

July 20, 2015



An Interview With:

TEXAS TECH COACH KLIFF KINGSBURY

Q. Coach, I was wondering, looking back on it a little over a year later, do you have any regrets about the way the Baker Mayfield situation played out?

COACH KINGSBURY: I haven't really thought back on it too much. I wish him the best of luck. It sounds like he's doing a great job there, which I knew he would. Hopefully, he plays really good in every game except one.

Q. I wonder if you could talk about what David Beaty has brought your defense, what you've seen over the months he's worked with the unit.

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, David Gibbs has been phenomenal. We knew that he had the track record, had the credibility coming in. Brought a different level of professionalism, accountability and discipline that we needed on that side of the ball. Couldn't be more pleased with what I've seen thus far. Have a young defense still. It's an excited group. He's related to the players really quickly. I'm excited to watch that group continue to grow this fall.

Q. Another question on Coach Gibbs. Have you changed the formation any? Or is a lot of it just the players' attitude? Or is it position changes? What have you seen over there?

COACH KINGSBURY: A little bit of everything. I think schematically he'll do some different things, the way he handles players. We've had some shuffling of which coaches are coaching which positions. So pretty much an entire overhaul. So far through spring, I thought they responded well. The players responded well.

So like I said, I think continue to watch that growth through fall camp and into the season will be fun for me.

Q. Obviously, a few defensive coordinator changes in the past six seasons. How have you -- what have you been able to tell defensive recruits about the consistent changing of coordinators, and how do you sell them on coming to Texas Tech with that?

COACH KINGSBURY: I think some of it's blind faith, obviously. With Coach Gibbs, he brings his NFL resume. He brings what he did at the University of Houston, which was phenomenal in two years there. So guys want to be around that. They want to play for a coach who has those types of credentials. So that's been huge.

He's done a great job of recruiting since he's been at Texas Tech and really excited about that class he's bringing in. So I think more than anything, his resume speaks for itself when you're selling recruits.

Q. Kliff, obviously, the quarterback situation is something you're getting an awful lot of questions about, but what will eventually separate Davis and Patrick in your mind? What are you looking for from your starter going into next year?

COACH KINGSBURY: I think more than anything it's eliminating negative plays. We've been historically bad the last two years at that position with turnovers. I think the last two years we've had 20-plus just in our position at quarterback.

So whichever guy can protect the football the best and continue to take shots, take chances but protect the ball is going to be our guy.

Q. I believe your last year as a player at Tech was the first year that a kid named Lincoln Riley came from Muleshoe, I think might have been in the room with you now. He's obviously coordinating at Oklahoma.

What do you remember of those days with him and his ascent to this point in his career?

COACH KINGSBURY: Very sharp. I've known Lincoln for a long time, and he has worked very hard to get to where he's at. Did a tremendous job at East Carolina building that offense and that program with Coach McNeill.

I'm happy for him. I think Coach Stoops got a great coach and another great offensive mind in the league.

Q. I was wondering, you mentioned the negative plays just a couple of questions ago. Is that -- first of all, how has the progress been this off-season on eliminating those? Secondly, is that the type of thing that you think will be able to turn around from 4-8 a year ago?

COACH KINGSBURY: I hope so. I think, when you look at our turnover margin last year, it was very close to the bottom in the entire country. If you're doing that, you're not going to win many games, especially in the Big 12 with these offenses.

So that's what we've harped upon. We saw great progress in the spring, but we have to go out there during games and do it.

Q. Piggy-backing on the quarterback, when you were talking about eliminating negative plays, are you going to literally have to go into the season with Mahomes and Webb to test how well they do with protecting the ball?

COACH KINGSBURY: I'm not planning on it. I'm planning on naming a starter fairly early in camp and trying to develop that chemistry with the first team and second team. So, no, we will try to get that handled.

Now, if somebody falters early on, we do feel that we have two guys that can win games. So that's a luxury we haven't had.

Q. Have red zone situations been a focus this off-season?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, we've got to get to the red zone more, I think. First off, we've always been able to get yards since I've been at Texas Tech. I think we've been a top ten the first two years as far as yards per game. But the turnovers have killed us, and not being efficient down there in the red zone has hurt us as well. So that's definitely been an area we've been trying to improve upon.

Q. Kliff, quarterbacks in the air raid come in all shapes and sizes, but over the years you've played in this system and coached this system, is there a characteristic or two you feel like is consistent with those guys?

