

July 28, 2011



An interview with:

## NEBRASKA HEAD COACH BO PELINI

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach Bo Pelini from Nebraska. We'll have coach make an opening statement and then open the floor to questions.

COACH PELINI: We're looking forward to the upcoming season. It's great to be here today. I brought with me Rex Burkhead, our running back, Lavonte David, and Jared Crick, the players representing us today.

We're excited. We're excited about the season. We're opening up here practicing in a little over a week. We've had a great off-season. We've needed it. We required a lot of work because of obviously our first year coming into the Big Ten. We basically had 11 new opponents on our schedule which creates a little bit of a challenge for our football team and our kids.

But our kids are excited. It's going to be an honor to be a part of this conference, to be a part of the tradition, all the things that the Big Ten represents, the tremendous institutions we're going to be joining in the conference and playing against this year and into the future. We're looking forward to that.

It's great to be here at our first Big Ten Media Day.

THE MODERATOR: Time for questions.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about the progress of Taylor Martinez over the summer and early fall, and the depth at quarterback.**

COACH PELINI: We feel really good about where Taylor is. He's had a great off-season. He had a tremendous spring. He's had a phenomenal summer. I think he's more engaged as a leader. I think he's really taken it

upon himself to grow in that area. I think he's becoming a tremendous leader on our football team, holding his teammates accountable, holding himself accountable. I think he's poised to have a great year.

We feel great where we are at the quarterback position. We have a young man who stepped out in the spring as a backup in Brion Carnes. Cody Green choosing to leave, he made a decision that he thought was best for him and his future. We decided to back him on that. We wish him the best of luck.

With Brion, we have Ron Kellogg, Bubba Starling. You all know he's a baseball kid, somebody who has a tough decision that he's going to be facing here in the coming weeks. We'll see how that all plays out. We brought another walk-on in.

We feel good about where the depth is. You can never have too many, we all know that. But we feel real good about the quality of our players and the type of kids we have playing the quarterback position for us. We're real excited about it.

I mentioned the walk-on that we have, we have Joe Broekemeier, we now have his younger brother (Tyson) coming in and we think he's going to be a nice addition so we're excited about it.

**Q. As you said, you have nothing but new teams on the schedule this year. Basically zero familiarity with the teams you play. How do you prepare for them? Do you watch tape?**

COACH PELINI: Yeah, we prepare like we do any other time. We always find the new teams on our schedule. We put a little bit more time into those. Obviously we have 11 of them this year. That required a lot more time. It creates a greater challenge for us.

But at the end of the day, I feel great about the preparation we've had. That started for me way back in February, our staff. We put a lot of work in. We feel good about where we are in that process. I think it will continue right up until we kick it off next week.

But we've got a lot accomplished in this off-season and I think we're ready to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

**Q. Given your program's style of play, how do you feel the Big Ten is a better fit for Nebraska than the Big 12?**

COACH PELINI: I don't know if it's about style of play or anything else. We feel like we can line up and play against anybody in the country. We're going to do our thing. We're going to play our way. Obviously you have to make some adjustments according to who you're playing in a particular week. But we feel like our style, the type of kids we recruit, the type of football team we put on the field can fit into any conference.

Is the style of play a little bit different? In some ways yes, in some ways no. Football is football. You're going to win by the basics, the fundamentals. If you're good at those things, you're going to win football games, no matter who you're playing, no matter what conference you're in.

I do understand that in this conference there are going to be quality athletes, quality coaching. It's going to be a tremendous challenge for us.

**Q. You have two players on the defensive side of the ball. With your defense, do you feel this unit could be potentially as good a defensive unit as you've had the opportunity to coach?**

COACH PELINI: Well, we'll see. We have a good group coming back. Lavonte and Jared Crick. Alfonzo Dennard, I think is as good a corner as there is in the country. I think we have depth that we haven't quite had up until now.

There's a lot of things that play into that. I've been really fortunate to be around some defenses that have been pretty stout, accomplished some great things. Do we have the opportunity to do that? Yeah. But it's going to come through a lot of hard work and a level of commitment that allows our football team to get better on a daily basis.

There's a lot of things that make you become good. It's not just talent. It's about character, it's about leadership, it's about chemistry, all those things. Ultimately coming with your lunch pail every day and going to work. I think if we do that, we have the opportunity to be pretty formidable on that side of the football.

**Q. You said in some ways your style of play will be a little different. Can you elaborate?**

COACH PELINI: I'm not quite sure that's what I meant. I mean, we're going to play against some teams where the style might be a little bit different than we've seen in the Big 12. The style of play might be a little bit different.

We're going to do what we do and we're going to do it well. We're not really going to adapt what we do to the conference. We're going to hopefully make the conference adapt to what we do.

Certain things have allowed us to have success on the defensive side of the football. We're going to do that. We're changing some things offensively. There are going to be some things that are obviously the same, but there are going to be some things that are new wrinkles. You'll see that as the season wears on.

