

Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

Tuesday, July 19, 2016

Bill Snyder

Kansas State

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on the dais is Kansas State Coach, Bill Snyder. Welcome, and your thoughts about the upcoming season?

BILL SNYDER: Thank you very much, and I will be very brief and open it up to questions. Nothing about the upcoming season, but certainly I think and perhaps all coaches have shared that.

Two thoughts: One is, you know, the feelings from our program, our state and our university for some of the tragic events that have taken place here in Dallas and our prayers and heartfelt feelings towards the families that have suffered dramatically through the past several days. Also a note, the last time I was here a year ago I think I spoke to a Big 12 staple, Donnie Duncan, who is just, he stands for Big 12 and Big 12 football Donnie passed here not too long ago. So my heartfelt prayers to his family and certainly to the Big 12 Conference because they suffered through the loss as well.

Q. What has Jerry Kill brought to the program so far as the new Associate Athletic Director?

BILL SNYDER: Jerry is a good fellow. I really like Jerry and enjoy Jerry and he was coaching in the state of Kansas when I was at Kansas State University. He would come to Manhattan and we would talk and there were things he wanted to find out we may have been doing. But he's a football guy. But he's a football guy and I appreciate that. He's extremely helpful and he's there to be there any way he can. He understands what we are about.

I just visited with him yesterday. It was his first day on the job, so to speak. He had just gotten into Manhattan, first day on the job, and they're kind of getting settled in right now. But he will be fun to talk with.

Q. Coach, seems every year there is a couple of schools that have stadium renovations, facilities upgrades, you all did that a few years ago. In your mind, what's the importance of those sorts of things? Is it about the fans, about recruiting? What do you put the emphasis on with those sorts of things?

BILL SNYDER: Probably the fan experience, I think, is



really significant. I just have a different approach as it relates to facilities.

We've been doing some type of remodeling or addition from the time we arrived in '89. I think we started in 1990 and a little something virtually every year. My approach has always been I would like to have our coaches, our staff and our players in a comfortable environment, an efficient environment and that's what's most significant to me. I'm not caught up in the glitz and the glitter, you know, that goes along with it, and I honestly believe, a lot of people say, don't say that, but I honestly believe that we send a bad message with some of it, when we're trying to outdo the Joneses. For young people that you're trying to impart a value system that is not one of instant self-gratification, that makes it a little harder to do.

As I have said so many times I would like young people to come to our program because of a lot of things other than facilities, and certainly they would have to be as I said, comfortable and efficient. But you would like to have them come because of a value system that we have, the education that can be provided at our university, the kind of people that we have at our university and in our community of Manhattan. Those are the things that are more significant to me.

Q. Coach, for All-Big 12 players on defense entering the season I was wondering if you could talk to me about Dante Barnett, Jordan Willis, Will Geary and Elijah Lee. What strides have you seen from them and in their development that maybe landed them at this spot?

BILL SNYDER: I'm pleased for all four of them. They're all good, young guys. The first two that you mentioned, Scott, are here with us, serving as captains in our program. I like the fact that they're good, young people. I like the fact that they are valued young people in terms of having an intrinsic value system that allows them to be productive leaders, and obviously leadership is important in our program as it is any other program.

You know, I think all of them are committed to trying to provide the quality leadership and not only to provide the leadership but to be able to walk the walk, so to speak or walk the talk, so to speak and demonstrate their adherence to a value system, adherence to a set

of standards and try to promote that throughout the program. Obviously good players, but also very good young men as well.

Q. There's been some talk that college football in a few years might choose to eliminate kickoffs and go in another way. That's a play that you put a lot of emphasis on. I was just curious on your thoughts of that possibility?

BILL SNYDER: We had that discussion a few minutes ago. Somebody asked me and in all reality I thought I was up to date, but I wasn't aware of that discussion. It makes sense. We at one time moved the yard marker back 5 yards to open up the opportunities for kickoff returns, so my son who is the Special Teams Coordinator went to work on that and we've been pretty productive in that category.

If it were just strictly football, I would say I would hate to see that happen. But it's not strictly about football. It's about the security and the safety of young people that play the game, and if that's part of it, there's statistics out there. On a percentage basis, it might be conceivable that more of those types of injuries take place on kickoff, kickoff returns and the normal happenstance during the course of a ball game. I'd have to look at those.

But I'm like any other coach. I don't think I'm any different than any other coach. We need to do anything and everything that keeps the game as safe as it possibly can be. So just from a technical standpoint you would like to have the opportunity to return them but not at the risk of creating those kinds of injuries.

Q. With Dalton Risner being the only returning guy in your offensive line this season, what steps has he taken this season to really progress as a leader, and how has he helped develop the new faces coming in this season?

BILL SNYDER: Dalton is still a young pup in his own right as well, having the opportunity to become a starter at such a young age is such an intricate position as offensive center. And Dalton is here, so you will have an opportunity to visit with him as well, excellent young man, valued person, good young man. He's been, during the course of the summer he was elected captain at the end of our practice, in the spring. This summer he has done an excellent job of trying to assist all the younger guys we have in our program and all positions but specifically offensive line.

We've got some newcomers that have come in and they're trying to learn our way. He's been a great teacher in that respect and with teaching your peers comes the leadership role and the significance of it and

he's been very, very good at it. I think young people, young offensive linemen in our program really have profited from his help during the course of the summer.

