

Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

Monday, July 18, 2016

Kliff Kingsbury

Texas Tech



THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Texas Tech Head Coach, Kliff Kingsbury. Coach, any opening statement?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We'll go directly to questions.

Q. Kliff, can you talk about the defensive line transfers, Pipkins and Kolin Hill, and if you think they can come in and make an impact?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, those are two guys, depending on, to step in and have a major impact. They redshirted for us last year, had to step out because of the transfer, bigger players than we have had, strong, physical, big-time players, which will help that defensive line. You throw Breiden Fehoko in there with them and Gary Moore and Zach Barnes, now you've got an experienced defensive line.

Q. Obviously Patrick broke out and had a great year last year. What's he been working on and how can you be better this year?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think the biggest thing was not playing baseball, and it's the first full off-season he's ever had as a football player. So the weight room, film with his teammates, working on mechanics and working on his footwork. He worked on becoming a better all-around quarterback and last year made spectacular plays, really cared us at times, moving around and making things happen. This year we're going to work on things with him when the ordinary play is there let's take it. When you have to be extraordinary you have that ability to go do it. I think you will see a much more refined, athletic, polished quarterback this fall.

Q. Kliff, Tech had a reputation of system quarterbacks with you and Hodges and Symons and Graham, whoever. In recent years you had Brewer go to Virginia Tech and do well and Davis Webb, wherever he ended up. I can't keep up. You've got a great quarterback still on campus. Has that changed? Are you guys attracting better talent than in the old days? You're doing great with it, but you're getting better quarterback talent than you used to.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I hope so. I think there is better quarterback development throughout the state. I think

our Texas high school coaches do such a great job with their programs developing those quarterbacks through seven-on-seven which is year-round now, even in middle school those kids are getting great work through their high school programs. I think it's a testament to those guys.

Quarterbacks want to play in a system like we run. There is a great history of throwing the football and putting up great numbers and leading your team at that position at Texas Tech so we've been fortunate to have some really good ones come through there and hopefully that continues.

Q. There's been a lot of instability in your program as far as a defensive coordinator is concerned. How crucial is it from a play-making standpoint and a recruiting standpoint to keep your defensive coordinator for a second year? If he does make drastic improvements are you worried about him going to a different program for a head coaching job?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Great question. I think you look at the Big 12 and who has won the Big 12 the last four, five, six years. They've all had a defensive coordinator in place and built some continuity at that position and that's what we have to do. Coach Gibbs did a tremendous job at the University of Houston. He's made big strides at Texas Tech and I expect us to be much improved on that side of the ball and if that were given him. To be a head coach he needs to take that job, but we would love to have him three, four, five years, as long as he will stay.

Q. You touched on seven-on-seven a minute ago and they just had the big event in College Station. All the coaches here in this state, everybody knows what an emphasis is on seven-on-seven now. When those players get to you, should we be changing what in our minds constitutes good defense and good defensive play from how these kids are being brought up now?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Once again, I think it's more the game, the way it's changed. When you're talking about 17, 18 possessions a game, you're going to score some points, that's just how it goes, the rules in college football are different than the NFL and the clock stops when you get a first down. So there are a lot of opportunities in a game for people to score and in the

Big 12 as fast as we play, defenses are going to get tired, it's part of it. You're never going to have the staple statistics that an SEC team has because of the of play. When you watch Bowl games and you watch Big 12 teams play SEC teams there are going to be points scored, so I don't think it's as much seven-on-seven development I think in our league. The amount of possessions, the speed with which we play, you're never going to see 7-point-a-game defenses.

Q. It's fair to say that Patrick Mahomes II and Baker Mayfield are two of the best quarterbacks in the league. Would you say that both schools ended up in the best case scenario out of that situation?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It appears so. I like both of those young men a lot. I know loss has come from Baker's side, but loved coaching him, loved the chip on his shoulder, cheered for him in every game except one, and it's been fun to see the success he has had. Patrick has stepped in for year three and was poised for a very good year, and I think that's where Baker wanted to be and it's worked out for him there and he's had a tremendous run. I know Patrick wanted to be at Texas Tech and both guys have had a tremendous run and there is yet to come.

Q. We just saw two incredible playmakers in Jakeem and DeAndre move on to the next level. What's in the pipeline here? I know that you got 'em and what came out of the spring and when who should we be looking forward to?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: You don't replace two guys like that. Jakeem was our all-time leading receiver at Texas Tech and DeAndre had a thousand yards. So they will be playing on Sundays. That's where I think we're going to be strong at wide receiver is on our outside. We have Dylan Cantrell coming back who redshirted last year. Reggie Davis had nine touchdowns. On the other side Devin Lauderdale will be a senior. Derrick Willies is a big-time transfer, junior college wide receiver. They're grown men out there, and from what I saw in the spring that will be our strength in the outside receiver position.

