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An Interview With:

TCU COACH GARY PATTERSON

COACH PATTERSON: For us at TCU, it's been a long -- I kind of put it into, now going into our fourth season in the Big 12, just the difference in the two-year turnaround, walking up here last year 4-8, changed offenses, 12-1.

For me, many of you that know me, it's about standing in between the lines, not getting too high or too low, either way. So a year ago you had to prove people wrong. This year you have to prove people right. As a football team, that's really, from my approach on down, how we've tried to handle it.

It's been a great summer. Going into our fourth season, last year having an opportunity to be in a situation where you won more than you lost and getting a chance to play in a great Bowl game.

So for us, we're just moving forward recruiting-wise, football-wise, all of the above. Facility-wise. Things have not stopped at TCU.

Q. A year ago at this time, I'm not sure everybody thought Trevone was your starting quarterback. Now a year later, he's obviously the guy, had a great year. Can you just talk about his evolution and how he got to such a fantastic point with your offense last year.

COACH PATTERSON: If you were listening, somewhere listening, really he was the toughest quarterback that I've played against, just it had not come to fruition on the field. Really, I wasn't surprised by his success. I think we were all surprised that offensively -- because last spring, the spring before, going into last season, it wasn't one of those situations -- we just weren't very good when we ended spring. Some guys were hurt. So you really couldn't tell.

Then our kids really came along during the summertime on their own, really bonded and started doing it, and things just happened.

Trevone's case, I think one of the things is, and I've tried to do and I've talked to the whole offense about it, I think going into year two, having not been known for offense, is just handling success. I think our frustration is understanding that winning is the most important thing and all the rest will come. They don't have to score more points, have more yards. It's going to be we play on the road six tough road games. It's hard to -- if you're going to win those ball games, it's going to be hard to win by a couple of margins that we did last year.

That's the thing that I've tried to instill in Trevone is to make sure -- I've been very proud of him in the fact of everything that -- the circuit he's been on, some of the awards, everything he's been a part of, that he's handled it in the right way, at least to my knowledge. Head coach sometimes is the last guy to know everything.

Q. Staying on Trevone and how he's handled himself sort of during this circuit, how about his growth as a leader? We know he's grown on the field as a quarterback, but how about him sort of taking over, not just this offense, but this team?

COACH PATTERSON: Probably the best example of that, he had a lot of -- he's had a couple of the NFL guys, quarterbacks, the gurus that wanted him to come work out with them this summer, and he told them all no. I think his biggest thing was staying with the offensive group this summer, making sure they were doing seven-on-seven, winning ball games. He knows all that.

Whether he believes or doesn't believe it, at least he's doing the right things, and I think that's half the battle. Sometimes you can get lulled into everything, especially if you went from where we were to where he is now. So for us, from everything I've seen up to this point, he's handled it

very well.

For us, we have a lot of older guys on offense. So the leadership aspect is not just him, it's been Joey Hunt that's here today, Josh Doctson. You have many that have played in a lot of football games.

Q. You walked in here, the first thing you said was you're walking in here this year not 4-8. You're 12-1. What do you think of the distance you've come in just one year in this league to walk into this room today as really the lead favorite in this league?

COACH PATTERSON: I don't -- it's a nice feeling, but the bottom line is I've been in this business too long to get caught up in it. I know that last year we didn't have any linebackers, we didn't have a quarterback. This year I've got to replace six starters on defense. We came a long way in the spring.

But the thing I found is just, for me, if I stay even keel with how we need to do things, then my team will because it just kind of all reverberates down. So for me, I'm just going to -- what I think when I go to bed at night and not just in the Big 12, but everything that we've been able to accomplish at TCU in the last 18 years, it's all great and fine, but it's kind of like winning any awards. You can put them all in the closet because it doesn't mean anything to anybody anymore when we play Minnesota.

