

July 25, 2011



An Interview With:

OKLAHOMA STATE COACH MIKE GUNDY

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by coach Mike Gundy from Oklahoma State. Opening comments?

COACH GUNDY: Thank you. We're obviously very excited. It's that time of year. Vacation's over and back at it.

So got a number of returning starters and on offense that everybody's very aware of. We have a defense that has to grow up fast in the front seven and expecting to be very good on special teams.

So for the most part, as I said earlier, we're really excited, looking forward to getting back to work and being with the players. Ready for the upcoming season.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Mike, you have an interesting situation on offense with so much of the talent back and key, skilled people for you guys. But a new offensive coordinator coming into it, especially since Dana put his own stamp on it, how do you look at the offense and the transition this year?

COACH GUNDY: We're very excited about Todd Monken and what he brings to the table. We were looking for a coach that had experience in throwing and catching. And he's been around quarterbacks and receivers throughout his career. Had valuable experience in the NFL.

We wanted a coordinator that would come in and be willing to run our offense. And it's not easy to find a coach that's willing to do that.

And Todd's approach has been very good. Brandon and Todd's relationship has gotten to a level that I'm very comfortable with, and I'm just

looking forward to Todd putting his touch on our offense.

But there won't be much that's different from last season. We didn't see any reason in changing what we were able to accomplish last year. So we just need to move forward.

Q. So much has been made of this Longhorn Network, they tried to show high school games, they're talking about probably won't happen, but there's so many other layers this could affect, the Big 12 Conference and your school. How do you feel about what might happen with that network down the road?

COACH GUNDY: The good thing is I don't have to worry about that. I've got faith in our athletic director, Coach Holder, and our commissioner, Dan Beebe, and I'm sure they'll make the best decisions.

Q. What exactly is Todd's play-calling experience? Did he call plays at Eastern Michigan, or how much has he done of that?

COACH GUNDY: He doesn't have a lot of play-calling experience, but he's been very involved with it. When we worked together at Oklahoma when Coach Miles was the head coach and I was involved with calling plays, he was involved with play calling with me on game day. He was moved to quarterback coach at Jacksonville prior to taking our job. And he was not calling plays there, but he was involved with Coach Cutter and some of the decisions that they made there.

He obviously doesn't have a lot of that, but I'm confident he's a smart football coach. He works hard. He's been around enough good teams and enough good players to make calls.

With the players that we have returning, you know, for the most part I think he can think too much, and you need to call a play and let them go.

Q. What insights have you shared with him about that process?

COACH GUNDY: Not a lot. Todd and I have been friends for a number of years. And he's been around enough good football coaches and been on teams that have won a lot of football games that I think he's gained enough knowledge and understands the importance of it, and it's all about preparation and film study and working hard on Sunday through Thursday in order to get the team prepared for Saturday.

Q. You mentioned you had faith in Mike Holder when it comes to the Longhorn Network and Dan Beebe, but when stuff surfaces like initially they were talking about pinpointing games where they had commitments from, things like that, did your antenna go up a little bit when you heard that kind of stuff? Did you have a lot of questions just as a coach when this thing was first broached about exactly what are we getting into, what are the guidelines?

COACH GUNDY: I would agree that my antenna went up when I started to hear that information. But, again, we have so many things to concern ourselves with, and what happens on that network and in our conference, as I said earlier, that's one thing I don't have to worry about.

And I have faith in the athletic directors in this league and the Big 12 that we'll make the right decision in that area.

Q. For several years you've been sort of politicking for full round-robin schedule. Sort of one landed in your lap. Are you pleased with that? What's your next cause you're going to try to get pushed through?

COACH GUNDY: Well, I'm surprised anybody remembered that, to be honest with you, but I guess you guys now are good. You go way back on those comments.

But I think it's going to help our league. At the end of the season there won't be any teams that say that a certain team from the north or a certain team from the south didn't play each other and didn't deserve to or didn't deserve to be in a conference championship game. We all play each other.

I'm not so sure it won't help our fan base. I think that each team competing annually against each other will help stimulate some rivalries within our league.

Oklahoma State, Missouri we get to play every year. So I think the fans will look forward to playing Missouri and Missouri fans will look forward

to playing Oklahoma State. And when you did it once every two seasons or two years in a row with taking a two-year break, I don't think it worked and it wasn't effective.

I'm excited about it and ultimately at the end of the season whoever has the best record in conference will be the conference champion. I think it will help our league.

Q. As far as that championship race, do you see OU as head and shoulders favorite, and does it surprise you Texas is not in the top four as far as the preseason picks?

COACH GUNDY: I think we have a number of teams in our league that are competitive enough to win. Staying healthy, taking care of the football in our opinion's very important.

But this league has been very difficult. And because of the ability for offenses to score, and to score fast, ultimately I think it will come down to how a team will perform on defense and special teams.

And we feel like we need to improve in those areas and we need to maintain what we accomplished on offense in order to give ourselves a chance to win the championship.

Q. You said earlier we have to grow up fast as the front seven on defense. Who are some candidates there who you think might be able to do that?

COACH GUNDY: Nigel Nicholas, and little ahead would be guys inside the defensive tackle spot, Joe Mitchell is a linebacker, Caleb Lavey is a linebacker. Those guys will be key in the interior seven on the defensive side of the ball for us.

I'm comfortable with our ends because we have returning starters that have played in big games. But those are an example of players that are going to need to grow up fast in order for us to have success.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.
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