

Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

Monday, July 18, 2016

Gary Patterson

TCU

THE MODERATOR: We're joined with TCU head coach, Gary Patterson. Coach, welcome, and your thoughts about the upcoming season?

GARY PATTERSON: For us, every year we go back to the beginning, kind of like our pyramid, obviously starting off, I think everybody wants to ask about the quarterback, probably will -- the quarterback competition will be like it was two years ago, back then it was Trevone Boykin and Matt Joeckel. This year it will probably be Foster Sawyer and Kenny Hill, and we will judge quarterbacks like we always have, whoever makes the offense better and who can lead the team and make less mistakes. We'll go into it.

I think it's going to be a healthy one. I thought they improved this spring, and we will have the opportunity -- I thought they had a great summer. So I'm like everyone else, I'm kind of excited about this season. I felt like two years ago this group this summer was like two years ago coming off a 4-8 year. I thought it was a lot more attention to detail, a lot more work being done, I thought last year we didn't do as good of a job with that during the summertime.

So, you know, I'm really kind of excited to see what all unfolds because it's easier when you have unknowns. As a head coach, I have a lot more energy and excited about this season going into it than I was a year ago. So we have a couple of weeks and we will get ready to get it.

Q. Coach, everybody talks about losing Trevone Boykin, Josh Doctson, some of the other guys. Can you talk about the guys you will be getting back, especially the guys you lost to injury last year?

GARY PATTERSON: Number one, the greatest part about it is basically every ball caught and all the balls thrown, every ball caught in the Bowl game was a freshman, Austin Schlottmann, Joey that's up at Seattle, our starting center, he didn't play out last three games. Austin started against Oklahoma.

And so Matt Pryor did, so the offensive line and the quarterback position are two places we feel like we have to grow up. We have to have some guys, you know, obviously it's hard to replace Josh Doctson on



things he was able to do, but two years ago we didn't know who Josh Doctson was. He walked on to our place and kept growing and building and for us to have seasons going forward. You're going to have to have that next guy to go ahead and do things. Defensively we are lucky we get Texada. We also get back James McFarland that led us in sacks to go along with Josh Carraway. James did two years ago and then with Kenny Iloka go along with all the younger guys we have.

Really excited about the defensive guys that we had in our freshman class. Watching them this summer I think they give us size and depth and lengths and maybe a little more speed to do some things.

I think probably the one place we are paying close attention to is we have had a punter and a kicker that have been four years into it. They graduated so we will have two guys that came last semester. They came for a year, so they're not true freshmen walking in. So head coach anytime you have a new guy starting at those positions you're a little bit worried.

But like I was saying earlier in my statement I really like the way this team has approached the summertime and sometimes you get a feel for your team, oh, here comes two in a row and this group has not been like that.

Q. On the quarterback situation, do you think it would go up until your first game before you name a starter like it did two years ago, or do you feel confident enough in both of them that you might want to name it --

GARY PATTERSON: I don't know. We will have to see. That one went to a week and a half before. We will have to approach it and see how our scrimmages go. Both Matt Joeckel and Trevone Boykin two years ago really in their numbers in throwing it and everything else were very close, where it became apparent were in scrimmages, how well Trevone did with the offense, and I expect that one of those guys and hopefully both of them, because that will make us a better football team, will both step up and become that guy going forward.

But it's been amazing how much both of those guys have changed their bodies because Kenny was out for a season, what they look like right now compared to

what they looked like a year and a half ago, so we'll see how it goes.

Q. Coach, you pretty much are starting with a clean slate on offense but because of some of the injuries last year on defense you had a lot of guys gain a lot of experience. In what way do you think that side of the ball will be able to help with some of the question marks on offense?

GARY PATTERSON: Well, you know, it's -- I think sometimes when you have a younger football team that's played, they haven't -- they're still in a situation where they want to become great. They don't know who they are. I think that helps you sometimes as long as there is a competence level. Just watching this summer, if it's any indication I think there is a bunch of them that will have a chance to step up and be -- we had to play a lot of younger players and that means they're not as strong as they need to be so you had a spring and a summer to get stronger, both the offensive line and wide receiver positions.

One of the things we had happen is Shaun Nixon will not go through the season because of an injury, so we have to find a No. 2 tailback behind Kyle Hicks that's here at media day today. As all teams do, how you replace those guys and how you moved forward I think is the kind of season that you have. We've always been one of those places that we didn't hold anybody back. A lot of times a lot of people say, well, we're going to play with -- I go to the national convention and a guy says we got 18 starters back and we're going to be good and we say we're not going to be good.

