

Baylor University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 23 2017
Waco, Texas

Lincoln Riley Press Conference

LINCOLN RILEY: Quite a ballgame tonight. We knew coming in this was going to be a good atmosphere. First conference game. Coach Rhule is doing a tremendous job. Give them a lot of credit tonight. Thought their kids played really, really well. We're very excited about the win. That was probably the biggest message to our guys in the locker room. Winning is hard. You can't -- you can't take it for granted, and we're damn sure not too good to appreciate it.

So we've got to do a lot of things better. We've got to coach better. We've got to play better on all three sides of the ball. We had some critical mistakes tonight that let that game get close. So we've got to do a lot better. But we will. It's game four. We've got a lot of room for improvement. And going into this bye week, hopefully we can get a couple guys back healthy. Make strides on all three sides of the ball, and be ready to play when we get back home against Iowa State.

Q. You were heavy with the run game in the fourth quarter, especially with Trey coming out, what was the key to getting that thing going and specifically Trey?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, Trey ran well. I didn't do a good job, especially, we hit a lot of big plays in the first quarter. I didn't do a very good job in the second quarter. I got a little impatient. Didn't put our guys in a great position defensively, and it took me too long to catch up. So I've got to do better. We ran it well in the second half. We moved them up front, running through a lot of tackles. We really stopped ourselves in the second half. We fumbled on the Marquise Brown first-down catch, and every other drive was stopped by penalties. Had a chance, obviously, to ice it. If we don't get that last hold, the game's basically over.

So we moved it well, but still way too many penalties and got to do a better job.

Q. You get behind and your team responded with enough points to win the game. Talk about that



point right there and what your team showed you?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, you've got to have perseverance. You can't expect that every one is going to be a blowout. You're going to have tight games like that. This is a good conference, a good league, and a good opponent. I've told people all week. Lot of guys back. They're getting better and better. This is going to be a tough game.

So you've got to hang in there. You've got to keep swinging. Our guys did that and made enough plays to win.

Q. Was it your plan coming in to use Sermon at all in the fourth quarter?

LINCOLN RILEY: No, just got the flow of the game.

Q. Magazine in your gut told you to go with him?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, we felt like it was time to turn him loose.

Q. You had 21 points on seven plays to start the game. Is that something that can kind of lead you into a sense of you're playing better than you maybe really are?

LINCOLN RILEY: Oh, it could. If it does, we're not the team that we want to be.

Q. When you guys gave up 463 passing yards, what was Baylor doing differently than some of the other teams this season?

LINCOLN RILEY: They threw and caught the ball well. We were just, our pass defense was just inconsistent the whole night. Sometimes it was the rush not getting there. Couple busted coverages by the backers. Couple plays in the secondary were really, I thought at times, were trying too hard to make a play and coming out of their assignment.

Give the Baylor guys credit. The guy made unreal throws. They made some incredible catches. So we've got to play better there.

Q. Baker took two really, not illegal, but just big hits. Did that impact you at any point in play calling?

LINCOLN RILEY: No, no.

Q. Lincoln, how far are you all away from being a

great team?

LINCOLN RILEY: I don't know how you define it. We've still got a ways to go. We're still inconsistent. Our trust level right now as far as doing our job, we've got good intentions, but we veer off on our own too much right now. So we've got to do a better job of that.

I think we're all still learning about our team too. Playing a lot of new guys, lot of different guys and coaching-wise trying to do a great job of putting them in the best position to make plays. So we're a work in progress. We said after Ohio State everybody's going to want to anoint us. We've got a long ways to go. But we've shown the ability around here to improve a lot as seasons go on, and we're confident we're going to do that again.

Q. (Inaudible)?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah.

Q. Because it was almost a disaster?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, it was a disaster. I'll go ahead and say it was. Yeah, we blocked it up perfect. We blocked it well on the perimeter. When you go 99, 11 guys out there did a pretty good job.

Q. As a play caller, do you have to stop at times and say I just have to take what they give me?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. You can get too aggressive. I've certainly been guilty of it many times in my career. So, you know, just there is a feel. We're going to be aggressive, but it is a feel. You don't hit all those big plays without not being aggressive too. So we've got to find balance and I have to do a better job of that.

Q. Is being a coach and a play caller, sometimes it cross-references a play caller, and you want to be aggressive.

LINCOLN RILEY: No, because as a play caller, I think about all three sides of the ball. I always have. Certainly that was something I learned here from Bob the last two years, that I can't just call it trying to score points and trying to move the ball all the time. So I take that into account. That doesn't feel different now because I've done that the last two years.

Q. You have 3rd and 8, Baylor called the timeout before the next snap, and you go 34 yards, what did you see? That seemed like an unlikely call?

LINCOLN RILEY: We just don't care a lot about what is unlikely or status quo. If we call it, it's because we thought it was the best call we could make.