But at the end of the day to be successful in this game, yeah, you have to adapt to your opponents. But you have to line up and do what you do well. You have to execute your football. If we continue to do that, we'll be fine no matter who we're lined up against.

**Q. Whether it's on the field or off, what would you say are the biggest differences you've noticed between the Big Ten and the Big 12?**

COACH PELINI: Well, ask me that a year from now, I'll have a better idea. Having not gone through the conference schedule yet, it's hard to say.

I think the leadership in this conference is tremendous. I obviously played in this conference. I grew up in Big Ten country. I have a tremendous amount of respect for everything that the Big Ten represents.

So to me it's an honor to be a part of this, to be a part of this conference. I think if you look at the tradition, academic integrity, all the things that I believe our program at the University of Nebraska stands for, I think we fit right in with this conference. Tremendous football, tremendous athletics, a tremendous commitment to academics, and doing things the right way. That's what this conference is all about. That's what it represents.

So obviously I believe Nebraska is a tremendous fit.

**Q. You're getting quite an initiation in the Big Ten going up to Camp Randall, if not the most hostile environment in college football, then Ohio State at home. How do you prepare for something like that?**

COACH PELINI: You just take care of yourselves. Obviously the schedule makers didn't do us any favors in our first year, did they? We have a tough schedule ahead of us.

But you go week by week. We always talk about in our program the process. The process is going to lead us to have an opportunity to have success. If we continue to do that, we get better as a football team week in and week out, day to day, we'll be just fine.

I played in Camp Randall before, I understand what Ohio State brings to the table, the rest of the teams that are going to be on our schedule. It's not going to be easy. But we knew that going in.

Our football team understands the challenges that are going to be presented to them. I think they're ready to meet those challenges. It's going to be great.

You want to play against the best. You come to play college football to be challenged, trying to be the best you can be. You do that by playing against tremendous opponents, great coaching, a great environment. We're going to have all that in year one. I think our football team is looking forward to it and our fan base is looking forward to it.

**Q. You mentioned your commitment to doing things the right way. Are you bothered at all by some of the things that have occurred across the landscape the last few years?**

COACH PELINI: Yeah, obviously. You don't like things to happen. A couple things happen here and there, next thing you know the media, you all pick it up, you run with it. Sometimes I think you tend to exaggerate the difficulties that come up where that's the minority. The majority is, you know, things don't happen.

Let's talk about the tremendous academic accomplishments that are happening across the country, the kids that are all doing things the right way. That's what we should be focused on.

But, you know, let's face it, we live in a day and age where something happens, it's going to be on the airwaves for sometimes weeks, not just days, but weeks. So, you know, that becomes glorified instead of glorifying all the tremendously positive things going on in college athletics.

Let's face it, I don't live with my head in the sand. In this day and age, we all understand that's the way it works. We're under the microscope all the time. You have to be on guard all the time. You have to make sure you do things the right way so your institution doesn't fall into that category.

**Q. For the Big Ten fans that aren't as familiar with the play of Taylor Martinez, tell us what makes him such a special player and what types of things you'd like to see him improve upon this fall?**

COACH PELINI: I think Taylor has all the tools you look for. He's very fast. He's quick. He gets to top speed in a hurry. He can make all the throws. He can do really everything you ask a quarterback to do. He has good arm talent. He can throw the ball outside.

He has a long way to go in his decision making, just his knowledge of the game overall. With more experience, he's going to continue to get better.

It was interesting because last year he had such tremendous success early on that everybody wanted to jump ahead. The pressure went up in a hurry. People were talking Heisman candidate, all those things. He was two, three games into his career, which was crazy. Then he got hurt later on in the year.

But the young man is committed. He's tremendously talented. He has an opportunity to finish up his career. He has obviously three years left to play. He's going to be a tremendous player not only this year, but I think he'll continue to get better as the year goes on and throughout his career.

Just got to let him develop. That's where we are right now. He is a much more prepared quarterback right now than he was a year from now. A year earlier he was just getting started. We had no idea what we even had going into camp. Now he has a year under his belt and I think he has the opportunity to take his game to another level.

But you got to earn it on a daily basis. He has a lot of talent around him, a lot of talent pushing him. So he's going to have to be on his Ps and Qs to withstand all that competition.

**Q. There's always a culture to every conference. It might be geography, ethnicity, a variety of things. What do you see as being the**

### **Big Ten's culture in that respect?**

COACH PELINI: When I think of the Big Ten, I think of class, I think of tremendous tradition. Like I said, I think of integrity. I think that's what the Big Ten has represented for a very long time.

You look at the academic accomplishments throughout the conference. To me it serves as a model, and it's why I feel so great about us being a part of the conference. I think it serves as a model for the rest of college football. That's why it's such an honor for us as an institution for us to become a part of it.

I think maybe I'm a little bit biased because I said I played in this conference, grew up in the area. But I think you see the other conferences strive to be what the Big Ten is. That's why it's so great to be going into our first year.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks a lot, Coach Pelini.

COACH PELINI: Thank you very much.

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