



**2019 Allstate Sugar Bowl
Texas
Team Arrival Press Conference
December 27, 2018**



JOHN SUDSBURY: At this time I would like to introduce head coach of the University of Texas, Tom Herman. Coach, if you can start with a brief opening statement, we will go to some questions.

COACH HERMAN: Just an honor to be here at the Sugar Bowl. This is a place where myself and my family were at, it seems like yesterday, four or five years ago. And what an unbelievable bowl, rich with tradition, history. And they do everything first class.

I know our guys are excited. That's certainly the biggest plane most of them have seen, let alone ridden on. And a bunch of guys got to experience first class and stretch out a little bit, lay down and catch some Zs. We are very, very excited, very honored to be here and represent the University of Texas.

Q. Are you a beignet fan?

COACH HERMAN: I mean, I wouldn't say I go out of my way. But, if they're around, I'm usually snacking on them pretty good.

Q. Tom, you felt like this team had overachieved this year. Are you still saying that to them and saying that about them? Or do you want them to go into this game with the mind-set, hey, we're equal with you guys?

COACH HERMAN: I don't think when you say "overachieve," you imply that you are not equal. I think what I mean by that is that we're winning games on toughness. We're winning games on attitude, physicality. We're winning games this season certainly because we genuinely love the guy next to each other. And we don't want to let them down. And that motivates us much more powerfully than if you were motivated by self-centered motivations.

COACH HERMAN: And so we know that our best is good enough. It always has been. But we also know that we do need to play our best to beat such a formidable opponent as Georgia.

Q. Did everybody make the trip that you were expecting?

COACH HERMAN: Off the top of my head, everybody who was expected to make it, made it.

Q. Talking about the news about [Casey] Thompson and [Cameron] Rising that came out, are they here?

COACH HERMAN: They're here.

Q. Help me understand how you're okay with two guys being in the portal and yet still being part of the team?



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COACH HERMAN: Well, one, we want them to stick around. We don't want to lose either one of them. Nowadays in college football that's their right, and that's something that the football oversight committee and the transfer oversight committee thought was a necessary next step. And we respect that.

And we've been very communicative with both families, both young men. And they're happy to be here, happy to be a part of their team. And I think this is the way of the world now. And guys that want to explore their options have that right to do so. We also have the opportunity to communicate with them how important they are to our program.

Q. I know with college coaches, you are either all in or you're not, right? Is this the new normal?

COACH HERMAN: I think it would be different if it was a guy that was playing a lot. But these are two kids that are planning on redshirting. I mean, even if they played in this game would get this year as a redshirt year. So I don't think it's any indication of whether they're part of this team or not. I think it's simply guys taking advantage of a new rule that we support them and they know where we stand. We certainly want them back. We feel that they're an integral part of our future.

But, I mean, this is -- this is the way of the world. This is where we are.

Q. Are these the only two, or are there other guys as well?

COACH HERMAN: They are the only two I know of. Obviously, we had the two already decide to cut ties and transfer.

Q. [Casey] Thompson and Cameron Rising. Anyone else this past week or so?

COACH HERMAN: No. Moro [Ojomo] is pretty doubtful as well as Al'Vonte Woodard. Those two guys didn't progress quite as fast. We're still going to give it a go. We got six days or whatever it is, five days. But Caden Sterns practiced in full yesterday, and we expect him to practice in full tomorrow.

Q. Talking about the players Michael Williams, local kid. Can you talk about what happened there?

COACH HERMAN: No.

Q. This is a full practice. It gives you time to play a lot of young guys as far as the practice is concerned. Who amongst those guys have stood out to you as far as full practice is concerned?

COACH HERMAN: I think the young guys -- the two young quarterbacks played well in the scrimmage settings that we had. I think Moro [Ojomo] was playing well until he got banged up.



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I think it was good for that young O-line. I think those guys, if they stick together and they progress the way that we think they will -- Christian Jones is already 312 pounds. Rafiti Ghirmai is 300 pounds and can move and bend and is explosive. Reese Moore is teetering right around 300 pounds. I know I'm forgetting -- Junior Angilau has been practicing with the 2s. So he gets a ton of reps.

Those guys stick out a bunch just because it's such meaningful reps because for the entire year they have been reading off of a card and now they get these extended practices of actually running our offense in our terminology, using our blocking scheme. So I was impressed with their development.

Q. Can you talk about the defense?

COACH HERMAN: There wasn't a whole lot of scholarship guys that were out there playing. I think Dele (Ayodele Adeoye) and Demarvion [Overshown], they played a bunch in those scrimmages and did real well. Those would be the two guys that stick out. Hate to get put on the spot like that. But on that side of the ball, those two young guys certainly got a lot of reps.

Q. You talk about new experiences all the time. This is a whole new thing for all these guys. This isn't Houston or San Antonio. What did you tell them about New Orleans, going out at night, minding yourselves, watching others, all that stuff?

COACH HERMAN: I said, you know, our staff is full of guys that have been here. And we've won games here and -- not just here in the Sugar Bowl, but in New Year's Six games, playoff games. We've also seen the flip side of that as well. We do want them to enjoy it. They have earned this. This is a tremendous bowl game and a tremendous city. But we also know that we've come here with a job to do, too, and that's to win the Sugar Bowl championship.

So I think the sign of a mature team is that you can have fun without being silly, without being immature, without being stupid, for lack of a better term. I would imagine our guys are going to enjoy their time here. But, when it's time to work, we're going to be dialed in, focused in, and ready to work.