You find you don't keep your job very long if you approach it that way. We've been here 19 years, and our first set of seniors are now 40, 41 years old. So it won't be our first rodeo and on offense we've got to push the pin and make sure that our kids understand we're just like everybody that came to this Media Day today. They feel like if a couple things go right they could win the conference title and we understand possibly early that we won't be as explosive maybe than we were before.

But I'm not going to tell them they can't be. We've got some tough games. I think we have a tough September. You have South Dakota State team which is one AA, but they beat Kansas last year. You have Arkansas coming to town. Iowa State who has a new head coach and I thought they had some good players and then you've got Oklahoma and you have SMU and we have SMU on a Friday night. The last time we played SMU on a Friday night there it was one of more physical ball games that I've been in since I've been at TCU. So our September is going to be a tough up with going into the rest of the Big 12 schedule.

Last year I felt like could ease into it, or two years ago and last year we had our first Big 12 game, Texas Tech in the third ball game. So for us every year is different.

So I go back to it, I like the way our kids have approached the spring and really how they have approached the summer and going on. I sat up here and didn't tell you that a year ago. So I think that's going to be very important for us to understand going forward that you've got to win as a team and when you don't have some of those guys that stick out that we had a year ago that were All-Americans.

So it's kinda fun. That's what makes coaching a lot of fun is when you have a group that will do it as a group, they don't feel like they did it with individuals.

Q. You and Baylor have had some great battles in recent years. You and Art had a spirited coaching rivalry. How strange is it now that you are entering a season in which he's gone and what he built at Baylor is sort of in flux?

GARY PATTERSON: Number one, Baylor is a good university. I have a lot of Baylor friends, and Jim Grobe and I have known each other for a long time were on the Ethics Committee together, he and his wife, went on trips together, and he's a good football coach. He's done a great job every place he's every been. One thing is Baylor is a good university. They're a good football program and they've got a lot of good players coming back. I don't see that changing much.

Q. There has been some talk about how the championship game is going to be formatted, whether there is going to be definitional play or how that's going to work out, what would be your preference?

GARY PATTERSON: Well, I think whatever it is, it has to be set up to understand that we're doing this so we can get in the four-team playoff. So I don't think that you can say that you can divide it north and south, we're going to have to use a lot of thinking, a lot of thought process into how it is -- you know, because for me, just looking from -- for two seconds because I'm not in control of it.

So I don't think about it much to be honest with you. If you have an undefeated team then I would say you don't need to be in a championship game. Because I watched Missouri/Kansas teams, one beat one in the regular season and one beat the other in the championship game when they played it and didn't get a chance to go to a BCS game. I think it's a negative. If you have two tied teams I think a championship game will help us, but you can't have one that's 11-1 going in the championship game and the other be 7-4

because then in the computer rankings, you're going to hurt yourself.

So we've got to use some positives and thought process of how are we going to set this up that we can help our conference get into the four-team playoff. I don't think there is every going to be a perfect answer to that.

It's kinda like adding teams, you know, I've been in every -- we've been in five different conferences and we've done it about every way that you can, and I don't think there is any tougher way of playing it as when you have to play everybody, because what people don't understand it's not just the first year. You can't fool 'em anymore. You've got to play everybody every year and you've got to play 'em every other year at their place. And how do you find a way to do that? Because after a point in time it comes down to players, because you've used up a lot of your ideas over three, four, five years.

So it comes back to how are we going to do this? If you don't play somebody every year it's easier when it comes to schematics, because you can come into a game plan they wouldn't be ready for but when you played somebody five, six, years in a row, ten years in a row that's a lot harder.

Q. Previously you had mentioned that you thought TCU would be in a better position once you were fully vested revenue-wise with the conference. You're there now. What can fans expect to see that's any different than what we have previously seen now that you're making the same amount of money as Texas, Oklahoma or anybody else?

GARY PATTERSON: I don't know. This is our first year that that happens. The thing about TCU has always been when we build facilities we don't get a chance to borrow or bond it on the athletic side, everything we do we have to raise up front so I think the best thing about us going forward is we're going to be able to take care of our coaches better, take care of our athletes better because everything we've done up to this point our new stadium, weight room, locker room, training room, equipment room, indoor, all of it is paid for and our new recruiting room that we're putting up all has been raised with private money. So everything we're going to be able to use going forward is going to be able to keep. You don't have to wait as long as to get it, but I think keeping coaches and being able to take care of your student-athletes better from that part of it, and we're on a -- as far as a foundation, one of the things I said when we came into the Big XII Conference is there's not even a question whether you should do it.

