Matt Rhule Press Conference

MATT RHULE: Obviously, tremendously disappointed tonight in the result, and a lot of credit to Coach Wilson and his team. I thought his quarterback was outstanding, running the football. He’s their second leading rusher, threw the ball well. They made the plays we weren’t able to make.

I thought there were some bright spots on our end. I thought we played with a lot more passion and energy on defense. I thought the defense got a lot better as the game went on. Some guys stepped up and made some plays. And just offensively, we were not able to make any of the plays we needed to make to have a chance to win the game.

I thought they showed tremendous resolve by the defensive kids just to even give us a chance at the end to go down and even have a chance to win. Disappointed we couldn’t get a first down.

Obviously, like anything else, we have a lot of work to do. We need to become a good football team. Before you can think about winning, you have to play winning football. To have to call time-outs because of substitution issues, to have as many penalties as we did -- I think we had the ball in the red zone a couple of times and couldn’t score. That’s just not winning football.

That’s always back on me, and we’ll get it corrected. We wanted to make sure we were a team with a lot more energy tonight than we were last week. I thought we saw that in some areas. But went from being a team with six penalties to getting back to be ten. That was one of our goals was not to be a highly penalized team. I know you guys have a ton of questions. There’s a lot we have to do. I don’t think anyone played really well tonight, and we’ll get back to work.

Q. Matt, does your team believe in Anu Solomon?
MATT RHULE: You know, I don’t know that. I went over and challenged him at one point during the game, and they were rallied around him. I think so. I think the way that they fight for him and practice for him, I think we got -- I think it’s the second week in a row that our size on the offensive line shows up a little bit when it matters.

But I think all of us had to have played better in that game. We certainly didn’t help out Anu, and I don’t know that Anu played a great game either.

Q. Did you ever think about making a change at quarterback? Unlike last week when he played better, this was like watching grass grow. This just seemed like trouble from the beginning.
MATT RHULE: I have a lot of confidence in Zach. So the thought at a lot of positions crossed my mind tonight about getting other people in. But that wasn’t the time or place, and we’ll go back and watch the tape and see what we see.

I look at things as sort of an overall picture. I wasn’t pleased with that. We need to start catching the football better, and we need to protect. I mean, to take sacks in two minutes at the end of the game -- we’re in gap protections, seven-man protections. We’re literally like overprotecting and still not able to protect our quarterback.

That’s one of the things I was afraid we’re going to have to battle with, and we’d better get a lot better quickly as we start to face better teams down the stretch.

Q. They had the ball for 38 minutes. How big was that?
MATT RHULE: Well, I think that’s the kind of team they are. They’re a kind of ground and pound physical team. Some defensive penalties hurt us at times when I thought we were going to stop and get off the field. A key defensive penalty here or there was not good at extending drives. The key was the drive at the end of the first half. They went, what, six, seven minutes and kind of methodically made a ton of plays.

But I thought we got better in the fourth quarter. I thought we got better in the second half. I thought guys got stronger as the game went on. You could see the light going on for a couple of guys. Clay Johnston is a guy who stood out to me. Eric Ogor, a guy that got in the game and had a sack. Blake Lynch, Harrison
enough, if we’re not good enough, so be it. We will be. We’re not going to play bad football. If we’re not big playing 24 freshmen. Bad football is bad football. That’s just bad football. I don’t care if we’re calling time-outs because there’s too many guys on the field. You have ten penalties. You’re not going to win if you’re not executing. You’re not going to win if you’re not doing things they can’t do. So we’ll just keep doing that.

Q. Those third downs have been a problem for you guys. It doesn’t matter the depth or distance, third and short or third and long, teams seem to be successful. What do you do?
MATT RHULE: We look at everything. We challenge the play callers and the guys drawing up the plays, challenge the players. Just really go back and look at everything. We did that last week. We did third down every day this week. I thought we had a really good plan. But, obviously, it wasn’t good enough. I’m not one of those guys who says positive things all the time.

Went for it on fourth and two and thought we had a great play for a touchdown and weren’t able to convert that. So you just go back to work, you know what I’m saying? There’s really nothing you can do other than just keep going back to work until everyone looks and sees what you can do better and challenge everything, why are we doing this? Why are we doing that? Are we asking our kids to do things they can’t do? From there, I think you can make some improvements. So we’ll just keep doing that.

