

**July 30, 2013**



An Interview With:

## **CINCINNATI COACH TOMMY TUBERVILLE**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by University of Cincinnati, Head Coach Tommy Tuberville, Austen Bujnoch, and quarterback Brendon Kay, and linebacker Greg Blair, and nose tackle Jordan Stepp. An opening statement.

COACH TUBERVILLE: Good morning. Glad to be here. We're excited, all coaches are excited right now because we're getting ready to start a new season.

It's not nothing that's different because we've all been working hard and putting this thing together for the last eight months after everybody's season has ended. Different for me, obviously, because it's a new football team, new area, playing against different teams. So we've got a lot of catching up to do.

But we're excited. We've got good football players. The great thing is I've noticed our players have tremendous work ethic. They get along well.

Football is a team sport. It's not an individual sport. It takes more than one guy. It takes about 50 to 55 to play each week, get them going in the right direction. They have to play well together. It's kind of like a machine.

And, again, it's -- one guy's not going to win for you. You have to have a lot of people. So our players have worked hard.

I've got a good, young coaching staff that's hit the ground running. We've recruited awfully hard.

We had good spring practice. The key is your strength and conditioning staff to get these guys into shape that you want in terms of your philosophy. And, again, going back to what I said originally was the work ethic has been outstanding.

So we're excited about the first year of coaching in this league with some new players.

Cincinnati has been one of the bright spots in college football for the last six or seven years, four times winning ten games. That doesn't happen very often.

Playing in two BCS Bowl games, having the opportunity to be on the big stage. And so being at Cincinnati for me, I'm excited to try to keep it going and improve it.

There's been some good coaches come through Cincinnati the last few years. I can remember playing against Cincinnati in 1986 at the University of Miami. We'd go to Nippert Stadium and a packed house, and they didn't have quite the football team they put on the field for the past few years. So I understand that. And I understand the pluses and minuses, but my job is to pick it up and keep it going, make it better. And it all starts with your staff and your football players.

And, again, I'm excited to be around the guys that we have on the team, because I think that they're top-notch, not just football players, but young people that love to play and love to play the sport. Questions?

**Q. You've coached in very established leagues like the SEC, the Big 12. How does this experience of kind of a reinvented league compare to you?**

COACH TUBERVILLE: It will be interesting. Starting in a new conference, a new name. But I've noticed just eight months that I've been here, it all goes back to one thing: We will be broken or made by the media.

We obviously have to put a good product on the field. But we're in some great cities across the country. I've coached in most leagues, and the one thing that we had in those leagues is we had tradition in some of those teams and we had followings. We didn't have the metro cities that we do today in this league.

We have a great opportunity to sell our product to a lot more people than most of the conferences combined.

Just look at the cities that we're in, the opportunity for television, for media. And looking out here today, we have a generous amount of media, but nothing that was at the other leagues.

And for what reason I don't know, because there are some good football teams in this conference. There's some teams that will make a difference in college football. And we'll only do it, though, no matter how good we are, if we're followed by media and television.

And so we're going to do our part as coaches and players. We're going to put a great product out there. If we get help from the media and from television, then we will be sold like the rest of the conferences.

And, again, I've been to the top. And I've seen it happen. But I think the people in this country are going to be surprised by this league and how it does, how it affects the other conferences, because you need more than 10 or 15 schools. And that's pretty much what runs college football right now. It's not conferences, it's schools.

So I think we bring a different product. I think we bring a lot more fan interest from all the big cities, from Houston to Memphis, to Tampa, Orlando, Cincinnati. All those schools have a tremendous amount of population in terms of the difference in the other conferences I've coached in.

So I think we've got a great opportunity. We're going to need some help from you. We're going to need some help from television. But again, we're going to need to do our part, we're going to need to sell it. We're going to need to go out every day and be positive about what we're doing. We're going to have to go out and play some of the other teams, which we are.

We'll not only play some, we'll beat most of them because this conference will play good football. And it's about recruiting. And I've had a lot of talk from a lot of the recruits that's come to me. Coach, I've got an opportunity to go to the SEC, I've got an opportunity to go to the ACC. What kind of conference are you going to have?

We've been very honest with them. It's a new conference, but you have a chance to come here and play in big cities, travel and see different places.

And some players have jumped on board and some have not. But it will get better.

Our recruiting has been excellent the last three or four months, now that we've gotten into naming the conference and what we're doing and the plan we have.

So we have good leadership. We have some of the best coaches in college football that coach in this league. We have some of the best players. We need the opportunity to put it on that stage.

And so I think a lot of it is going to be left up to you out in the audience and television and everybody that's involved in getting all that out.

**Q. Wanted to know, you've seen a lot of big hits in your day, I'm sure. I'd like to know how you size up the new targeting rules that are going to be in effect this year.**

COACH TUBERVILLE: It's going to be interesting. I don't know where it's going to go. I know that as coaches and the administrations, the officials, everybody involved, number one thing is we want safety in our sport. It's a physical sport. We know that. There's some collisions. And one of the reasons that this sport is popular is because it's a physical sport.

It's a sport that you see a lot of different things happen. Kids flipped upside down, the exciting runs, the long pass plays, the big hits. But we're all for safety.

The concussion problem, it's there, but it's not just in football. It's in every sport. So we have to do everything we possibly can to protect players that are defenseless. And that's pretty much what this rule is about. It's not about the tackling, per se, of running backs or quarterbacks. The big blocks. It's about defenseless players, guys that don't see it coming, that don't have the opportunity to protect themselves.

I've been on the national rules committee before. That usually takes up 50 percent of the two or three days that you spend together to try to make the rules better.

So we're for it. We're for anything that protects the players. It's going to be interesting to see how the ejection rule is called. Again, we're for that.

There's going to be some -- I think some mistakes that are going to be made. We have instant replay. I think we're going to be able to protect the innocent player. I think there will be more rules brought up over the years to make it safer. But, again, as coaches we're all for that. We try to teach it the right way.

We try to engrain in our players to make sure they understand: Protect yourself, be cognizant of the other players that you're playing

against.

But it is a physical sport. So you're going to have mistakes made. You'll have things happen on the football field that will have big collisions. But that's part of it.

And hopefully, hopefully this rule will help limit that. And we'll start next week. That will be the first thing we talk about with our players as a team. We'll talk about tackling, talk about blocking, the proper ways to do it, as every team will do.

We'll talk about the rule of protecting the defenseless player. But it will only go so far, because sometimes these things happen in a split second. And when that happens, you're going to obviously have penalties. So hopefully this will eliminate all injuries to the head and to the neck because that's what we're trying to eliminate.

We know that that's not possible to do that, but it's something that we live with and have to live with because, again, it's a sport that's pretty violent.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**