Q. Baker, the secondary obviously had some issues on pass coverage in general. But could the front seven guys, did they play pretty thick out**there?**

LINCOLN RILEY: Talking about our defensive front?

Q. Your defensive front.

LINCOLN RILEY: No, yeah, we did a great job on the run game. We got them in the situation we wanted to get them to in the pass game, and we just didn't execute. So there's a balance there between defending a run and still being able to rush the passer and effect that guy. We got to them a few times. Obviously had the huge one at the end, but that's something we've got to do better at.

It's not just the DBs or linebackers. Playing great team defense takes all of them.

Q. You talked about how the play calling got away from you in the second. How did it get back?

LINCOLN RILEY: Oh, just having a chance to clear my mind and think about it, talk to our coaches, make adjustments. We've all done this together here for a long time. So we had some adjustments made. We felt like we had a decent beat going into halftime. We felt, even though we didn't score the first two drives, I think we had a hold on the first drive and then we fumbled on the second drive. But we knew those were self-inflicted. We felt like we were in a good spot at that time.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, in football, everybody has their assignments. It's 11-man football. If one guy veers off and tries to do his own thing, it could wreck the whole deal. When we go back and watch this tape, I can think of a lot of examples. I'm not going to call individual players out, but there are several examples, whether it be coverage, both sides of the ball where we want to make a play so bad that we want to get out of our lane to do it.

It's good we want to make plays and step up, but we've got to do it in the context of coaching them and what we're doing schemewise.

Q. So many people talk about losing Samaje and Joe coming into this year, but you won a lot of games the last couple years with those guys. How satisfying is that to know that you can put new backs out there and run the ball like that?

LINCOLN RILEY: I wouldn't say satisfying. We felt confident in the guys that we've recruited and the guys that we've developed here. We're very confident in the front that we have. So I'm excited about their growth, and I think we're getting better there. I think they're getting more in sync with what we're doing up front.

Q. (Inaudible)?

LINCOLN RILEY: I don't think so. I think we have in a lot of areas, but we've still got to get a lot better. Absolutely. Each week is its own new challenge. Just because you do this against this team one game, doesn't mean it's going to be like that the next week. There are new challenges every single week. So I think we're improving, but we still clearly have a lot to do better.

Q. With all these young guys, how much more do you trust (Inaudible)?

LINCOLN RILEY: We're getting there. We're getting there. And I think we've got more right now than maybe we've had in the past just across the board. So we're starting. Our guys are stepping up that make plays in critical games here. We've had two big road victories, so I think we're growing there and we've got some nice depth going into this stretch of Big 12 play.

Q. Is Jordan okay?

LINCOLN RILEY: We'll have to see. We're not sure yet.

Q. Are you concerned with your secondary?

LINCOLN RILEY: No, I'm not concerned. We've got to play better. We've got to play better around them. Again, it's 11-man football. So I think a lot of the things are easily correctible. But we've got to go back to work in the off week.

Q. There was a point in the game Baker got an un-Sportsmanlike, the camera came to you on the sideline and you looked to be calm. You're not ripping his head off or anything, and he goes out and throws a touchdown pass the very next play. What goes through your mind when you're the coach that he can do something to infuriate you, but he does something good in the game?

LINCOLN RILEY: Yeah, it's not our first rodeo together. I wasn't happy with him, and I made that pretty clear. Again, for me, it's not about what it looks like on TV or if everybody loves it in the stands when a coach is ripping a guy and just ripping him. My whole deal is just what's going to help us on the next play.

I'll get him later. Trust me. But it's what's going to help us on the next play. Is me tearing him up right there going to help him? My ego's not too big for that.

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Baker Mayfield Press Conference

Q. Baker, this game had so many ebbs and flows to it, you come out and you end up winning the game, you're running the ball a bunch in the second half. Talk about how crazy this game was?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Up-and-down for us offensively. Shot ourselves in the foot too much. Wasn't my best game, but, you know, I don't think any of the guys would say the same for the first half. We established the line of scrimmage in the second half and we were able to run the ball well, so I didn't even need to throw. That's good for me.

But we need to play like that, physical like that from the git-go. And I think once we settled in and realized that you can't take anybody lightly, I think we would have played better.

Q. You start out three touchdowns on seven plays. How much did that maybe give the offense maybe a false sense of success early?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I think it was a good reality check for us. We say it all the time around here, all gas, no brakes. So you can never let your foot off the pedal, especially playing a team like that because they can score in a second. Doesn't matter their record or anything. It's still a high-powered offense that Baylor's had for a while. So you can never take your foot off the gas.

So I think for us it's just about, it doesn't matter who we're playing, what the score is, down and distance, you've got to go do your job at a high level. So I would say that's the most disappointing thing for us today, tonight, was not being consistent enough.

