

Texas Tech University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 12, 2015

Kliff Kingsbury



Q. I thought you had an interesting question in the teleconference this morning about playing 11 games in a row. When you first learned you were going to have the schedule, what was your reaction and what was the reason why you had to play 11 games in a row?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, I'm not sure the reason. Like I said on the teleconference, I've been part of one where we got hot and worked out, and there are also times you're kind of banged up and you like that off week. I guess for us the interesting part is like I said, that Thursday game we'll still have practice on that weekend, so it's not a free weekend for three straight months.

So just kind of how it fell this year. Everybody takes their turn with that Thanksgiving game, and it just worked out that way.

Q. Which was the one here that you got the reference that you said you got hot and it worked out?

COACH KINGSBURY: 2012 at A&M. For some reason our first game, we were supposed to play Louisiana Tech and it got pushed back to our bye week, so we just played straight through.

Q. What are your concerns going up to Kansas? Defense, offense, what do you see so far?

COACH KINGSBURY: I know they're well-coached, being very familiar with Coach Beaty. I think Coach Bowen did a great job last year as interim head coach and playing hard. So defensively they'll be lined up and playing well. They're trying to build it.

Playing a true freshman quarterback, I know what that's like. But they're still a well-coached team, that anybody in the Big 12 can beat anybody on any given day. So we have to be prepared and make sure we try to get better this week.

Q. What was your biggest takeaway from David Beaty having coached with him and his coaching style? Particularly in recruitment too?

COACH KINGSBURY: Tremendous recruiter. I think when we got to Texas A&M, he had a veteran group of wide receivers and Mike Evans who was a young guy and watched the way he handled that group. He had Ryan Swope. It was just really impressive to get Mike

Evans to the level he did that quickly and manage those older guys and gain their respect very quickly. I think he's a tremendous football coach. I know he's trying to build something special out there.

Q. With Kansas winless this year, how do you talk to your players about not taking them too lightly?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, I think we're talking about starting the second half of our season the right way, and that's been our focus is getting better each week, and that's what we'll try to do this week.

You look to last year when TCU went on the road to Kansas, and Kansas almost got them there. So it's great to point out that it is a good football team that's well-coached, and they had a tough run, but they're getting better. They have young players. So we just need to continue to get better ourselves.

Q. Going back to last weekend, what was kind of your thoughts on Tony Brown and Morales and getting his first start this year?

COACH KINGSBURY: Tony Brown?

Q. Well, at right guard?

COACH KINGSBURY: Oh, at right guard. You know, it's still a little rusty, but I love the effort he plays with. Both those brothers play with incredible effort, and they really push each other. So for not having played in a game for however long, he's come a long way. I think he'll continue to get better and continue to develop. But one thing when you turn on the tape, he's going to play as hard as he can and run as fast as he can every snap.

Q. You got through Tony Brown as well?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, he did well. I mean, subbing as a true freshman, first start, I thought he handled himself well on the big touchdown pass, had two awesome blocks for Jakeem to kind of spring him there, made some big catches. Had a great catch there at the end that Nick threw him. So he's the guy that's going to keep getting there. Has a ton of tremendous natural ability and has to keep honing it.

Q. How big has it been for you to see those guys come in and be so physical over there?

COACH KINGSBURY: It's been great. That's what we preach for the last couple years and starting to see the

fruition of it this year with everybody blocking for each other, playing hard for each other. That's when good things happen.

Q. You talk about (No microphone) a little bit, he can't kick off, but he can't punt?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, that one's new to me as well. I don't know. You'll have to ask the trainer on that one. But he still seems to be able to punt the ball well. But Clayton stepped in there and did a great job. I think he had 9 of 12 touchbacks, so really been happy with his progress.

Q. Did your team have a favorable match-up this team, does it give you confidence in the way they handled a somewhat similar situation last week?

COACH KINGSBURY: I hope so. It's about us and getting better every week, so I think they've taken it to heart. I think they know we have six more guaranteed opportunities and you better make the most of each one.

Q. Have you seen this team improve every week?

COACH KINGSBURY: With the exception of the Baylor game, and that wasn't effort, it was just the penalties and those four turnovers, you're not going to beat a team like that doing those things. Other than that I feel like we've gotten better progressively.

