

# Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

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## Jim Grobe

Baylor

THE MODERATOR: Joining us now is Baylor Head Coach, Jim Grobe. Welcome, Coach. Your thoughts about the upcoming season?

JIM GROBE: I'm probably more excited than any coach in America to get the season started, looking forward to August 4th, our first practice day. I will tell you, I've been around the players for a while now, I'm still trying to learn all the names. I know most of the kids' first names by now. They know me as Coach, so it's been an easier job for them. I'm very impressed with our players. We've got a great, great group of kids, been impressed with our coaching staff and the way they have handled themselves in this adversity. They have been on vacation for a while. I wanted to keep their vacation schedules sorta the same that Art had, so they've had time with their families and I think they're back and ready to go.

So we will be spending some more time together, but I've been very impressed with our players and with our coaching staff. I know the challenge is great, we play a lot of good football teams going forward, but we've got to get people to understand that we've got a great group of kids at Baylor University and I think Baylor going forward is better than we have ever been. So proud to be at Baylor and can't wait to start the season.

### **Q. What can we expect that will be different from Jim Grobe's Baylor football team as opposed to Art Briles's football team?**

JIM GROBE: I've been so impressed with what Art and the football program has accomplished over the last few years. I'm an old West Virginia hillbilly, and we got that feeling if it ain't broke, don't fix it. So from strictly a football perspective, I think we want to continue to play fast and furious on offense. We want to keep those same principles that Art had. Defensively, I think Phil Bennett, our defensive coordinator is the best there is in the country and it's a challenge at Baylor because the defenses typically had to typically play more snaps than most people. They get more serious out on the field.

But I think Phil is doing a great job combining four-man and three-man fronts. We're thin in the defensive line so we may have to play more three-man stuff. I've always been a guy who stressed special teams, so



that's something in talking to the coaches I think we might be able to improve on a little bit.

And I think, you know, the thing that we want to do is we want to continue to play hard. I'll know more once we get into practice. I think there are some things, I like what we have done offensively and defensively in the past. I think as we get into practice it will give me a better beat on what we might need to improve. I've been a head coach now for 20 years, going on 40 years of coaching, so I've seen a lot of things.

I'm not here to make a lot of changes. I thought that was really important especially for our players to have the same terminology, the same type of schemes as much as possible but hopefully as we go forward if I do see things that I think might help us be a little bit better we might put a different spin on a few things, but I'm not here to change a whole lot.

### **Q. It's been a turbulent several months for the program there. How do you keep your players from having a woe-is-me attitude? Football is something you gotta want to do. How did you get them excited about the upcoming season?**

JIM GROBE: It absolutely was a challenge and there was no road map to this. When I got in and first met with the team, I think they were somewhat skeptical of a lot of things. They were certainly heartbroken that they lost Art. I know the staff was in shock, and so it's been a journey, to be honest. I think we've gotten to the point now where the players are trusting of me, and I think they wanted that I'm here to help, I'm not here to change things, some coaches come in and they try to run off the old guy's players and bring in their fresh recruiting classes.

I'm not here to do that. A lot of coaches come in and this is probably a little bit unprecedented, I don't know how many head coaches have taken over a program and kept all of the assistant coaches but I felt like that was important for our players with our players' welfare first and foremost. So we're to a point now where the players have had time to digest everything. I've spent enough time with them. I think now that they understand I'm fully here to help them and I think our coaches understand the same thing. I've never been a head coach that's lost the perspective of being an assistant coach. I've always wanted to be an assistant

coach to this very day. I would like to make all the decisions that head coaches make but coach the linebackers and have nobody know I'm the head coach. I've always had an assistant coach mentality.

So I want to support our coaches as much as I possibly can and I felt like in keeping the coaching staff together there is nothing that would be more settling to the players than to have their coach in that meeting room every day. So I feel like we're on track. I think the kids are pumped up. The coaches are getting back in from vacation now. I think everybody's on point to start playing some football.

