



Allstate Sugar Bowl
Baylor
Team Arrival News Conference
December 27, 2019



COACH RHULE: Well, on behalf of our entire team, families, administration, everyone, I just want to make sure I say how blessed and how happy we are to be here.

Our team is extremely excited to take on Georgia, a tremendous team, in a landmark opportunity for us coming to the Sugar Bowl. And as I've said, it's a tremendous opportunity for our team but really for all of us personally. We worked very hard to get here, so we're excited to play in the game.

We certainly hope that we'll represent not only ourselves but our University and the game itself by playing a great football game with tremendous class and hoping to play really well.

Q. (Question regarding Charlie Brewer.)

COACH RHULE: Charlie practiced last Saturday, right before we went on break for Christmas. So he's been cleared through the protocol by the doctors and should be ready to go.

Q. (Question regarding Charlie Brewer.)

COACH RHULE: For me, I think it's exciting for Charlie. He's one of the main reasons why we're here. I thought [Jacob] Zeno and Gerry [Bohanon] filled in admirably for him in the Big 12 championship game. But he deserves to play in that game. He wasn't able to play very much in that game, but he's able to play now.

We'll need him versus this great defense we're going to go up against, and I think having Charlie we'll play really well.

Q. You had a lot of players not sure they're going to play. Do you have any concerns about the team? Did they all make it?

COACH RHULE: Everyone's here. We had one young man that was a couple minutes late for the meeting this morning.

But, no, we have guys -- Denzel Mims will probably be a really, really high draft pick. I said to him, Hey, you going to play? Because that's just kind of the conversation nowadays. He looked at me like I was nuts. He said, "Coach, we're playing Georgia. Yeah, I'm playing."

Bravvion Roy had surgery after the Big 12 championship game. He was out there practicing last Saturday. Our guys value the opportunity to compete. I think they value the opportunity to compete against one of the best teams in the country. What a great measuring stick for us as a program, our players. And we have a lot of guys that -- everyone is going to play.

Q. Motivation seems to be a big thing for bowls these days, what the team is playing for, players' attitudes. Do you find your team as motivated, if not more so, than they were last year and made the big leap from one level?



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COACH RHULE: I think when you start placing certain value on games than -- a lot of times that comes from us; it doesn't come from the kids. It comes from us as coaches. We were motivated to play against Stephen F. Austin. We were motivated in the last game of the year to play against Kansas. We were motivated in the Big 12 championship game.

And at the end of the day, if our players aren't motivated to play in this game, what does it say about our program? What does it say about me? What does it say about them? We want to turn out tough, hard-working, competitive guys.

And I'll say this about our players. If I went out there today and said, "Hey, we have to run ten wind sprints," there would be some grumbling. They're back there laughing at me again.

But if I said I think, I think Kalon [Barnes] is faster than [Josh] Fleeks, our guys would line up and they would run against each other all day. We have competitive players.

We're going to go out there and we're going right from here to practice. There's no going to the hotel. We're going right to practice. We're getting off the bus. We're putting full pads on and we're putting the ball down. We're saying one zone, one compete. That's just kind of who we are. We're a blue-collar, tough, competitive team.

Our team will be beyond motivated. And we have to be because this is such a great team we're facing. I'm motivated. I have never really met Coach [Kirby] Smart, but I certainly respect him. So a chance to go against him as a head coach, I have to be at my best. And so I think our guys are highly, highly motivated.

Q. At the same time, you were that close to being in the playoffs between -- you could beat LSU and Oklahoma right now or Clemson and Ohio State. Maybe because where Baylor came from, there's not as much of a sense of "Oh, we were this close" than it might be for some other schools?

COACH RHULE: No, I mean, that game ripped their heart out. But that's life. These four teams are going to play tomorrow. Tomorrow? Tomorrow? I don't even know what day it is. I know it's the day after Christmas.

Those four teams are going to play tomorrow and two of them are going to lose and their season is over. And then they're going to go to the championship game and one of them is going to lose. So there's only one team that's going to leave.

If you spend your whole life thinking about what could have been or what you missed out on, you don't live a very grateful life. You live a pretty entitled life.

I am just so grateful for the fact that we had a chance to go play in the Big 12 championship game and came up one play short. And now we have a chance to go out there. We lost to the No. 5 team in the country. We have a chance to go out and play the No. 5 team in the country again.



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Our program, we just don't believe in entitlement. We are grateful for everything we get. We're grateful for these jogging suits they gave us this morning. We're grateful for the chance to go practice -- Imagine that, we're going to the Saints facility today and practice. I might bump into Sean Payton. This is a dream.

We're going to leg up next year and we're going to fight, scratch, and claw to go to the College Football Playoff again, to win the whole thing. But that doesn't mean we're going to get there.

I think this is an amazing opportunity. This is the Sugar Bowl. My son's a bowl fanatic. He's got a book on bowl games, and we're reading about Tulane and not going to the Rose Bowl. We read all about the start of how the Sugar Bowl came to be. And to think we have a chance to play in it, to think I have a chance to walk on the same sideline as Bear Bryant.

My son is Vincent Bryant Rhule for a reason, though my wife has a different interpretation.

To think that I have the chance to walk on the sideline where Bear Bryant onced walked, that to me -- come on, I'm walking on cloud nine and so are our players.

Q. (Question about the marching band.)

COACH RHULE: When I saw it, I said, "That's right." I shouldn't be like that.

Just an amazing experience for us, and I think we're going to work really hard. Our players, we're going to really practice, but we're also going to make sure that they take the time to truly value the experiences they're going to have here. Most of our kids are from Texas so this is, for some of our guys, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. So I want to make sure they enjoy all parts of it.

Q. What are you looking forward to in the coming days?

COACH RHULE: Just the time with our players. I think this is an experience for them. It's an experience for us. We travel a lot with the guys who travel. There's 40 guys who have a chance to travel. All of our coaches and their families are here.

So I look forward to all the events, all of the opportunities for our kids to be around each other, be around the players. I think that camaraderie.

And I want to get out and really truly experience New Orleans. I'm going to spend some time with my wife. You know, we'll go out. My wife and I are foodies, so we've already hit up -- we have got reservations here, there. I don't know where they are, but we're going to go to the aquarium. We're going to do a bunch of things as a team to take advantage of this remarkable city and this great city. So I think seeing the city is a big part for me as well.



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Q. (Question regarding pressure on the quarterback.)

COACH RHULE: We went back and looked at the recruiting rankings for Georgia the last five years. When I was the head coach at Temple, St. Joe's Prep used to practice underneath us. So I watched D'Andre Swift practice there for years. We started go down, like, just watch all the different running backs come in the game.

And so we don't really rotate a lineman, but you kind of get a feel after a while that they've got really good players. Watch the D-line rotate. It's a different guy every play. And it's a credit to their coaching staff, the way that they get so many people involved.

But they have great, great, great players. So I'm sure whoever is going to play at the two tackles will step in and they'll be of that caliber. And that's a credit to Georgia. They're a next-man-up mentality, I'm sure.

Coach [Sam] Pittman leaving to go be the head coach at Arkansas and quickly getting Coach [Matt] Luke in, I'm sure that they'll have great players in every position.