The University financially is going to be on a lot better ground as far as its athletic programs are concerned

but my job just got harder. But that's the way you would want it because we got a better opportunity now to play for a national championship because of who we play and we do things.

So fully vested and do all of it, chancellor and the head coach -- excuse me, the athletic director and the board of trustees will take care of all that. But it makes a lot of difference because we basically had our own TV because the University had to spot TCU athletics and now we're going to be able to stand on our own.

Q. You talked about the schedule here, Gary, and you get to play everybody else. You're going to see a lot of returning quarterbacks from a year ago, Patrick, Seth, Baker, how would you evaluate the Conference's crop of quarterbacks?

GARY PATTERSON: Obviously, you think I'm going to give bulleted-point material? Obviously they won a lot of football games and you have to go ready to play. Obviously Baker did an unbelievable job. Oklahoma got in the playoffs. Patrick has been burning it up. When you play in this conference you've got to understand you're always going to be play great skilled players and great quarterbacks. It's one of the reasons we have played in a 5 defensive back system because you've got to be able to give people different looks and I want to practice every day what I do all the time.

But you've got some unbelievable offensive minds in this league. If you go down the list everybody presents a different challenge, and every year just like I talked about before you've got to put yourself in a position that you can take some things away if you can. That's one of the reasons we put so much of a premium on speed in our secondary and on our defense just because -- and give up size for the simple reason of what these offenses can do to you, and you've got to chase down quarterbacks. It's that 12th guy that can run with the football all of the time, and in both Patrick and Baker's situation they both can take off with the football. Anytime you have to defend a guy like that it always causes a lot more problems.

Q. Curious how your nonconference scheduling philosophy has shifted from the conferences you used to be in to now that you are a permanent Big 12 member.

GARY PATTERSON: It hasn't. We always felt like you play what I would call a stretch game. Somebody would believe that we weren't supposed to win, like we had Arkansas home-and-home. We had Minnesota home-and-home last couple of years. We had Ohio State home-and-home, and a 50/50 game and one you should win. The thing that we've always felt like, you've got to test yourself before you get into your conference.

You always worry about that. If you had four games and I would tell you that you would want two you should win or two 50/50s and then one stretch game. I don't think that you want to go, because of the toughness of the conference, I don't think that you want to go any more than one stretch game because of everybody else you have to play.

But that's pretty much been the philosophy between -- I've been through -- been a part of three chancellors and three athletic directors in my 19 years. So every one of them is different is and each of them had a different philosophy. One of the things they had the same philosophy on is winning trumps financial, because if you win that everything else comes. So we always tried to measure ourselves before we got into conference and hopefully be 2-1 for sure going into conference play and hopefully 3-0, and if you do then you have a pretty good football team and then get ready to play.

Q. Gary, do you think Baylor did the right thing by parting ways with Coach Briles?

GARY PATTERSON: You know, Baylor is not my problem. TCU is my problem.

Q. Coach, everyone talks about recruiting, but the two guys you landed over the off-season, Doug Meacham and Sonny Cumbie, retaining those two guys how much is that something to help moving forward?

GARY PATTERSON: Not just those two guys, everybody else gets lost, all nine of my coaches have been offered jobs, full-time guys. So we've lost one, Kenny Perry that went to Kansas this last year. DeMontie went to Missouri as the defensive coordinator. So for us, you know, I think, it's a compliment to TCU and Fort Worth that we've kept coaches and they've stayed. As I was telling somebody earlier, Sonny, in Sonny's case was offered by Texas, but it wasn't anything about Texas. Texas is an unbelievable university. Got great football tradition, and for us, I think Sonny's whole thing of where he grew up, understand he lives about 30 seconds from the office. He really liked his friends he had in Fort Worth. It just wasn't about football. I think that also -- the only thing I could say myself is I would have liked to have hired people that aren't just good football coaches, but when we hired Doug and Sonny, it wasn't just about X's and O's. I wanted to find two coaches that were respected by high school coaches and recruit in the state of Texas, and I wanted two guys that I could put together along with the staff that I had that would have chemistry because it's hard for your team to have chemistry with the players if your coaches don't.

You're going to spend almost 18, 19 hours a day with

each other and so those guys did a great job of taking everybody in. They did a great job of meshing together. You have Rusty Burns and Jarrett Anderson along with Curtis Luper, both those other two days has been offense active coordinators also, so easily you could have put four guys in the same room and understand they wouldn't have had to get along if they didn't want to and they all kinda stepped up, did what they needed to do and it's really turned out great.

For me, it's been a blessing to be a part of something where you didn't have to worry about calling people in the office and reminding them we're all on one staff and that happens in other places in the world.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you for your comments. Good luck for the season.