Q. I've really admired your career over the years, and you've done a great job in Manhattan, obviously. But one of the things you've been able to do I think that's impressive is coaching continuity. You've got Coach Hayes on your staff, a lot of tenure, Coach Miller, Coach Dimel, what has been like with that coaching continuity and how has it helped continue the success of your program?

BILL SNYDER: I think it goes without saying, as long as the greater continuity with great people is significant, and that's where I've been fortunate and my entire career there or my entire career anywhere I've been blessed to be around really wonderful people. People that are genuine. People that care. People that as it relates to football are knowledgeable about what they do. Some of them are here today that have been through our program, and I have a great appreciation for them. Sacrifices that are made, you know, the people in our program truly do make some very genuine sacrifices in regards to time, effort and all that goes along with it.

A brief answer to the question is it's very significant to have that kind of continuity where you don't have to go through the reteaching or changing of things that you firmly believe in, not that we're not open to change, we certainly are. I love to entertain new thoughts, new ideas, et cetera.

But all these guys have been very productive in our program, and there is a continuity with the players as well. You hear some players get up and talk and say, well, I've gone through four coordinators in four years and that's kind of tumultuous, or it can be. We have been fortunate not to have to go through that over the past quarter of a decade.

Q. You've been a proponent of the Big 12 championship game in the past. Are you glad it's coming back? What would be your preference in determining the two teams? Divisions? No divisions?

BILL SNYDER: Well, I am a product of the initial, I was in the Big Eight Conference. We were at Kansas State, and when we initiated the Big 12 Conference. We've been a part of it, and I've said this so many times, and I firmly believe in it, not my decision to make by any stretch of the imagination. But I'm a firm believer that the way we hit it was right. We had two divisions, six teams each, championship game, and I've been a proponent of that ever since.

It was beneficial for our program. We lost the opportunity in a championship game to play for a National Championship, but even at that I have a strong belief that it was in the very best interest of at least our program.

Q. You've talked you're most pleased at Kansas State with the pride that you helped instill at the University, what your football program helped instill. Outside of winning games what's your advice to somebody who is trying to instill pride in a place? What would you tell them about how to go about that?

BILL SNYDER: Be open, be honest, be you, is kind of simple. I understand this. And care, you really have to care. There is a long history to that, but you remember, Barry, when we went to Kansas State, the dialogue, our attendance was an average of 13,000 per ball game and there was an NCAA regulation at the time that indicated that to be a Division I football at that time you had to have an average attendance of 19,000. So our Board of Regents, which handles all the colleges and universities in the state, was contemplating what happens with Kansas State.

There were two options on the board. One was to drop football and the other one was to become a Division II school. They were in the process of really making that decision. The thought, that next year, and I appealed to people that supported Kansas State people, and the next year we had 19,000 in attendance which put us over the hump in that respect. After that it went to 31, then to 50, and we're maxed out at 51,000 right now. Not a big stadium by any stretch of the imagination.

But my point is, the Kansas State people responded and there wasn't any particular reason because we were not a very good program. We had 47 guys on scholarship when you could have 95, lowest scholarship program in the history of college football. The only college football at the time that had ever lost 500 ball games. You had all those things going against and you yet people stood up and made their way to see some of the not very good football but still support their program, and it's grown that way. That's been a great asset to our community. That's why a lot of people always maybe addressed our schedule.

But I always wanted to play at home and get teams that could come to Manhattan with us not having to return the game and the purpose behind it was strictly for our community. Like I said, we don't have 100,000-see the stadium as so many do but we still bring approximately \$20 million into the small community of Manhattan every time we play at home. So playing at home had a dramatic impact on our community, and consequently, that's part of addressing the question in that the people

of our community became so embracing of our program because our program was there in part to be able to benefit the community of Manhattan, Kansas. I hope that answers the question.

Q. There seems to be a renaissance of running backs in this league. It was hard to pick who might be the All-Big 12 guy. Looking back over 20 years, do you think the Big 12 may be coming back full circle to where it was in its inception?

BILL SNYDER: In terms of running backs being more productive?

Q. Running backs, running game.

BILL SNYDER: That's a good question. I don't know that I could answer that. I don't think they have every been, maybe I don't see it the same way you do. I've never seen them -- even though with the onset of the type of movement, passing game that college football has grown to, I don't think anybody, well, I won't say anybody. Most teams have not divorced themselves from that young guy that you can put the ball in his hands and know that you're going to get positive yardage.

I think if you go back and look you may not have the 50 carries a ball game, but you're still getting 25, 30 carries a ball game out of an awful lot of running backs in the country. I don't know. In answer to your question, if it is moving in any direction, I agree with you. I think it is perhaps moving back where you're going to find running backs having maybe a greater impact than what they have, yeah.

Q. Every year it seems there is a newcomer to your program or former walk-on in your program that surprises everybody nationally outside of Manhattan with a breakout season. Did you want to give any hints out on who that could be this year?

BILL SNYDER: No, and I hope we have one (laughter.) I could identify for you several names of young people that will be new to the media when the season starts, and I would like to hope that they have those excellent seasons and those kinds of seasons that you're talking about.

But I'm certainly not going to divulge who they are because they read the newspapers as well. Well, they read it on their iPads. But I don't want them to think that I think too much of them right now. Thank y'all very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach, appreciate it. Good luck.