Q. Do you think maybe there’s anything pressing with the team to sort of get back that game from last week and get this one tonight?
MATT RHULE: Well, I will say that I got the sense last week that this was a team that like the minute something bad’s happened, kind of like, oh, here we go again, something bad’s going to happen. So we tried really to correct that this week and have them be a team that -- I told them, if anyone can handle adversity, it’s this group of kids. They’ve been dealing with adversity for a while now. So I wanted them to see adversity as an opportunity. That part of the game, I was pleased with -- their emotional reaction, their ability to sort of stay on task. I was proud of that part of the game.

But you also have to execute. You’re not going to win if you have ten penalties. You’re not going to win if you’re calling time-outs because there’s too many guys on the field. That’s just bad football. I don’t care if we’re playing 24 freshmen. Bad football is bad football. We’re not going to play bad football. If we’re not big enough, if we’re not good enough, so be it. We will be eventually. We’re not going to play bad football. We played too much bad football tonight.

Where does that come from? That comes from -- sometimes from panic. It can come from unfocus, but that was a focused team. They just might be pressing too much.

I told them, we’re going to play one more nonconference game. We’re going to get on the road and stay in a hotel together and go back to work and grind and learn from the tape, and go play a really good Duke team who looks like they’re lights out this year in terms of their offense. And keep getting better and moving forward.

Q. The best plays seem (indiscernible) there’s not a ton of north-south. Was that by design?
MATT RHULE: Well, I think we had a bunch of opportunities where we ran behind, and we just couldn’t quite connect. I think, if you go -- I always look at things in terms of five, six, seven plays. If four, five, six of those plays we catch the football or we throw the ball -- I’m not putting it on any one person, but we had some big plays.

I think a little sense of panic set in in the fourth quarter of, hey, we’ve got to go make a big play. But anything that was running across the field, any time we handed those speed sweeps off, we had good plays. Nothing was good enough tonight. Obviously, I wasn’t good enough. None of us were good enough. So you’ve got to keep grinding.

But, yeah, I have to go back and watch everything and sort of see why things didn’t work, the way that they worked when they didn’t work, and trying to get Platt the ball because we know how special he is. Just connect on one or two of those deep balls in the first half, and it’s a different game.

Q. For someone that preaches physicality, how much did that drive at the end of the first half and the 38 minutes, how much does that wear you?
MATT RHULE: You know, I will say -- I really believe this. Watching on film, I thought our D-line dominated at times. It was really more, because of some of the quarterback runs and all that stuff, we were pressuring, and there were a lot of guys pressuring who were just going where they weren’t supposed to go and just trying to go make a play instead of, a fullback comes at me, I’m supposed to go underneath him, I go underneath him. That’s a level of discipline we haven’t attained yet. Sometimes you don’t attain that until you go through games like this and guys say, okay, Coach, I understand why.

When we lined up, I thought we were way better in
terms of our D-line getting vertical. I think we had a couple sick. I think you saw Micheal Johnson race in the backfield a couple of times. So that was a point of emphasis this week, just being a more physical team.

The 38 minutes, that was more about third downs. It wasn't just, hey, we couldn't stop the run. They had a lot of yards rushing. Please don't mistake me for that. But the runs that they had were the quarterback really, when it came down to lining up and handing the football off.

The thing I don't like, to be completely honest, is when they're dragging us from three, four, five, six, yards, and we're hanging on there. We're not coming in, and we're not striking guys. So that will get better.

I think Tooty brought a physical presence. Davion Hall brought a physical presence. It was nice to have him out there. Henry, until he got cramp up, had a physical presence. I think our secondary will get better and better as the weeks go on.

Q. Did you game plan at all thinking he would run like that?

MATT RHULE: That's what they've done. They were way more in spread out people than they were in weeks past, but we thought that might happen. We had a better feel for this. We tried to take away most of the explosives. Blake Lynch made a big play down the sideline. Really defensively, if you look at it, just defensive penalties hurt us. You had that pass interference that led to that last score. If you can get the ball out just a few more times -- the defense still hasn't gotten a turnover yet. We got one on special teams.

I think we'll start getting more turnovers as we get more and more physical. We run, we strike. I think we'll start getting the ball out a little bit more.

Q. Matt, you talked about Davion. You got several other DBs back, guys that have been out. How much of an impact or lift did those guys make, particularly Davion?

MATT RHULE: Davion, again, was physical in the run game. And went from giving up whatever that was last week, 400 yards passing, to 155, which is a good number. We still had other opportunities, third down conversions where we could have made a play on the ball and we didn't. I think they got better. They'll continue to get better.