Right now we've been moving forward. I really like the attitude of our football team. This summer has been a very business-like manner, how they've gone about it. To be honest with you, it hasn't been as hot in Texas. So we've had to turn off the air conditioner in the indoor to create the humidity to make sure that we play like TCU teams are supposed to play.

So if there's any actions from me that would indicate that I didn't go back to the beginning, I've tried not to make sure I gave any of those away. We've just been trying to do what we need to do.

Q. Questions about two of your positions. It looked like in the spring you had an abundance of wide receivers, enough to move some of them around. And the second question is about your linebackers because it looked like you didn't have a lot of depth there.

COACH PATTERSON: I don't know if you ever have enough of anything. You try not to have. But we have the same guys coming back,

and we have some freshmen coming in. We lost Josh Porter, but everybody else is back.

I think, like any football team, the key was in the last half of the season, until we got in the Bowl game, we were beat up in that position, and it showed in our numbers. Like anybody else, we have to stay healthy.

Linebacker-wise, we had two guys, both Mike Freeze and Alec Dunham, that came in the spring. Ty Summers redshirted. To be honest, it's back to the numbers we had. Our starting linebackers last year ran 5 flat, 4.8. It was the slowest group we've ever had at TCU. The five top linebackers this year average a 4.5-something when we ran at the end of spring.

Defensively, not just linebacker-wise, we have a chance to be more athletic than we were a year ago. You've got to replace a Kevin White and then a Sam Carter and a Chris Hackett. So you have a group of guys that in the last three years in the Big 12 that picked 65 footballs. So there's a lot of production that we have to be able to replace. How do you do that?

So we started in the spring because I treat spring like two-a-days, where it's really about being physical and learning. And then we'll get into two-a-days just in addition, and hopefully it carries through. We've got a lot of practices before we get to Minnesota, which it's going to be a very tough ball game. It's like Custer. The only difference between Custer and us is we know what's on the other side of the hill.

For us going into it, then you have Stephen F. Austin and SMU, and you have a very tough four-game swing with going to Lubbock and Texas at home and then going to Manhattan and going to Ames. So three out of four. So you play a lot of road games on the road and get ready to go.

But that's the Big 12. We're excited about it. You've got to embrace it and go forward.

Q. Bob Bowlsby was in here a little bit ago talking about the limiting days of contact for teams to two, including a game day. What's been your situation in the past? How much hitting have you guys done? How is that going to affect you?

COACH PATTERSON: It's easy for us. Just on Tuesday. That's the only day we're in full pads besides the game. Everybody always looks surprised at me because we're physical. Sunday we're in shorts. Tuesday we're in full. Wednesday

we're in shells. Thursday we're in shorts. We've been that way really since we've been at TCU.

Our whole thing is about being physical in the spring, being physical in two-a-days, and then when you get in the season -- in this league, you've got to be able to pull up because of the bodies, and you've got to be able to get guys through to the end of the season.

I think what you'll find is you'll find that there's a majority of coaches -- there's a false sense of we just try to bang our kids around, but I think all of us, we like keeping our jobs, and we want to keep our kids healthy. We've all been like that.

Fresh shoulders, fresh legs means more physical players. So once we get to that point, but that's what we've always felt like we needed to do. I've even -- when you go every other day, we're probably only down two-a-days where we go maybe two days we're in full pads both practices, that's it. We don't even do it in two-a-days.

I think it's not so much part of the climate of everything that's going on with it, I just think the body types, I've just felt like the body types are getting so big, so strong, so fast, I think it's just important that you make sure that you get all your guys to game day and keep them healthy. That's been our mindset for a long time. Best teams play at the end of the year.

Q. You had worked with Dick Bumpas for a good percentage of your career. With his retirement, how are things different not having him around? How much are things going to be different on the field with Coaches Cross and Glasgow?