Q. Can you talk about the sequence with the un-sportsmanlike conduct foul and the very next play throwing the touchdown?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I just can't get caught up in the hoopla. I'm an emotional player, but there's got to be a line drawn, so that's on me, especially as the team captain. But it's all about how you respond. I'd say it's the same thing about how we responded after that 99-



yard touchdown from Abdul, we responded after that. It's about how you respond. Taking the momentum and take it away from them.

Q. Talk about that play, that's wide open. That was a pretty neat thing?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, great game plan. We saw something that we liked, and just well-executed. Ran the route right, and executed well on the outside, and up front great protection. So it allowed me to just put it out there for him and he made the rest easy.

Q. Trey comes into this game and takes complete control in that quarter. How big was Trey coming in for you guys?

BAKER MAYFIELD: He's a fantastic player. Just the way physically he is, not just how special he is, but especially at the point in the game where he came in and took over. At that point in time you wear a defense down in the throwing game and we had been doing that, but for him to come in fresh legs and break a lot of tackles and make plays. We blocked well, but he also was breaking a lot of tackles, and that's something that he's so special. It takes a lot more than just one guy to run him down.

Q. Baker, what point did you realize guys like Trey and CeeDee were people you could trust to make plays when you needed them to?

BAKER MAYFIELD: I think just from when they got on to campus. So Trey was here a little earlier. He graduated early, so we got to see him, how he worked out and how he practiced and carried himself. So I think just being able to count on him, like you said, it comes when you're really putting in work and it sucks during the off-season, you see what you're made of.

So with CeeDee, when he first stepped on the campus, it was during the workouts and also with just the players. The voluntary, seven on seven stuff, him making plays just routinely. So you see it as guys, and you gain respect for him. So when the lights come on, you just expect it to be the same thing.

Q. I don't know if you checked the boundary route, the wheel route that you completed after your penalty. But if you didn't, if you got the call in, was that one of those that you felt really good about and loved having it come up right after the

penalty?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, you know. Obviously, like I said, I can't have that happen on my part. We were at 1st and 25, so it was a call from the sideline, but we had run it during the week and we were very confident in it. So just really just trusted in our guys to just do their job on that one. Obviously we had the look we wanted and executed well.

Q. Was that by design why Sermon didn't do that in the fourth quarter, and if so, why?

BAKER MAYFIELD: I'm not doing the depth chart for those guys. I think we have four guys that are more than capable enough of playing here. I just think it's, you know, whoever is hot handling the ball. So I think it's frustrating for those guys whoever's not playing, but at the same time those guys are all, like I said, capable. So when they get in there, they take over.

I think it was good for Trey to take advantage of his time so he shows the type of guy he is and he's going to come in and be a game changer.

Q. Was it physicality though? I mean, Abdul Adams was hot in the third quarter, and then the fourth quarter starts and Baylor's tired in the fourth quarter and can't seem to tackle Trey Sermon?

BAKER MAYFIELD: Yeah, I think after watching how he ran the ball his first drive in, I think it was something that we wanted to stay with. Knowing that they were going to load the box late in the game and try to stop the run game, I think he's the type of guy that has success no matter how many guys they put in the box just because he breaks a lot of tackles.

Q. You were asked so much about replacing Joe and Samaje, were there times tonight that you felt like you had their back the way you guys are running the ball?

BAKER MAYFIELD: I wouldn't say I felt like I had them back. A lot of it is just the combination of our O-line, the play calls, and the guys we have. Yeah, Joe and Samaje are two talented and special guys, but the guys we have in the back field, they're not slouchy either. They're special guys. No, not everybody knows who they are and they haven't had the same amount of reps as Joe and Samaje did, but those guys are talented too. That's why they're at the University of Oklahoma.

Q. Does this bye week come at the right time for this program?

BAKER MAYFIELD: It does. And the bye week, not just where it is in the schedule before we go on a conference run, but after a game like that, like I said earlier, eye opening for us. Got to be more consistent. Never take anybody lightly, and we've got to, no matter what the score is or who we're playing, just keep

pushing.

Q. You haven't been behind much this season, and you get behind in this game. You guys respond favorably. Talk about that point in the game.

BAKER MAYFIELD: That's just the mentality we have. I think we've instilled that throughout the tough workouts that Schmidty puts us through. And just talking about we've been in situations where we've been behind before. You've got to stay positive and do your job. Trust in the plan and the plays that are called. If you go out there and execute it, good things will happen. You just keep firing.

Q. It was talked about on the broadcast tonight the words that were exchanged with you and Baylor pregame. When you challenge guys like that, is there a certain amount of respect you have for a team after a game like this? They played you guys tougher than anybody thought that they would.

BAKER MAYFIELD: Absolutely. You get caught up in the hoopla of their record 0-3 coming into this game, but you don't realize that some teams and guys when they get their backs up against the wall, that's when they play their best. I think that's the same thing for us.

You know, I'd compare it to how we went into Ohio State week. Everybody was picking them and nobody really cared about us. It's that same feeling.

You've got to expect that. That's why I said we've got to be consistent, come in, and not take anybody lightly.