Q. What is your assessment of Mahomes' play halfway through the regular season?

COACH KINGSBURY: He's getting better. He made some tremendous plays on Saturday where he just kind of made it all happen. But he's getting more comfortable in the system. Watching him operate, everything's happening at the line of scrimmage faster. He made some great checks, and so now it's just continue to protect the football and when things are there throughout the read, get it to him. If it's not, now go do that stuff that you can do. He's got a chance to be very, very good if he continues to work hard at it.

Q. (No microphone) plays the game seemingly close to flawlessly. What have you seen and what do you want him to improve on when watching film?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, the biggest thing is don't go through lapses where you have success doing it all by yourself on one play, and the next play you say, oh, I'm going to do it again. Go through your reads, stay within the structure of your offense, and if that's not there, then we get to that point. So we're still walking that fine line.

The biggest deal to me is the ball security. He's really taking care of the ball and still been able to find the throws down the field but still protect it at the same

time.

Q. Breaking down the speed, what did you think of the 37-yard touchdown from Jakeem that was from infield?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, on the head set it was like, "no, no, no." "Yes," was about the dialogue. It was one of those. Yeah, I mean, just did everything and found those guys. Our receivers and O-line have really learned to play with him in that they continuing to and keep playing and keep blocking and keep trying to get open, because it may take a while.

Q. You look at the offensive performance that you guys had Saturday. How do you build upon that this week?

COACH KINGSBURY: Anytime you watch the tape, there are a lot of yards left out there, a lot of mental mistakes that you can get better at. So we are still a work in progress offensively, playing all those young wide receivers. We'll just keep getting better. We've got to get better over the last six weeks, and trying to get bowl eligible and go from there.

Q. Dylan Cantrell or Devin Lauderdale?

COACH KINGSBURY: Devin will be back this week, Dylan Cantrell will not.

Q. Still possible he would red-shirt?

COACH KINGSBURY: Still a possibility.

Q. How is Patrick Mahomes' knee?

COACH KINGSBURY: It's getting better. He said today it felt better than it has, so that's encouraging.

Q. Is there a structural issue?

COACH KINGSBURY: No.

Q. A tear?

COACH KINGSBURY: No. The term I was given was some sort of sprain.

Q. Since you said Dylan will not be back this week (No microphone)?

COACH KINGSBURY: Pretty close, pretty close, yeah. I would expect that after this week that's probably the direction we'll go.

Q. What did you think about today from your defense? Statistically there were a lot of numbers.

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, that's huge. I think prior to that final drive, only holding the three points was really good. That's a senior quarterback, a good offense. Coach Mangino does a good job offensively. So I thought we made good adjustments at halftime. Then to create those turnovers that we're able to score off of kind of jump started us.

Q. You look at Justin's performance, what's that do to push DeAndre?

COACH KINGSBURY: He's a very talented back. One of the fastest players on our team. Any time he touches it, he can go the distance. Those guys do a great job of pushing each other and working with each other. DeAndre's the proven veteran leader on our offense. That's really been fun to watch him help Justin. They have a great relationship, but DeAndre knows he's got a really good back right behind him.

Q. I saw you getting involved defensively as far as I don't know if you were encouraging guys. But what's your routine when the defense is on the field?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, first you try to give encouraging words to the defense, and then Coach Morris, Coach Jinks and Coach Hays and I are on the headset talking about our next drive and what we're trying to do. Meanwhile I'm trying to pay attention to the defense in the situation. Just trying to take it all in while we're prepping for our next drive.

Q. On Saturday we learned that JJ Gaines that was his first start ever at safety. Was that safe for that group and for him individually?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, he's come a long way. We've had him at corner some, some at nickel. For him to step in first game, create some turnovers, he's just a very tough kid. He's been through some surgery and just keeps fighting, keeps showing up and keeps making plays. It's been fun to watch his development.

Q. Did the defensive film you saw after the game look better than maybe what you thought Saturday?

COACH KINGSBURY: It's always not as bad as you think or as good as you think. But I think there are some guys growing up, some of those young linebackers, some young guys in the safety. Then Breiden Fehoko gets better each week. The guy that's really standing out to me is Branden Jackson, how hard he's playing. He looks like night and day. The film this year as opposed to last year, just effort, consistently play in, and play out.