COACH PATTERSON: They were all here before. I think it's probably the most experienced staff we've had in a couple of years because, obviously, Chad, Coach Glasgow, has been with us a long time. He's been the guy that's probably -- he's been with me longer than what Coach Bumpas, in some situations. Obviously, losing a guy that's been in the profession as long as Coach Bumpas has, it's hard to replace that. But Coach Sharp has been in our program for a long time. He'll be our D-line coach. Coach Cross, now being his third year, just the spring and then fall, it's way different than what it was starting when young coaches in our scheme come in.

And Paul Gonzales, that is our corner coach, really is a guy that has been behind the scenes, was a graduate assistant. He's probably

one of the more articulate guys we've ever had, done a great job recruiting so far.

So I feel really good about where we're at as a staff. Obviously, when you lose a coach -- and that's where our seniors coming back, our older group is our senior guys up front -- you worry about it all, but I thought they did very well in the spring. I think the farther they get along, fall will even be better because you just have a different guy coaching them.

Q. Gary, this time last year, how much of your offense had you all installed from the new offense? And then how much more have you added to the playbook?

COACH PATTERSON: I don't think -- I think one of the secrets to that offense is that they don't. They try to outexecute you. I think what we try to do is just do it better in the spring.

Everybody has always told me there's always another level second year. Kind of like last year, I'm going to wait and see what the difference is.

When you've been around other kinds of offenses, you kind of know the progression. This will only be my second year of being the head coach with this offense, so I don't know what the progression is besides playing against it. But everyone I've talked to has talked about taking it to another level.

One of the things is you now have your older guys can teach your younger guys where it was kind of a brand-new thing in the summertime before, where now you're getting a lot more reps, you're able to run more of your offense in the summer, you're able to do all of those things, which we didn't get a chance to do as much a year ago because they didn't know all of it.

This offense is a little bit more like our defense. It's all about execution, look like you're doing a lot of things. Throw in a few bells and whistles, but it's about being better at what they do than other people are and plugging in good players.

Q. How confident do you feel that your team would be in the playoffs without having a conference championship game in the Big 12?

COACH PATTERSON: After last year, I don't feel confident about anything. But the key to the whole story is -- and I'm going to always be a team player. The bottom line, I handle it the way I

handle it because that was what was best for college football, best for the Big 12, best for TCU, best for my team. And I knew if I handled it differently, then they wouldn't have played like they did in a Bowl game.

For me, I think every year is different. I'm not a big believer that you have to have a conference championship. I thought the whole thing about going to a playoff was that they picked the four best teams. You didn't even have to have a championship game. That's what I was led to believe. In 33 years, I've seen different forms of how we got to a national championship in every shape and manner.

For me, all I can do is control what I can control, and that's to try to put the best TCU team on the field that I can and make sure that they act right on and off the field and let all those other people decide all the other things they need to.

There was eight really good football teams last year, I thought. And I think I would have told you before we even went into the season every year there's always about eight. There's very few times that I ever look up and say, well, this team here when I watch -- and I don't get a chance to watch a lot -- I say this team is so much better than everybody else, they're the favorite.

I think once you get into one of those tournaments and do all of it -- our key is to control our own destiny, and the best way to do that is to try to win them all. That's what we're going to try to get done. Then we'll see how everything else falls.

I think you have to -- for me, I have to believe and trust in the operation of what goes on, that everybody's going to deal above board, everybody's going to do the right thing. Because that's what -- we don't do it for the coaches. We do it for the kids. The kids are the ones that are practicing all the way 365 days a year and doing the things they're supposed to do.

That's how we're supposed to find the top four teams -- not about money, not about leverage, not about anything else. Just supposed to be about who are the four best teams.

I've been in this long enough that I have to believe that the people who are in charge of it, that's what they're going to do. We've only done it one year. Just like coming into this conference, I said we have to do it a couple years until we understood the landscape, how did we have to recruit differently, how did we have to play differently. We changed offenses, and I think we also have to look and wait and see how was last year an anomaly. A couple games could have

been different. Maybe both Baylor and ourselves could have been in the playoffs.

So I can't judge a group yet until I kind of see it go out a few more -- a couple more years and see how that all extends. So we'll see.

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