So I think the ball will go more there and at running back, Justin Stockton had limited touches because of DeAndre, but he's as explosive of a back as I've seen around and I expect him to have a big impact this year.

Q. Kliff, the Big 12 rule change on walk-ons transferring within the conference the Mayfield Rule, did you and Texas Tech support that rule change?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yes, yes, we voted in favor of it.

Q. Big 12 Championship Game coming in a year, do you have any thoughts on how you would like to

see that structured? What are your thoughts?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't have much expertise as far as the championship game. I do think we had to make that move given this 13th data point. If the teams have already played and then they run it back, is that going to be fun for the fans. I don't know. I think it's exciting for us to have a showcase game like that late in the season and give us the playoff committee another data point to look at but how we're going to structure it. The divisions, you worry, because do we not play OU one year or Baylor one year, TCU, you hate to see those games go away.

Q. Patrick Mahomes II is obviously your number one quarterback, but can you go through the depth chart on your quarterback? It looks like maybe a true freshmen could be the second guy?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He's got a chance. Jett Duffey had a really good spring for us, was a tremendous player here in the DFW area. Played a similar offense, so understands what we are trying to do. But right now we have Nic Shimonek, transferred from Iowa two years ago, earned a scholarship with us and has really come along, one of the hardest workers on the team, and we're going to give Jett every opportunity to get that job, but Nic really played well this spring.

Q. If memory serves me correctly, really the last veteran quarterback you had was Case Keenum back in Houston. Going into this spring, how much more are you able to install what Patrick Mahomes II's compounded given the fact that he gave up baseball, and how much more confidence does it give you going into the season having a third-year guy?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It's huge. When you are in the third year of the same system it goes a long way and he has complete control out there. Now you watch the way he operates, the way he's checking the line, what he's seeing, he's made huge strides. I think the first two years he did it a lot on athleticism and natural talent and I really saw him take strides as being a great quarterback.

If what I saw this spring translates to the field this fall then he will have a very special year.

Q. Can you talk about who the leaders are on that defense, the linebacker position and where you think they take a big step?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I think we have some veteran secondary guys, Keenon Ward has now played for three years. Justis Nelson has played for four years and we will have a couple of senior corner backs. And linebackerwise, D'Vonta Hinton who played as a true freshman last year made some good strides at that position. We have a transfer from Houston, Luke Stice,

Malik Jenkins. It's a group that has played a lot. They've grown up, taken their lumps and it's made them mentally tougher and I saw that this spring. So I hope that carries over into training camp and into the season.

Q. We get to see a personal side of Patrick. We know he's important on the field, but how much of a leader has he been off the field for you?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He's been phenomenal. As you know, being out and around him, he's very humble, soft-spoken, doesn't toot his own horn and his players -- our players on our team love that. He's one of the most natural leaders I've ever been around as far as they just follow him. He has that mystique about him, the way he plays the game, cares about people, the way he does he want try to put himself above the team, his teammates respond to that.

This is his team now. We had some good quarterbacks around prior to that and now Davis has gone to Cal and will have a tremendous career there, but this is Patrick's team and it's been cool to see him fall into that role.

Q. With all the talk about satellite camps over the summer, can you talk about how you've used those in the past and if it changes your thoughts on them in the future?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: For us, it's good because of where we're at geographically in the state to bring our product to San Antonio, Houston, Austin, Dallas, East Texas, to get our brand out there. From what I saw of those mega camps, I don't know if we're accomplishing what we want. When you are talking about 800 kids at a camp, I don't know if that's a good thing for kids or parents. But for us to travel around the state where sometimes kids on official visit sometimes have a hard time getting up to us, it has helped us.

Q. With everything that went down in Baylor, does that give you -- do you get nervous and say, hey, are we doing everything we're supposed to do? Do you talk to your players? Does it send a chill up your spine?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think it made all coaches take a second look at how you do things. That's close to home. Coach Briles had an at the amount of success. I've known him a long time and you try to coach your players your core values and how to be a good man. But you're not with them 24 hours a day, so you talk about accountability with your own players and holding each other to that. But, yeah, it definitely I think made every coach in America take a step back and say okay what can we do better in that area.

I think also as far as second chances go with players

they have to understand there will be many less second chances given because of what has transpired across the country recently.

Q. Just going back to what you said about the satellite camps and maybe not being able to accomplish everything with so many kids there and more and more teams in and out of conference recruiting Texas heavier, what are the sorts of things that you're trying to do to elevate your program to the next level on the recruiting front?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Win! I think that's the best thing you can do. I think kids see that first and foremost. They want to be part of a winner so we're trying to take that next step. We feel like we've recruited well, going on year four have great relationships across the state now, it's time to take that next step.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much for your comments and good luck for the season.