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An Interview With:

OKLAHOMA COACH BOB STOOPS

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined by Coach Bob Stoops from University of Oklahoma. We're glad to have you here, and if you would tell us about the players you brought with you today.

COACH STOOPS: Hello everybody. Great to be here again. Let's see. The players I brought, Jon Cooper, starting offensive center, senior, four-year starter for us. And then Manual Johnson, senior wide receiver, also a four-year starter for us. Manny, I think last year he was probably three or four times one of the most valuable players of the game. And just consistently done a great job for us. And then defensively, senior safety Nic Harris, who is also a two-year starter and a part-time starter as a freshman. An All Big 12 guy a year ago and one of the leaders on our defense.

Anyway, just again excited to be starting my tenth season and I would note that really pretty special that in those 10 years I've had the same president and the same athletic director. I feel very fortunate to have had the success we have had and work with the people we have and a great group of players. And you'll hear from three of them here representing the team at some point today. So thanks again.

PETER IRWIN: Questions.

Q. Bob, after last season, pretty honestly, you said that you thought you might put some thought into your approach, given your results in your last BCS appearances, have you given any more thought to that? Do you see any way you might alter that?

COACH STOOPS: In the end, it's a situation that there isn't any one answer to it. You can look at all the factors. I think we've played pretty well at the end of the year when we played

the number one team in the country for the Big 12 Championship and played pretty well, winning in a strong way. Everyone is complimenting you for three or four weeks leading up to the game, and there are factors you can't control. And the other team gets beat at the end of the year or has something to prove, I think that's a factor in every game in every BCS game or any bowl game.

I think there are always factors with players that are already graduated, the number you have. And I think that the year we won the national championship I think Florida State had about 26 or -7 seniors. And we weren't expected to beat them and we did working with a bunch of young guys.

There are factors when you also don't have your full team. We have four starters not in the game. That doesn't help you. But you deal with all those things. There isn't any one good answer. And in the end, too, I think it's obvious you're playing another championship team and if you're not at your best, you're not going to fair too well.

So, again, I think overall, we've been in six Big 12 Championships and we won five of them. We are doing something right. We know how to win those games and we'll manage these others the best we can and I think as much as anything it's the players staying invested and us as coaches as well doing the job we need to do to be at our best in those situations.

Q. People say SEC, Big 12, two best conferences. You've been, as you said, it's amazing your 10th year. It's amazing. But is this as solid top to bottom with respect to the Big 12 conferences as you can recall? Can you compare it to any other years with the way that some of the teams in the Big 12 North have stepped up?

COACH STOOPS: I think for sure just the quality of overall play, but I think everyone know it's the great quarterbacks that are out there throughout this league. It's just amazing and it's really challenging for defenses to be in position

and to play well and to limit them.

So I agree with you. I think it's definitely one of the stronger years we've had. As was I think even a year ago.

Q. Do you have any -- I know the answer -- you've already done it. Where do you see defenses going? Everybody says the cycle is offenses are ahead right now. What do you think is going to happen for defenses to catch up with the spread?

COACH STOOPS: I think some of it is just more speed on the field is a big factor. I think that's a major factor is speed and athleticism on the field. Speed-wise, you're constantly trying to mix things up and I think there's always some tweaking there.

But I think the biggest issue is your speed on the field on defense and athleticism, guys that can play in space, tackle in space, cover, pressure, do those kind of things, and I think some of those teams that play that way aren't as physical as maybe some teams have been or some teams that really want to pound the ball running. So there's some differences there I think you have to try and manage.

Q. Can you tell us how DeMarco Murray is doing and just what he'll mean to you guys this fall?

COACH STOOPS: Well, he's had a really good winter in the weight room and he had an excellent spring. He's done everything we've asked of him since returning and being sent home from the bowl game and throughout the second semester and what we've asked him to do through the summer. And so he's working his way to being the kind of player and the guy we want on this team.

As far as his workouts go over the summer, of course, I couldn't elaborate on and I don't have any idea. But the way he worked through the spring, he was a very consistent, strong player for us against a really good offensive line throughout the spring and he has a chance to be a really special player for us.

