



2014 Russell Athletic Bowl

Clemson 40, Oklahoma 6

Dec. 29, 2014

Orlando, Florida

Oklahoma Postgame Quotes Head coach Bob Stoops

THE MODERATOR: We will go ahead and get started and open it up for Q&A for Coach Stoops.

STOOPS: I'll start. And just, again, congratulations to Clemson, Coach Swinney, the staff, team, played an excellent football game today. They really executed well against us. I'm really disappointed in how we played. You know, just the number of turnovers were so big. And then we finally make a play, get a turnover. We feel we got a touchdown and we're off sides. A few plays later, they score. There's another 14-point swing, you know, so start the game off with our veteran guys miss a tackle in the open field. The guys out the gate, then, for a touchdown. You know, those are -- we've got to make those plays if you're going to have a chance in these kinds of games and we didn't make them. So, again, I credit Clemson for that. They really played a good football. Offensively, our inability to throw the football -- You can't play one-handed. I thought overall we did a really nice job of running the football, but lack of execution in the passing game was a major factor as well. So, you know, they're really good on defense. Brent's done a great job with them and their guys made a lot of good plays.

THE MODERATOR: Right in the front.

Q. Bob, with the three and out -- It was a real quick three and out, and then they go, like you said, missed two tackles and its off to the races. How prepared were you guys to play this game?

STOOPS: I have no issue with how we practiced. We didn't have a guy late for a curfew. We didn't have a guy late for a meeting. We were at practice every day, the way we have. The same formula that worked really well didn't work this time, and that's the bottom line.

Q. The team a year ago got out really fast on you as well. You guys were able to rebound and regroup. That didn't happen tonight.

STOOPS: Well, again, we had our chances. You hope you had a spark there when Tapper was running for a touchdown. And then you're deflated. It's taken away. And then a few plays later we miss a tackle out on the perimeter again and the guy goes for a touchdown. So in the end, we had our shots and we weren't able to come up with the play to make it happen.

Q. Is there anything for you or for the fans of this program or the administrators, is there anything to feel good about in 2014?

STOOPS: About this season? You know, nothing much other than the 8 wins. When I first took the job, all anybody wanted to tell me was just beat Texas. Well, that doesn't fly. I knew it didn't then and it still doesn't. So, yeah, this was very disappointing and especially the way it finished.

Q. Coach, it just seemed like there wasn't much effort. I realize you're talking about mistakes, but coming off the field at halftime, the energy on the sidelines, it didn't appear to us. It seems like you guys sense that as a team and as coaches.

STOOPS: You know when you get energy? Not when you're down 27-0. Usually your energy comes when you're having success, you know. It's hard to have a ton of energy when the number of plays that I just talked about go against you or you don't make. You know, it doesn't make you real excited. And that's been the case. I've been in this a long time. It's been that way forever.

Q. Bob, talk about -- Shepard really never was a factor tonight. He really hasn't been. How big of a factor was that when you throw the ball coming down the stretch?

STOOPS: Well, he's hurt. I mean, it hurt us. I mean, he's a guy that, you know, you saw for the first six games or whatever he played. He made big plays and was over a hundred yards each game. When you remove that, that's tough when you need such a dynamic player that way. It changes you. So, you know, it hasn't helped.

Q. (Inaudible.)

STOOPS: He was there but not quite, you know -- he's not full speed to where he usually is.

Q. Where can you go from here, what do you do -- (inaudible.) Last two games -- (inaudible.)

STOOPS: Well, we've got to keep recruiting. We've got to keep developing the players we have. We've got to analyze what we're doing as coaches. So all of us need to improve. I need to do a better job, first and foremost, at the head of the program, and coaches after me and players after that. We all have to do a better job in what we're doing.

Q. (Inaudible) do you have a knee-jerk reaction and make all kinds of decisions right now and angry with what happened?

STOOPS: I'm not going to discuss any of that. I'm pretty good at not throwing any knee-jerk reactions. And, you know, when you look at our track record for 16 years, I think we're the only team in the country that's had eight or more wins the last 16 years, so we've had a few championships and we've done it the right way and I'll take stock of everything and continue to evaluate what we're doing.

