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An interview with:

## INDIANA HEAD COACH KEVIN WILSON

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Indiana head coach Kevin Wilson. We will invite Coach Wilson to make an opening statement and then take questions.

COACH WILSON: Thank you.

Again, excited to be here today. Honored to be here. New era of Big Ten. New era for me. My first Media Day, chance to be up here as a head coach. Excited about that. Excited to lead our program. Excited to be in the Leaders Division.

Eight months, been a lot of fun, a lot of transition with families, coaches. Our administration has given me a great opportunity, a great challenge, but a positive opportunity. They've given me great resources to put together a strong staff. Started back in December when everybody seemed like they were in bowl games except our program.

We've had a great winter. Had a heck of a spring. Very positive, very pleased with what our kids do embracing our values, work ethic. Like our talent and players. Going to be extremely competitive, think we're going to have an outstanding year.

We'll see the guys in about a week, see what we've done throughout the summer. I was encouraged we had the whole team the whole summer in Bloomington. Phase four, we'll crank it up in pre-season with a brand-new era for me and Big Ten. Proud to be Indiana coach, proud to kick this thing off. So let's go with some questions.

**Q. Obviously you can't talk about individual recruits. Seems like there's some momentum building in your program, perhaps**

**a big-name guy who is interested in joining you next year. Talk in general terms about that.**

COACH WILSON: The key thing I think we've done in recruiting, we recruited our current team. If you talk to our three guys representing us today, we're not trying to be good four, five, six years from now. The expectation, I think every game is going to be exciting, competitive, challenging in the Big Ten. That's the niche in college football these days. That's the beauty of BCS, fighting every week in your bowl situation. We've done a great job of recruiting our current team. I think we've had very little attrition.

The number one job our staff has done and our strength staff has done is recruiting the current Indiana football team, giving these seniors a chance to have a great year. The only thing we haven't done yet is put our product on the field.

Recruiting for the future, I'm pleased with the way recruiting ended last year. So many guys committed early. There wasn't a lot of loss and flux when we got hired. I expect the freshmen class to come in. Again, with the resources our administration gave me, counting our weight coaches, 13 of our 15 guys have coached at a Big Ten program. I think they understand how to recruit in the Big Ten, how to compete in the Big Ten, and have a good start with commitments.

There's a lot of water to go over the dam with guys that are committed. We're selling a great product, a great school, a great opportunity because we're ready to take this ship and get this thing exploded. Recruiting is off to a great start for next year as well.

**Q. I know you can't talk about the future of the quarterback position among the guys that aren't there, although a lot of people want to talk about a certain name. Talk about the two guys battling for the position this year and where you see the future of that position.**

COACH WILSON: We have four guys, Teddy Schell, senior, Adam Follett as a junior, two sophomores in Ed Wright-Baker and Dusty Kiel.

The way we did our practice, we were able

to split things up. There are two practices going on at the same time. So instead of one quarterback repping and three guys watching, we had two guys going. I think we've been able to hopefully carry that during the summers. They throw on their own.

Previously at Oklahoma and with Coach Walker at Miami (Ohio), you don't anoint a quarterback. I have yet to watch one snap of last year's games. If you're a police officer trying to catch me, you're going to have to chase me a while because I'm not looking in the rearview mirror. I'm looking forward. I'm not allowed to go watch them throw in January and February. I have 15 practices. I'm not going to judge and anoint the quarterback in 15.

You have to earn the position. You have to earn the respect of your peers. Sam Bradford, we named him 10 days before his first start. Jason White and Nate Hybl are in a battle. We went with Jason, he got hurt. Nate's on the Rose Bowl MVP. Whoever is at Pasadena, which we're all going to be fighting to be out there, if you look on the wall, you'll see Nate Hybl that was in a battle that went down to the last week.

I wanted our players to battle it out. I sleep very comfortably when I watched what our kids did this spring. I think our offense, with Rod Smith, Kevin Johns, myself, all our coaches having coached the position, I think we know how to develop it. I think we know how to put them in good positions.

I think we have players around our receivers, tight ends, running backs, that will complement those men very well. I'm excited. I expect that position is going to be very good.

