

December 2, 2006



**Oklahoma Sooners 21
Nebraska Cornhuskers 7**

A Post-Game Interview With:

**COACH BOB STOOPS,
PAUL THOMPSON, MALCOLM
KELLY, RUFUS ALEXANDER, C.J.
AH YOU**

MODERATOR: Coach Stoops arrived. Would you like to make an opening comment? First of all, congratulations on winning the championship.

COACH STOOPS: Thank you. Yes, I guess just it's fun to be in an exciting game, you know, again, with, you know, the championship implications with a great rival in Nebraska.

My compliments again to Coach Callahan and the team. We fought well. They played well. Everybody had their moments at different times. Fortunately we made some good plays to start the game. We made some good turnovers defensively, and the huge drive coming off our own 1-yard line. Paul was sensational throughout that drive and just played great, great defense the entire night.

Starting the third quarter, I don't know how many times we had possessions with great field position. We were able to come up with stops. We feel fortunate and blessed to work with players like Malcolm. The guys are a group of selfless players, very much of a team. They just pulled together the entire year and never made excuses. We had plenty of excuses, too, if we chose to grab onto them. Nobody ever did, and they just kept working through the year.

And the assistant coaches, again, too, deserve a great deal of credit because managing

the different personnel changes throughout the year they've done it in a great, great way. Just fortunate to work with all of these people.

Q. After the 35-yard pass aggression on the third down off the 1-yard line, did you tell Kevin keep it going, keep rolling?

COACH STOOPS: I don't have to tell Kevin. Everyone makes an issue. The way they were trying to defend us in the past, their opportunities were there. And we were going to keep taking advantage of it.

I don't tell Kevin what to do. Occasionally he'll ask me my opinion in certain situations when he wants my opinion. And so but I am listening all the time. And he did an excellent job.

Q. How big was that to just drive right down the field?

COACH STOOPS: Huge. When you get that big one, on third and 10 from your own -- or third and 14 from your own 1-yard line that's pretty big. I don't know if that's exactly right, but it was a big play.

Q. Bob, you mentioned that your defense kept coming up with stops. Talk about the resiliency of your defense tonight. The big plays they were able to come up with the interception and the sacks.

COACH STOOPS: Awesome, maybe one of our best defensive games. We gave up a couple of plays but, again, compliments to Nebraska. They're a good football team. They're going to do that, but, boy, did we come up with a lot of plays and turnovers and stops when we really had to have them. I thought the secondary, I thought the coverage was just outstanding, and they came up with interceptions, pressure was there. Rushing the ball outside of a few plays, we really, you know, I think a few early and then we settled in and really defended the run which we felt was the biggest part of the game and played it well.

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Q. Coach and Malcolm, talk about that unbelievable touchdown grab where you were able to put the one foot inbounds.

MALCOLM KELLY: Paul just put it in the right spot. He was playing a little out. I knew he was going to throw it out there, and he put it over where I could get it. I really didn't know if I stayed in. I thought he pushed me out, but it just so happened I got one foot down.

COACH STOOPS: On the play, Paul threw a great ball. Malcolm is a big target and he can go up for the ball and Paul knows that, and he put it in a great spot. And again, his ability to be able to get a foot down and make a big play.

Q. Coach, did you go into the game with the mentality that you would pass as much as you did or did that kind of develop as the game progressed?

COACH STOOPS: No, we felt we went in ready to throw the ball a good amount and we felt the way they were trying to defend us that it would be there and we would have to be able to work it, throwing the football more. And so it was about according to plan.

Q. Bob, how do you feel about that guy to your immediate left and his game and the season?

COACH STOOPS: He's the best. He's what you want. If you can go out and recruit guys like him every single day, you would. His character, his toughness, his attitude, his leadership. He's in that huddle and Malcolm will probably grin with a bunch of young guys that they all look to him, and he's been kind of like their pops. Is that right, Malcolm?

(Laughter).

COACH STOOPS: But the best way to say it, he's been a great influence on all of those young guys in the huddle.

Q. Bob, Paul, and Malcolm, all three, do you feel like that 99-yard drive was the biggest play of the game?

PAUL THOMPSON: That was definitely real big. Being in the situation we were in in the second half, we weren't really moving the ball well. The defense was doing a great job of getting -- they were getting the ball 50-yard plus 40-yard coming in. Defense did a great job holding them

every time. So we weren't having as much success running the ball, getting anything rolling.

So Jermaine was able to make a good corner route cut in. I laid it out there for him and that kind of got it rolling. We just kept rolling from there. That was a big momentum I think in changing the game.

MALCOLM KELLY: I'd have to say the same thing. Just the way the way things were going for us the second half. We came in the second half and Coach Stoops told us to execute better. We came out the second half, we weren't executing. Coach just called a good play. Jermaine got open. He's a freak out there, you know what I'm saying, if anybody can see him. It was just -- it was just a good play called. PT put it out there and it was a spark to the rest of the half.