Q. Coach, you had mentioned that -- (inaudible.)

STOOPS: Well, I mean, they ran the ball 42 times for 68 yards. That's a lot of -- that's pretty good tackling. We had -- the two big plays that show up on the perimeter were the two touchdown plays. You know, they talked about the opening play of the game and then the play after, you know, Tapper's interception that was nullified. We missed a tackle out on the edge. Those two hurt us. A lot of what they did, tackling and running the football, we did really well.

Q. 36 points to USC, 20 to West Virginia, 28 to Texas A&M, 34 tonight. These are bowl games. These are the biggest blowout losses in Oklahoma history in bowl games. What are you guys doing wrong in bowl games that these things happen and they spiral out of control?

STOOPS: Well, give me the statistics and I'll show you the other ones that were won. So don't talk about the Sugar Bowl a year ago. We had the same type of problems. So it worked then and it's worked in a lot of other bowl games. You named the ones we lost. Name the ones we won, also.

Q. I'm talking about historical losses.

STOOPS: Well, I just got some historical wins, too, count, in bowl wins. Yeah. That's what I thought. Yeah. There's several.

Q. (Inaudible.)

STOOPS: Say that again.

Q. (Inaudible.)

STOOPS: Yeah. We -- you know, they were executing better than we were getting to our blocks, you know. So, you know, a few of them, you know, in some cases worked but some of our tunnel inside screens, they played them really well a lot of times.

Q. A lot of times about your quarterbacks, you're first to say that it's not all on them. In this case tonight, was Trevor having a bad game? Were other people not executing? What was the problem there?

STOOPS: Well, again, I'm not going to single people out. I think it's always fair to say they all have a little bit of a hand in it. Trevor could have been better. Receivers could have been better. Earlier they got us on protection but earlier we were better protecting them.

Q. Bob, it was an experience for a lot of receivers with injuries that didn't turn your way. Is there a chance that you lost some of the guys along the way and emotions set in and it was really hard to keep their attention and keep playing at the level you needed them to keep playing against Clemson?

STOOPS: Again, I don't feel that. But, you know, we didn't play very well, so maybe there's some of that. But I didn't sense that. And I'm not sitting here -- like I said, we practiced hard, well. Guys, again, were in meetings when they were supposed to be. So I don't -- again, I don't -- I can't speak for every one of them. You know, that could possibly have happened.

Q. (Inaudible.) a year ago (inaudible) where do you want to go -- (inaudible.)

STOOPS: I think it's fair to say it is open. I mean, you know, with the other guys that we have coming in and our inconsistency overall, that it has to be. But, you know, every position is open come springtime. If a guy hasn't -- you know, it's one thing if a guy is a first-team All American. You know, he's going to be hard to price. So I'm not sitting here and creating a problem with it but, of course, there will be competition for it.

Q. Down the stretch when it's clear things got away from him, what's your emotion? After the Baylor game, someone said it's embarrassing, and you sort of defiantly said it's not embarrassing when you try hard and play hard. Is that still the way you feel?

STOOPS: Obviously, I'm not going to give you headline words. That's not what I'm going to do. Obviously, it doesn't feel good. And it isn't something we're used to, so you can use the words. I don't need to.

Q. We talk about consistency. But since 2010, not many championships of any type.

STOOPS: That's fair to say. Had some in 2012 and the other ones are what they are. So am I content with it? No, not at all.

Q. (Inaudible.)

STOOPS: I've always been that guy.

THE MODERATOR: Two more questions for Coach Stoops.

Q. Yeah. Bob, ever since Sterling's been hurt, you guys have had a lot of trouble with receivers getting open for passes. Can you diagnose what the problem has been with the receiver for you this year?

STOOPS: I think you just said it, so -- you're watching it the same as I am.

Q. You've had a lot of talented guys for years.

STOOPS: Well, again, this hasn't been a strong position for us right now.

Q. Yeah. Coach, coach relationships are pretty special. Do you feel like Trevor's the kind of guy who worries too much about it or turns it around?

STOOPS: He'll take it personally and he's a team guy and he knows a lot is on his shoulders, so I'm sure it'll be hard on him. But he'll move past it.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you for your time, Coach.