Blake Lynch is another week in. Jameson back, played a little bit. He'll get better. Grayland will come back in a couple of weeks. So I think our secondary took a step this week, and they need to take another step this week.

Q. How many more freshmen did you play today?

MATT RHULE: I played Timarcus Davis. I played James Lynch.

Q. Did Rob play?

MATT RHULE: Rob Saulin played. Gavin Holmes played. Gavin Holmes started. I think we started four guys, that was their first start on offense.

Hearing you say that, that's not an excuse. That's not good enough out there. That's just not good enough. If they're just that much better, so be it, but to beat ourselves.

But I do always find the positives as well. I was pleased to see some guys fighting in the fourth quarter, which I didn't feel last week. If we have that, we'll have a good team at some point.

Q. When you were down there -- obviously, you've got to score twice, but when you were down at the 3, did you think about going ahead and scoring the TD?

MATT RHULE: My heart, my gut, my emotions and everything wanted to, but that was the smart football play to kick the field goal. We had two time-outs. They gave us something but throwing the ball away on first down, we get the ball back with 2:30 with a chance to win the game. We didn't win the game, but we had a chance to.

So that to me was a smart play. If I could go back, the fourth and two, I would do it again. I mean, we kind of called a wide delay, and Jason Clements was standing over there within 100 yards with pressure in the quarterback's face and he wasn't able to get it there.

I told the team we were going to be aggressive. We were going to go for it on fourth down. That's the one thing they need to feel from me is we're going to go for it, we're going to try to do different things. But I think the smart play at the end of the game was, at the end of the day, we've had the ball twice at the end of the game with a chance to win or tie the game. As Coach Paterno used to say, you've got to make one more play here, one more play there, and you win those games. We'll find a way to get it done.

Q. Does this team have the mindset of having the proper sense of urgency? You keep finding yourself in identical situations, opportunity, but maybe starting it a little bit early?

MATT RHULE: I think I feel their sense of urgency. I think I feel them almost too urgent at times, just...
pressing. I'm sitting there in the game, and I'm talking to Terence Williams in the game, and he's sitting there like you just got to calm -- like you see some of those older guys, and you know that -- we'll get Terence back here in a couple weeks, and he'll have a different outlook, I think, than a couple of the young kids.

I think they're pressing a little bit. I think they're not expecting something great to happen right now. We've had two dogfights come down to the wire, and we haven't been able to win it. But, shoot, that's football.

They will at some point stand there and be talking about games like this. They'll say, hey, this is where our team was built. I just want it to be -- I don't want to give up on Tooty and Taylor and all these great seniors we have out there fighting. We're going to keep fighting for the older guys. We're going to keep fighting for the seniors. But we are going to learn from these tough, tough heartbreaking losses -- and these are tough, heartbreaking losses. I think we all know that.

I don't know how else you build a team. I just don't want to coach front-runners. Last week we thought it was going to be easy and it wasn't. This week I was just proud we didn't act like front-runners this week. We did have guys -- we had the ball down the 12 yard line on a bad snap, and we get a holding call. So just stop beating ourselves and stop being our own worst enemy. When you're a coach, who do you put that on? You put that on yourself. I have to continue to push those guys forward from that mentality before we can have a ton of success.

Q. Do you beat yourself up? Do you lose any confidence in this process?
MATT RHULE: Not at all. I don't want to make excuses, but like I didn't come here because I thought it was going to be a really easy job. I didn't come here saying to myself, boy, this will be fun. This will be easy. I came here saying, this is going to be epic. This is going to be awesome. This is going to be a process.

You shouldn't have to go out there and play 14 freshmen. I shouldn't be playing a freshmen center, but we are, and I'm proud to do it. I told the kids in there, I love these kids. These kids are warriors. I stand and fight with them. But I really believe God put me here not so things like this didn't happen, I think God put me here because things like this are going to happen. I said, you guys told me you want a staff that wasn't going to quit on you. I won't quit on you. Don't you quit on me, but I won't quit on you.

My process is the same process we won a National Championship at Penn State. My process is the same process I watched with Tom Coughlin. My process will work with these kids. When I say my process, it's just working hard, growing kids up, stop making mistakes. We just aren't doing the process at a high enough level yet, and we will, we will.

You're not going to see any flinching from me because we knew things were going to happen. If you told me before the year Terence and JaxMycal were going to be out, are you serious? But you know what, I love watching Lovett play. And I was proud to see Trestan Ebner out there. And I know there's going to be a day when we're going to walk out there and JaxMycal, Terence, Ebner, Lovett, they're all going to be standing out there, and people will be in trouble. So that's the positive, positive outlook I bring to the team.