Q. How do you feel about that drive? Do you feel like that was a big?

COACH STOOPS: Best drive of the year, without question. It was huge. And just a lot of great plays. I thought Paul threw some great balls on that whole series and we executed in a great way and punched it in. It was a big blow to them.

Q. Paul, at the beginning of the season, you guys were dropping in the polls after wins because of what people thought when you moved into the starting spot. Can you talk about how that made you feel then and now how you feel now after all that's happened? Where you are now?

PAUL THOMPSON: I didn't focus on it too much. I knew people -- you can sense doubters. People were talking about "I'm getting rid of my season tickets." It was kind of a down feeling amongst the people in the house side. But within the program, within this organization, we knew what we had. We knew we would be successful this year.

I felt comfortable with the position, knew I could lead this team and was able to do that. So since the beginning, within this program, within this organization, we never doubted ourselves. We never felt that we were one step behind, even with all the injuries we've had, the people we've lost.

So this has just been -- it's been a crazy year. And just the dedication, the commitment all these players have is something I have never seen before.

Q. Do you get a certain satisfaction with where you are now compared to -- you know, showing people that you did what you thought you could do and they didn't think you could?

PAUL THOMPSON: Maybe a little bit, but that's not what it's about. It's about this team. I wouldn't care -- I don't really care what people think on the outside. It's about this team. The joy we have when we're in this locker room. Cheering with each other.

People have doubted us all year. And week in, week out, we're in the locker room dancing and having fun. We're not worried about what anyone else has to say.

Q. Rufus and C.J., you guys played a very good offense tonight. Talk about just the ability to tackle in space and how that many times, you know, even when you put pressure on, you're able to make a play just in a one-on-one situation, both of you, where you came up with a big play to stop a drive or even come up with a turnover.

RUFUS ALEXANDER: I mean, Nebraska has great skilled players. Zac Taylor, he made a lot of things happen out there for the team. We knew going into the game that we had, you know, eliminate our missed tackles and we had a few out there that we've got to get better on. We made a few mistakes out there.

But we focused in and we fought an uphill battle all game long, and we just came out with the victory. That's all that really matters.

C.J. AH YOU: We just knew we had to pressure them all game. For him just to sit back there, he could easily pick our defense apart. So we took -- made sure that we got a lot of pressure on him, made sure he wasn't comfortable back there. And everyone did a real good job today.

Q. For Bob and a couple of the players, can you talk about playing Boise State in the Fiesta Bowl next?

COACH STOOPS: That would be great. I've been lucky and fortunate to be in a lot of Bowls and all the BCS Bowls but the Fiesta Bowl. So as a coach, I haven't been in it or as a player.

So I talked about that with my wife Carol here this week, and so I thought that would be pretty special to win the Big 12 Championship and play in the one I haven't been fortunate enough to be in. And I know John Junker and the people with

the Tostitas Fiesta board, they're some of the best. They're classy as they come. So I'm sure it will be a great trip.

We're excited to play Boise. And are they already in? I haven't paid attention. It tells you where my mind is. If that's the case, then that's great. So it's a great bowl and we're looking forward to it.

RUFUS ALEXANDER: I haven't played in it either. I've played in all of them except that one.

PAUL THOMPSON: All the seniors except for C.J. because he transferred. But everyone else we've been part of every other BCS bowl. That's what I thought about, this would be the only one I haven't been to out of five years, four BCS games. So that's real big. And just a testament to this coaching staff and to this organization.

MALCOLM KELLY: And I haven't been to either one. Real exciting for me.

Q. Bob, how good is this team? It seems more super-competitive and dominant than some of your previous teams.

COACH STOOPS: That's fair to say. Super-competitive. Resilient. Just has a great will and determination to them, all of those. And right, maybe we're not in a position where we're bawling people out by 30. That's okay. There's a lot of different ways to win.

I think this team has found that. We trust our defense in tight situations. Our offense comes up with plays when we have to. Our kicking game's been solid the whole year. So I think you would say that we're in a good way and I would agree with that. Just incredibly competitive.

Q. For Coach and any of the players who want to address this. With what happened to USC today, did the thoughts of what happened to you guys on September 16th creep in at all and what might have been for you guys?

COACH STOOPS: They didn't even know they lost. UCLA beat them.

RUFUS ALEXANDER: I didn't know.

COACH STOOPS: So I'll answer. You know what? We can't do anything about it.

For us to sit here and make an issue of it is not going to come off the right way. So you guys call it what you want and we're going to get ourselves ready to play the next game and we'll have some great bowl practices. We'll work our

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young players and keep developing them and look forward to a challenge in the Fiesta Bowl and enjoying the Fiesta Bowl.

MODERATOR: Best of luck, Coach.

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