He's a very physical force for us inside.

Q. With the arrival of Coach Pelini in this league as the head coach of Nebraska, you have three guys who worked for you as head coaches, and in Baylor you've got a second-generation guy that worked for Leach. Does that make you feel like an old man?

COACH STOOPS: It really does. I know it. It's exciting, though. Those guys are all good friends. As everyone knows, I've been one of those head coaches, I think, where I'm probably closer to my assistants maybe than some. I pull for them and I'm happy for them and they're doing a great job. And it's exciting to see guys go on and have those kind of opportunities.

So it's challenging because they're all good coaches, but still excited for them.

Q. I appreciate the answer on DeMarcus Granger; I was asking actually about DeMarco Murray, what's his status and what he will mean for you guys this year?

COACH STOOPS: DeMarco, he's recovered well, when I've seen him coming in the training room and rehabbing his knee, he says it feels great. I ask him, how are you running? He says, Coach, I'm doing everything. I feel great running, I feel super. So according to him and our trainers, everything is on schedule and he looks great.

DeMarco is an explosive, exciting player. He's one of those special athletes that everyone sees the great speed and the moves he has. But he's a physical guy, too. When you get up next to him and you pat him on the shoulder, there's a lot to that guy. There's about 210 pounds. So he's put together. So he's a stronger runner I think than people notice as well.

But he just -- I think he averages about six yards per touch a year ago. So we have to get him the ball. Not only run him but out passing the ball as well. He's got great hands. We're expecting great things from him.

Q. Would you like to see the Big 12 standardize the release of injury information?

COACH STOOPS: It probably would be easier for everybody. You know, in the end, the other dynamic in that is the more you do that -- I'm always leery that we protect college sports from gambling and wagering. And in the end that's pretty much all that matters. That's why everybody wants to know. And in the end I don't know that we need to do that.

And the other thing, I think we -- it's not professional sports. If the young guy was out there playing for his school and has no chance of playing in the NFL and he has a bad ankle, why should everybody know going into the game we're going

to pick on this guy. They may figure it out in the first quarter, but make them figure it out.

So, anyway, I don't know. You're trying to protect a young guy who is trying to play, so why broadcast how truly injured he is if he's going to be out there playing. I agree that if a guy for sure is not going to play, then I'm all for letting people know that.

Q. Bob, I don't know if you've heard any good rumors or bad rumors any time soon, but can you talk about the state of the Internet and all the outlandish stuff out there these days?

COACH STOOPS: It's sad. The whole incident with our players. I read the guy's comment. He didn't mean to hurt anybody. Well, what did you think would happen. You sit there -- and that's two young guys that are as good of young men as you'll ever find. Virtually straight A students and do everything you ask of them and someone just puts that out there. It's grown, mature people. It's amazing to me, to be honest with you. And I find it just as humorous, though, that people actually read it and believe it.

I don't know what to say about it. It just surprises me that it gets that much attention or that somebody would actually then go ahead and report it as true as well without researching it. There's so much junk that's on there, from what I understand. I promise you, I'm not reading any of it. But that's what they say, anyway.

Q. Is there any way to police it?

COACH STOOPS: I would imagine you'd have to start making people hold 'em to it. Again, I don't know what the situation will happen with our young guys, but I don't know how you would, to be honest with you. I think the way to police it is people don't read it or don't give it any validity unless it's one of you guys and you've got your name to it and you can stand by your story.

Q. You know that the Daily Oklahoman is suing the guy. Is that something that you would support?

COACH STOOPS: Absolutely. I think that there are issues -- I'm really glad that the Oklahoman. For those reasons you have to be accountable, and as far as what our young guys will do with their families is another story, because there's a lot that goes into that. Their parents are working jobs and they have time to do that and the kids with school and all they're doing, do they have

time to go through all that. But, again, I'm glad that the Oklahoman is. So you have to keep -- that kind of thing should not happen.

PETER IRWIN: Thank you, Coach.

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