**Q. With all the talk surrounding the program, it's all been nonfootball recently. All the success that Art had on the field and in the standings, how daunting is this task for you to come in and try to continue that while also changing the culture off the field?**

JIM GROBE: Well, there is no question that this is a daunting task. And as I mentioned before, you know, there is no real road map for this. I do think for me personally I admire what Art's football teams have been able to accomplish on the field. I really don't want to change that. I'm hopeful that we can continue to be very competitive every timeout. We talk so much about changing the culture. That's not the deal with these players at Baylor. I think most people understand this. The majority of our kids are great kids. I mean great kids! It's a shame when a few guys can really hurt a large group of people in such a devastating way, really.

So from our standpoint, what I want to do is let people know that the majority of our kids are fantastic kids and their programs, the problems that we're dealing with at Baylor or have dealt with at Baylor to this point are probably problems at every university in the country. I hate to say every one, but I'm guessing most universities are having some of the same issues we've had at Baylor. You can make a call as to whether you think Baylor was too strong in the way they dealt with it.

Unbelievably, I've had people tell me they don't think they dealt with it strongly enough. But I think going forward, do we want to learn from our past mistakes? We absolutely want to learn from our past mistakes, and we're doing that. Baylor University right now is better than ever because we have confronted some problems and made changes in the way we deal with problems going forward and I'm talking about serious problems. I'm not talking about missing class and late to weights and those type of things.

But I think the things we have put in place at Baylor and it an ongoing process are going to help us be better going forward. So I want to put my arms around the good kids we've got and love them up and I've been able to do that, I think. Once we start football

practice I might have to kick 'em in the seat the of the pants once in a while.

But my whole attitude has been that, and everybody knows that, that the majority of the kids we've got in our program are fantastic kids and we need to continue to stress that. We've had some misbehavior on some kids' parts, and it's been hurtful to so many people. But I think going forward the message I would like for people to get is that at Baylor University we've got a wonderful school, a great compass of where we want to go right now. We're on track to be better than we've every been, and we really have an outstanding group of young men.

**Q. Baylor talk has dominated Big 12 Conference Football Media Days so far and you're probably going to be asked all season about something you had no part in. Why did you want to take this job?**

JIM GROBE: Well, I really felt like when Coach Teaff called, I worked with Coach Teaff with the American Football Coaches Association, was on his Ethics Committee, I chaired his Ethics Committee for seven or eight years, he originally promised me three years, but he's hard to say no to, so he kept me on there. I did a lot of different committee work. I did All-American Committee, I did the Rules Committee, I did top-25 voting, all those things I did for Coach Teaff and with Coach Teaff, and he called that night when Art had been let go and asked if I would come and help.

I don't think Coach knew that I had him on speakerphone and my wife got to hear that, and she wasn't very happy about that at the time. We had some pretty nice trips planned. I had not done the travel thing. I worked for fox Sports on the ACC Gridiron Live Show when I first left Wake Forest and tried to get in second year, but nothing worked out that I wanted. So we had planned a lot of things to do together and we went home and prayed about it and got up the next day and spent some time, and I just felt like the main reason was Coach Teaff, and with that, being able to help and be in a position where, you know, I've got some experience. I'm not trying to come in here and make a career move. I'm here to help. I'm here to help the players first and foremost and secondly, help this coaching staff get back on track.

**Q. Coach, what's the biggest challenge? Do you feel that it's your responsibility to help rebuild the image of the Baylor football program?**

JIM GROBE: Well, I think it's really, really important for our players to understand that they're going to be closely watched. My point to the players is let's make sure that things that we're in the newspaper for or on TV or radio going forward are for making tackles and scoring touchdowns, that's what we want to do. We

want to be known for doing the right things.

I think obviously there is nothing more important to me. I don't think there is anything more important to any coach than having good kids, having good character, doing good things on and off the field. We have a ton of kids on our football teams that take mission trips, that do community service, that help in the community. So we've got a wonderful group of kids on our football team. Going forward they have to understand that an individual's actions can adversely hurt and reflect on so, so many people.

I think from our perspective going forward, our players understand that -- and I don't want to take away from winning. Winning is very, very important. But absolutely nothing is more important than our kids' character and integrity and I think, you know, we need to show that in everything we do, that Baylor's a fantastic place to go to school and that we have fantastic kids playing for us.

