like there's someone standing up for them.

I thought in the second half our guys played the game the right way. I hope everybody that's a Baylor fan is proud of the way our team played. But no moral victory now. We're hurting because we feel like we should have won the football game, but we didn't.

Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: I want to make sure I say this right. What you learn from this loss is if we just don't - you list about seven things - we might win the game. If we have to go 77 instead of 97. If we don't have to burn a timeout earlier. All those things.

Like the drive before, man, we're running down the sideline, we have a chance to make a big play. Just kind of don't come up with it.

All those things lead to losing. So what I've been trying to tell our team is, It's not these external things, it's what we do. When we handle what we do, when we handle our part of it, we'll have a chance to win every game we play. If we don't, we'll have a chance to lose every game we play. That control over our destiny is an important part of it. That's all I want them to learn.

As I told a lot of them, It's okay that this hurts now. It's okay to let this hurt tonight. I don't want to turn on Instagram and see guys having a great time tonight. If they choose to, that's their business. First time since I've been here, I saw tears in guys' eyes. I saw older guys telling people they were hurting. That's a step in the right direction.

I know we're always try to take the passion out of the game. This is a game of passion. I saw our guys play with passion, and so did they, so did they.

It was a good college football game.

Q. (No microphone.)
MATT RHULE: Well, taking those games out of it, I mean, I think any time you have a fourth quarter shutout, I think you have a chance to win the game. Not even that, but to have a third quarter shutout. Play good red zone defense, hold guys to field goals, get enough of a rush that maybe we affected it in some way.

I thought those pieces of it on defense were important. Any time you have a second half shutout. If you look at our defense, it was this one little cluster of time and space. Making the pick, making the play on the ball in... when all is said, we're done®
the end zone. A lot of our young DBs took a step today. We'll take another step here moving forward.