

July 30, 2013



An Interview With:

SMU COACH JUNE JONES

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by SMU. Student-athletes here from SMU are quarterback Garrett Gilbert, linebacker Randall Joyner, and we're pleased to be joined by head coach June Jones.

Coach, and opening statement.

COACH JONES: Well, lunch obviously is on the dais right at the moment because the crowd has thinned out. But I am glad that I have an opportunity to come be a part of this conference.

It's been really an enlightening trip for me. This is the first time I've been to Rhode Island, and Newport is quite an outstanding place. I spent all day yesterday walking around and enjoy the history here.

So it's been pretty good. We're excited about being in this conference. I think the level of play is a step up from what SMU has been involved with Conference USA, and I believe that we're going to have to play some pretty good football to be competitive at this level.

I think the opportunity to be a part of the BCS conference is a first for me and for SMU for a long time. So we're excited about being here.

We got a lot of good young players. We've lost six or seven guys on defense. But we have some young kids that are very talented that I think are going to be good defensive players.

We have I think five or six guys back on offense. And with our quarterback back, and I think a year under his belt, he'll be much, much improved, and I like what I see so far in the offseason of their work ethic.

So I'm excited about the opportunity to be in this new conference. Open it up for questions, I guess.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. This new league seems to be filled with pretty good quarterbacks.

COACH JONES: Yes, whenever you have -- doesn't matter if you're in the National Football League or wherever you are, if you have a returning quarterback, you have a chance to be competitive.

And with that said, I think there's eight or nine guys coming back that started last year for their teams in this conference, and that is a sign that there's going to be some pretty good football played.

When you have consistency at that position, obviously that one person makes it a little easier to win. And I think that will show up this year.

My quarterback is -- very, very interesting. I knew his father very well. He went to Texas. My first month or my first week, I know he had committed to go to the University of Texas long before I got the job at SMU. But the first phone call I made was to his father, to let him know, because his dad played for (indiscernible) at the University of California and was really the first Division I run and shoot quarterback.

With that said I tried to convince him to change his mind and come to SMU, but obviously that didn't work. It took three years, and he did end up finally coming. So I watched him in high school.

Very productive kid. I think what happened at Texas was unfortunate. But at the same time it's a plus for him that he's involved at SMU now and doing what he's doing. I noticed last year by middle of the season he was finally starting to get a little bit of his confidence back.

I think he took it upon his shoulders to compete and win maybe three, four games through the end that just was him, and even though we did it a little bit different than we normally do it, which normally doing it is passing the football. He was a

very good runner. We inserted some things into the game plan to allow him to do some things that he does very well. And he gained a lot of confidence both in the passing game just from doing that.

So I'm excited about him. He's a leader. He's a great kid, and he has the skills to go to the next level.

Q. Talk about your relationship with Coach Mumme and how things are working out so far.

COACH JONES: My relationship with Hal, I was just sharing that I've known Hal for probably 35 years. He first came down -- I was with the Houston Gamblers in the USFL with Jim Kelly at that time. Of course we were running the four wide receiver communist approach at that time to the game, and it obviously was creating a lot of interest. There was nobody in the state of Texas that even knew what four wide receivers at one time in the game were.

So he was at Copperas Cove High School, and he liked what we were doing, went down, put some of our stuff in and had a lot of success. And when I went to Jacksonville, he and a couple of guys -- there was Paul Johnson, Hal, Mike Leach -- would come down to Jacksonville, the USFL, and we spent some time because we had a year we didn't play football with that lawsuit.

So they went back. Hal got the head job at Valdosta State. And when I got the head job at the Falcons, my secretary's son went to play for him, and he would come up to the training camp all the time.

So we kind of just picked each other's brains all the time. When I went to the Hawaii, he was head coach at Mexico State, and so I tried to hire him when I got to SMU two different times. And finally this last time it worked out.

But this spring has been kind of interesting because we spent a lot of time in the film room, talking about what the things that he kind of added to what we did, and I always kind of felt that what we did in our passing game was getting the ball down the field vertically, we did a little better than him, and he was more horizontal.

We've combined some of the approaches, and I'm going to kind of enjoy watching what happens this fall, because I think we stumbled upon some pretty good concepts.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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