COACH KINGSBURY: I think recently it's the ability to extend the play. I know at Houston, coaching Case Keenum, he was great at extending a play when it wasn't there. Obviously, Johnny at A&M. You look at what Trevone Boykin does at TCU in a very similar system, moving around making plays. People have had success. Graham Harrell was a pocket guy, Brandon Weeden.

I think the trend now is going to more guys that can extend the play. But if you're a smart guy and you can get it on time, get through your reads quickly, you have a chance to have success in that system.

Q. In an offense like yours, you obviously need a good quarterback. You're going to need some offensive linemen to make things happen in the trenches. But let's talk about the wide receivers. Where are your wide receivers stacking up, and what are your expectations for them?

COACH KINGSBURY: I feel like for most of the year last year, it was a group that was feeling our way around, weren't very confident in their abilities or that they can compete in that league. I think the last three games you saw some guys that the light bulb finally turned on, and that was exciting to see.

So moving forward, we had a great spring at that position. We have some young guys coming in that we think will push those older guys. But Dylan Cantrell, Devin Lauderdale, Jakeem Grant, Reggie Davis, Ian Sadler, all those guys late in the year made a bunch of plays for us, where at the beginning of last year seemed to be timid and played timid.

If we can continue that progress, I think it will bode well for obviously what we're trying to do offensively.

Q. Concerning the receivers, Cameron Batson played a little for you last year. How is he doing?

COACH KINGSBURY: He's doing well. Last year majority of the time he was a punt

returner. Did a great job returning punts. 4.0 student, obviously a smart guy. Played quarterback in high school. We have him at that inside H position, getting some time with Jakeem Grant there. He's really taken pride in developing as a wide receiver, coming in as a quarterback.

Q. I know it's been historically a quarterback-receiver offense. DeAndre Washington had a good year. What are you going to be able to do to let him take a step forward as a leader on your offense?

COACH KINGSBURY: We'll continue to find ways to get him the ball. We have four offensive linemen coming back from that group that helped him gain a thousand. In a down year, he was definitely a bright spot on and off the field. Did a great job leading, never gave up. Had some dire situations where he continued to run the ball tough when we were out of games. Couldn't be more impressed with him, his development on and off the field. I expect another great year from DeAndre.

Q. Coach, talk about the chemistry you've seen between Cantrell and Mahomes, they were so good out at Whitehouse, what you're seeing there in Lubbock now.

COACH KINGSBURY: Pat looks for him when he's on the field, that's for sure. They had a bunch of connections in high school. And any time we get in live situations and they're both out there, the ball is going his way. It's been fun to watch their development. They do such a great job at Whitehouse training both those players. So both those guys came in ready to compete in our offense.

Q. Looking at the roster, the depth chart, it's littered with out-of-state players. So what do you attribute your success in recruiting those players coming all the way out to play at Texas Tech?

COACH KINGSBURY: I think more than anything some relationships our staff had. Last year we actually -- I think we signed 20 players, and 19 were from the state of Texas. So the first couple of years, scrambling to put classes together, we were out of state a little bit. But the trend now with our program is to be more in state with players.

Q. Kliff, you go to Fayetteville in September. How big is that game from a

...when all is said, we're done.®

ASAPsports

visit our archives at asapsports.com

confidence standpoint? You guys got beat in Lubbock by the Razorbacks last year. What could a victory in Fayetteville do for your program and for this particular team?

COACH KINGSBURY: It would be a huge boost. That's a great football team. We found that out last year. I don't think our team mentally was ready for the type of physical team that came in there and got after us. So hopefully this year, with a lot of those guys coming back, we'll know what to expect of that team of how physical they are and the quality of team they are.

So that's going to be a great atmosphere. It will be a great game for us. I know our players are looking forward to it.

Q. Kliff, considering the fact that Patrick Mahomes and Davis Webb both have had success in their careers, if one of them struggles for, say, two, three series, would you be more inclined to go to your backup this year than you might normally do otherwise?

COACH KINGSBURY: That's a great question. I think it will just have to -- it will be a feel situation because both -- if we name a starter, we're going to ride with that guy knowing that we have a great insurance policy behind him, but I wouldn't expect a quick hook on whoever we name the starter.

Q. Mike Mitchell is coming from Ohio State and transferring to your program. What have you seen in him? Has the layoff caused any changes in him? What potentially could he mean for your defense?

COACH KINGSBURY: He's one of the most physically impressive young men I've ever seen as far as speed and size and strength. I think the year out, he's just got to get back to playing the game, playing that many plays and that many reps. He definitely brings a different side of physicality.

Once he gets our system down and gets back in game shape, I think we'll get something out of him.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

K. Kingsbury - 7.20.15