**Q. Jim, so much has been made about the assistant coaches remaining on your staff that were a part of Art Briles's staff and part of that culture and yesterday interim President Garland said the way you change the culture is by having a new President, a new Athletic Director, a new head coach. But obviously those coaches remain in their position. What have you implemented in your obviously short time still at this point within the Baylor family? What have you changed to help modify the culture that exists there?**

JIM GROBE: Well, I have to push back, again, and tell you that is not a culture at Baylor University. We don't have a culture of bad behavior at Baylor University. Our kids, I thought Holly and I had a tough time raising two kids in Matt and Ben and they turned out to be great kids. But anybody that's raised kids understands that when you got over 100 of those guys it's a little bit tougher.

For me personally, when I took the job I was assured that I could make any changes with the coaching staff that I needed to make. When I got here, my plan was to be at Baylor's direction, really. I'm working for Baylor University. When I got here, I found, I've had nobody tell me about assistant coaches' misbehavior. If our assistant coaches' conduct had been bad, if anybody told me that, if anybody can come to me and point out that the coaches have not behaved properly then I would have no problems making changes.

But I think from our players' standpoint and from our players' perspective, we lost our President. We lost our athletic director. We lost our football coach. We lost some other staff members. So for me to come in and

make changes without reason made no sense to me whatsoever. I will tell you as a coach I've never been a coach to hire friends.

I think the tendency for any new coach from a comfort perspective is to come in and make a lot of changes and bring all his biddies in to coach for him. But looking back at what this football staff has done, and I'm strictly talking about football right now, they have been very successful and done a great job on the field. If I felt like there was misconduct on the part of any of my coaches I would have no problems dealing with that.

But as I've said, I've not found that to be the case and nobody's told me that is the case so going forward in thinking of the great kids that we have on our team right now, I felt like the best thing we could do for them is to try to keep consistency in the coaches, have the same coach in the meeting room, have the same terminology, and try to, you know, put our arms around the players and take care of them. I thought the best way to take care of them was to try to keep the coaching staff together as long as I didn't find any problems when I got here.

**Q. With the players that the school chose to let go from the 2016 class and some of the kids that were committed early in 2017 that chose to decommit and obviously a final resolution still pending with things right now, what is your expectation? What is your strategy for player replenishment and recruiting going forward?**

JIM GROBE: That's an issue for us right now. I think one of our biggest challenges playing this season and going forward is numbers. I think we are at about 70 full-scholarship kids right now. We're allowed 85, so our numbers are down. But it's not just from decommitted kids, and I would want to let everybody understand that the kids that did come to Baylor that stayed committed to Baylor are a really talented, wonderful group of kids that honored their commitment and I couldn't be more excited or happier with the freshmen that are at Baylor right now.

The decommits, there were probably about, and I'm going to give you a ballpark, I think there were probably four kids that were difference-maker-type kids and we're really disappointed to lose them.

There were some kids that were probably project kids that needed to develop, so I think we can, in this recruiting class coming up we can replace them. I had a couple of kids that were in trouble academically. We had four kids that have been medically disqualified that are hurt to the extent that they can't play football again.

Of course we had some misbehavior kids. So that takes us down to 70 scholarships. I think we will probably come to camp with somewhere around 100 kids, counting our walk-on kids, and we've got some really good walk-on kids that will help us. We're going to have to be creative in our practice, try to make sure that, you know, we don't get anybody banged up by doing too much in any one practice because of our numbers.

But I like our talent. I like where we are and I think going forward in recruiting we're probably going to have 25 full scholarships to give in the next recruiting class, and if I was a young guy out there realizing that Baylor has dealt with some issues that needed to be dealt with, that maybe aren't being dealt with at some other places, I think going forward we should hit a home run with this next recruiting class. The nice thing for kids coming in next year is when they come in they know they're going to have a chance to play in a hurry.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach, for your comments. Wish you the best of luck.

JIM GROBE: Thank you.