We signed up for this, and that's why I have such affection for the seniors with Taylor Young and those guys because they could have just graduated and gone somewhere else, and they chose to stay here and do something really hard and chose to stay here and fight to move Baylor forward.

I'm upset that we're 0-2. You know what, I couldn't be more upset, but I'm proud to walk off the field. And you hear the Baylor fans and them telling the kids, hey, we love you. We believe in you. It's such pride that they have in their team, and these kids are going out there and laying it on the line. I'll do a better job. They'll do a better job. And we'll become a good football team sooner than later.

When we're a good football team, those kids that are crying in the locker room now, they'll be tough to beat because they'll have gone through this process. Champions have to sometimes get kicked so they learn how to get back up. That's why I came here. I came here because I knew it was going to be hard. I knew these kids needed a coach that believed in them, that was going to fight for them. They fought for me tonight, so I'm proud of them, and I'll come back next week and be ready to go.

Q. Sometimes Blake Lynch (indiscernible) could be inexperienced. Without having seen the film, obviously, what tonight at times where he’s improving and also some things he still needs to work on?
MATT RHULE: I think there was one play on the sideline -- the game comes together in terms of people. Had a big play on the ball. Had a couple of comebacks where they pushed them down the field and down the field and came back and caught the ball. But stayed on top of everything, kept them from getting a big play. Went after him on third down, and he got the OPI on their guy, got the pass interference.

I just think it's experience. You're not talking about a guy who played corner in high school and played
receiver and moved back to corner. This is really his first time playing corner. It's just reps, reps. I think Francis is doing an amazing job with them, taking Jordan, who's never started before, Harrison, who's a freshman, and Blake Lynch. I think Blake will get a lot, lot better as we just continue to move forward and bridge that gap until Grayland gets back.
Anu Solomon
Press Conference

Q. Seemed like you guys were getting things going but once you cut across the 50, you got in the red zone, just kind of shot yourselves in the foot? ANU SOLOMON: Yeah, just things wasn’t just going my way.

Q. So what do you think you could have done better then? If you say, it’s all on me, what could you have done better then? ANU SOLOMON: Everything -- to my reads, to my throws downfield. I wasn’t connecting. Receivers were ready to play today. I just wasn’t connecting with them.

Q. Do you still feel confident as a starter? ANU SOLOMON: I felt confident to compete. But it is what it is.

Q. What was your teammates’ reaction to you tonight after the game? ANU SOLOMON: Supportive. Bringing me up. I mean, there is some -- I mean, it is what it is. I know I didn’t step up. I know I didn’t play today. But at the end of the day that’s just on me.

Q. Coach Rhule talked about he’ll never quit on you guys. What does that mean to you guys knowing that you have a head coach that’s going to stick with you guys through thick and thin? ANU SOLOMON: I mean, he’s a man of his word. He’ll never quit on us and we’ll never quit on him.

Q. Were you happy with the way that you guys prepared going into this game? ANU SOLOMON: Of course. I thought we had a great practice. Just things wasn’t going my way.

Q. How do you plan on fixing your way then for Duke? ANU SOLOMON: Getting back in the film room. Stay after practice and continue to work.

Q. Is there any positives you can take away from tonight to kind of tie up loose ends and fix them in practice this week? ANU SOLOMON: Our defense did great.

Q. What was UTSA doing to kind of take away those north/south plays that you all had? ANU SOLOMON: I just felt like they knew what was coming. They just played 10 yards off. (Indiscernible) and make a play.

Q. How do you not let these two tough losses affect you moving forward? What do you take away from them, how do you keep positive and focus on the game ahead instead of the two behind you? ANU SOLOMON: Don’t look back. Just continue to move forward. Grind. Watch film. Just ignore all the outside noise.

Q. What’s the mindset in the locker room right now? ANU SOLOMON: We want to win.

Q. What do you want the fans to know about what you and the guys talk about? ANU SOLOMON: I mean, we want to win as much as the fans want us to win. We are working. We are grinding. And we’re going to continue to fight.

Q. Do you think maybe as an offense y’all got a bit panicked in the second half, and maybe tried to go for the home run play as opposed to maybe a 10- or 12-yarder just to keep the chains going? ANU SOLOMON: Things were there. It’s just I wasn’t connecting at all.