I think it's going to be a great deal. Don't plan on playing two. Don't want a quarterback looking over his shoulder.

**Q. Kevin, how do you go about changing the culture of a program that's been down for so long?**

COACH WILSON: To me, again, it's all about the future moving forward and it starts with me. I have no issues in complaining or what should have been done or why things have happened in the past. I've been fortunate to be a part of programs that have turned it around. I look around the country, see so many programs, I don't think 15, 20 years ago we thought of Oregon as we think of those guys today. We look at programs that came on so strong, Northwestern, what Coach (Gary) Barnett, Coach (Randy) Walker, Pat

(Fitzgerald) have done, what Coach (Bill) Snyder has done at Kansas State.

There are so many great examples. We should do well. We should do well. We expect to do well. To me the culture changes with our performance.

I don't complain about our culture. I want our fans to be excited about it, but they're not going to be until we win games and do the things that winners do. When we get our program in place, that's when the culture will change.

**Q. Looking at your staff, how big of a get was Mark Hagen for you guys?**

COACH WILSON: Mark was at Purdue for 11 years. I knew him from Northwestern. He is so well-known in our state as a recruiter. Does a phenomenal job. He was a two-time captain and all-academic Big Ten, Big Ten football player. He has a lot of friends in Lafayette, West Lafayette. I know he's excited and happy to be in Bloomington. I'm honored. He's a great add to our staff. Great football coach and one heck of a recruiter in this state for us.

**Q. Do you expect everybody at the running back position to be ready for the start of camp? When you look at that position, do you want to name one guy or have a group of guys that share the carries?**

COACH WILSON: You know you will have a guy that jogs out first. I think with the number of reps you get, the number of carries you get, I think it's hard to be at (indiscernible) at running back. NFL, as good as Adrian Peterson is, there needs to be a nice complement.

We are all healthy. That's exciting. At the same time a lot of those young men in spring, that was the position that was a little bit in flux. That position concerned me more than quarterback. I just couldn't see them. I'm excited for August 8th, to see kids run, as we put pads on through pre-season.

**Q. Talking to some of your players and people, you're in a unique situation. You follow a coach who was beloved and did everything but win. How unique is that? What did you do because you seamlessly transitioned well?**

COACH WILSON: I knew all those men, competed against Coach (Bill) Lynch. Half those guys on the staff came with Terry Hoepfner, a lot

of those guys were on our team at Miami (Ohio), GAs, a couple I actually recruited. They were all great people. Because of that they recruited great kids.

I think the kids embraced us, our values. Again, we haven't looked backwards and said, 'I don't know what you did, it's just this is how we're doing it, this is how we're moving forward.' This is the process I feel I saw for nine years at OU or 12 years with Randy Walker. This is the process that gave us each year a chance to have a great team.

But those were great men. I know in some ways it's a difficult deal because those are Indiana guys, too. We're honored to be here. If you talk to the guys here today, they'll talk about how much they respect those previous coaches. I think they'll also talk positively about how we've moved forward.

**Q. You come into the league here at a time when there's uncertainty and transition at Ohio State and transition at Michigan. Wasn't necessarily the reason you came into this league. When you look at it, do you view this as a greater opportunity for a program that is trying to rise up in the conference?**

COACH WILSON: Well, again, I think everything's in place from some of our commitments from the last 10 years, our facility upgrade, the campus and academics, things we can recruit to. Our state has gotten better with the Colts, Peyton Manning playing in such a strong way. High school football in Indiana, if you put that dot in Indianapolis and go five hours, we can get some great football in the midwest region. We're kind of in the heart. We're excited the championship game is going to be in our own back yard.

If you look at the Big Ten the last 10, 15 years, there's been a boat load of champions, guys that have had a chance to be in Pasadena, represent our league.

I'm excited with the championship game. We have a couple teams that don't cross over. We're not going to play everybody in each bracket. The two best teams are going to match up and play and decide who gets that true one BCS spot, instead of voting, someone is rated fifth versus eighth, and they never played each other. That excites me.