Q. Coach Rhule was talking about the process and how he’s done this process with other teams and they’ve eventually found success. Is it tough to follow through and still believe -- do you find yourself struggling to believe in the process after losses like this? ANU SOLOMON: Not at all. There will always be setbacks and disappointments in the process. You just gotta continue to grind and trust it.
Baylor University
Football Media
Conference
Saturday, September 9 2017
Waco, Texas

Davion Hall
Press Conference

Q. Being back on the field, what was it like for you to be back out there after missing the first game?
DAVION HALL: It meant a lot being able to be back out there with the team and being able to help defensively. Did a lot better than last week but we gotta keep going forward.

Q. Do you think this was a step forward for the defense, just the way they played and did better on getting off on third down too?
DAVION HALL: Yeah, we did a lot better on third down but we've still got a lot of improving to do. And we're just going to keep moving forward, move forward from this game, get ready for Duke.

Q. How is the mood, the mindset; this has got to be tough. You guys aren't used to this?
DAVION HALL: It's part of the game, just gotta keep moving forward, like I said, which we will. Get back in the film room, see where we need to make corrections on and keep moving forward.

Q. Talk about that long drive they had there at the end of the half when you all were throwing the shutout up to then, I think they made five straight third down conversions?
DAVION HALL: I mean, gotta do better communicating. And get a stop. I mean, get the ball out, get more turnovers as a whole on defense.

Q. You have struggled to be able to stay on the field because of various things that have happened. How frustrating has that been for you, and how refreshing even with the loss was it to be back?
DAVION HALL: I mean, it's frustrating not being able to be out there with your brothers and all the work y'all put in. But now I'm back, like I said. We've just gotta keep on moving forward and see what we need to correct on.

Q. How healthy are you now? Are you fully back or are you still dealing with pain?
DAVION HALL: I'm good. I'm good enough.

Q. It's the back, wasn't it?
DAVION HALL: Oh, yeah, and came back and strained my calf trying to come back too early. So I'll be all right.

Q. Did you almost feel like you had to come back even though you still have -- you're not 100 percent because this team needs you and others?
DAVION HALL: I've played banged up since I've been here. So it's not a big deal. As long as I'm able to go, I'm going to go.

Q. What kind of keeps you going?
DAVION HALL: I mean, the brothers that's in that locker room that I'm with, they keep me going. They keep me going. Each and every last one of them.

Q. Coach said he's not going to quit on you guys. I mean, he wants to keep playing with the seniors. Sometimes guys will go with younger guys, but he wants you guys to play. Does that mean something to you?
DAVION HALL: That means a lot. Because with him coming in, I mean we didn't know what to expect. He could have just played all the new guys and just forgot all about us. You know? But I respect what he's doing. And it means a lot.

Q. He said that he was not going to quit on you as long as you don't also quit on him. You don't feel any of that, like, confusion and maybe doubting in the locker room at all?
DAVION HALL: No, not at all. I mean, he's going to stay with us. I know he will.

Q. Does it sting? Does it hurt, that kind of thing?
DAVION HALL: No, not at all. I mean, like I said, he'll stay with us and the whole coaching staff will as well.
Q. Tough loss. Talk us through the game here.
CLAY JOHNSTON: Obviously it was pretty tough. I thought we played a much better game than last week from a defensive standpoint. We're young. We're still trying to get through the cracks. Just a young team. Get the chemistry going, just come together and we will.

I have all the faith in the world in Coach Rhule and these coaches, and I'm going to just trust the process and we'll get better, we will.

Q. Did you find something in the second half, defense played a little better?
CLAY JOHNSTON: We started clicking. We started clicking. We started just communicating a lot more, just trying to come out hot. We didn't want to have what happened last week with no energy, and so we came out, just a different defense that came out in the second half.

Q. Clay, the locker room can't be too happy right now but how is everybody taking the second loss?
CLAY JOHNSTON: Obviously we're all kind of down. Obviously wanted to win. And you can't say much more than that. But we're just going to trust in these coaches.

Q. You talk about trusting the coaches. Do you feel your teammates are the same way?
CLAY JOHNSTON: Yes, 100%. The team is going to be bought in. We're going to be good. We're growing in the future.

Q. Was anything that they threw at you that you didn't expect? The quarterback got a lot of good runs.
CLAY JOHNSTON: No, we watched a lot of film and tape and knew he could run the ball well. Had a game plan for that with just our "D" line stunts and stuff, try to contain him. But it's just football and you have that sometimes.