At Northwestern, Coach Barnett won two, we won one in 2000, and that wasn't supposed to happen. You look at Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan

State, Ohio State, you have a bunch of teams leading this league.

If we're in flux now, maybe we are, maybe we aren't, there's been a great deal of balance in the Big Ten, and that excites our program.

**Q. You talked about how a lot of your coaches have experience in the Big Ten. I was wondering how you think that will help the staff coming in, specifically maybe what you can take from your years working with Randy Walker and how that will help you going forward?**

COACH WILSON: Ten years ago with Coach Walker, nine going on 10, coaches have changed, so there's some structures of offense and defense that are different. Again, what you have in the Big Ten is tradition, value, great football every Saturday. You better buckle up when it starts that first week in October as you play through. Every week is a challenge. You're going to play in big games.

Comment made earlier, the schedule is challenging. When you're in the Big Ten, every schedule is. You better embrace it, you better be enthused about it, better be excited about it, and enjoy walking in the big venues on national TV. I think the network goes to 50 million TV sets around the country.

It's big-time football, it's a big-time challenge. I love the fact our administration gave me the resources that I could attract coaches with salaries with Big Ten experience. That's going to help us in recruiting and I think that's why the transition has been so easy from the previous staff to the staff we have now.

**Q. You mentioned you're not allowed to watch anything that's gone on in the summer. Do you have any impression of how things have gone?**

COACH WILSON: Again, I won't kind of know until -- these rules are kind of weird. I can't ask them how it's going. When I watch them walk through the hall, I like the body language, I like the leanness of our football team. I don't see guys that look like me. I see guys that are lean and in shape.

Our strength staff that we brought in had ties to my background at Oklahoma. I can promise you with the program our kids have been through, they've ran more than they've ever ran. I would

challenge that they've been jogging out there. I'm excited about the way they look. We'll see when we crank it up.

The key, Woody Hayes said years and years ago, you rollerblade in the winter and ice skate in the summer. That means, when you can't do it, how do you improve in the summer? We can't put on pads. It's nice to be in shape, stronger, but are we better football players August 8th? It will be interesting when we see you guys on the 9th, if we think our team has made the off-season strides as football players.

**Q. Did you say you haven't watched tape of last year?**

COACH WILSON: No, haven't. One of our previous coaches was watching. I saw one clip of a pass play. I will probably watch, when we play some Big Ten opponents, watch how our team did when it's game time to play Penn State in our opener. I have not.

We concentrate ourselves on developing our players, putting in our scheme offensively, defensively, special teams, and moving forward. That's all we've done. That's not coach speak, that's dead true.

**Q. You didn't watch film from last fall, you did have the spring and you mentioned watching some of that. What did you see when you had time to evaluate film after the conclusion of spring practice? Did anything emerge one way or the other out of that?**

COACH WILSON: I saw some give-and-take, which I think you like to see. We made some solid strides from the first day of practice till the end of practice defensively. I think if you practice every day, the defenses start to get the edge. They're used to seeing you, your looks, alignments. That was one of Coach (Bob) Stoops' comments, as we go through preseason, the defense should really start take over. I'd like to challenge our defense.

I did see some days when our defense was outstanding. I saw the offense challenge and come back. I saw some give-and-take. I saw guys sparring and jabbing, going back and forth. I'd like to see some consistency at certain positions. We'll see how that evolves as we crank it up next week.

**Q. I know it's pretty early to make comparisons, but what do you see in terms of similarities between the Big Ten and Big 12 style of play?**



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COACH WILSON: Having been in the league before, again, I haven't done a great deal of trying to study because to me that tape is so generic. Until you're on the sideline and you're up close and personal, I think you get sometimes some false impressions. We're going to have great coaches, great players, some phenomenal teams.

What's going to be interesting as you get into November, you're not going to see four or five teams jockeying; we're going to see six or seven teams, three or four from each division, fighting for that divisional deal.

I think the uniqueness of our league, I don't think the league understands, I don't think the people from Indianapolis understand the jockeying for play and the power of the championship game, how strong that's going to be for our league.

I know we've got tradition, but I think we're on the cutting edge of something special for college and Big Ten football.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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