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David Gibbs



Q. You have to feel a little better about the way you played Saturday than in previous weeks?

COACH GIBBS: I would have felt okay except for the last drive when we still have some of our decent players in there to let them go down the field and score. But that's who we are right now. We've got to learn to start fast. You figure after the first play you might get an interception and you figure you'll play good, but for whatever reason we have no consistency.

We miss a line, we miss tackles, we do all the things bad defenses do. Until we learn to lineup right and keep doing your job and do the little things, we'll continue to struggle.

Q. You talk about starting JJ at safety this week?

COACH GIBBS: Trying to get a better tackler. Trying to get better tacklers on the field, then lo and behold, he doesn't have a lot of chances to make any tackles so it's typical. You put a guy in there to tackle, and he gets the interceptions. If I had put an interceptor back there, he would have missed all the tackles.

But it's where we are. At least he caught the ball when he had a chance to. We'll continue to play him back there and hope his body can hold up, because the reason we moved him to nickel and corner was to try to keep him from having to make too many tackles because of his shoulder injuries. But he did a decent job when he was in there.

Q. Where has your defense progressed the most?

COACH GIBBS: Did you regress or progress?

Q. Progress?

COACH GIBBS: That's a good question. We need to continue to work on the fundamentals of stance, alignment, technique. So really not pleased in any aspect, because in my mind we're not playing up to our potential which to me goes back to coaching. Not doing a good enough job coaching them, so we'll continue to focus on the little things and sooner or later, they'll get better. I keep saying that.

Q. What is the difference from what the defense is doing in the first half versus second half?

COACH GIBBS: If I knew, I'd start the game that way. Really, we're pretty good at making adjustments during the game. It just happens to not show up until the

second half. I don't know why. Same thing happened to me in Houston. Though we played better in the first half, but always seem to play better in the second half.

I'm not changing a whole lot of calls. I know you would never believe that, and I'd love to sit here and tell you I was a genius, but that's not the case. We just need to learn to play from the beginning. It's not like the other team's coming out and giving us a whole bunch of different plays and looks. They're just executing better than we are.

Q. When you say that coaches need to do a better job, what specifically do you mean? Is it what goes on in practice? How you deal with them during the game?

COACH GIBBS: No, ma'am. I think every one of them are excellent teachers. I listen to them, watch them coach, we film every individual drill, we watch them all together. I like the process. But at the end of the day, the product that you're putting on the field, if they're not playing good, you have to change the way you're approaching it.

The truth is we tried that last week. After five games, it's not working. I realize we played three pretty good teams, so we've just got to keep grinding. We've got to keep grinding. Do a better job coaching, better job recruiting, and players got to do a better job playing.

Q. (No microphone)?

COACH GIBBS: They've grown. They're babies. They drive you crazy because they make one play and then you don't see the play they miss. They don't even miss the tackle because they're not lined up right, so then you put a safety in a bad situation, but they're only going to get better. They have a bright future here. You just wish they didn't have to go out there and play 40, 50, 60 plays. But right now, that's the way it is. They'll continue to develop. But they've got bright futures here.

Q. You get the sense your team is retaining knowledge week to week or do you feel like you have to start over every week?

COACH GIBBS: I think they're retaining. I think it's a product of dealing with young men. One guy makes a mistake on this call this week. His back-up wasn't in on that play, and even though you spend all your time in

your meeting and in practice making sure the back-up knows the starter messed up, then the back-up gets it the next week and makes the same mistake.

But it is what it is. Your job as a coach is to get all the guys to go into the game ready to play. But we've got to do a better job.

Q. What would you consider a good performance by the defense? How would you quantify that?

COACH GIBBS: I don't know. That's a good question. I probably won't ever be happy. I'm disappointed. I'm not discouraged. I see progress. I do. I realize that you're playing defense with the spread offense, and they might score in 25 seconds. I understand that.

But if they outexecute us or their running back is better than our linebacker or safety and we can't tackle him, I'm okay with that. Some of that happened against TCU and Baylor. That's okay. But certain things aren't acceptable. When you're gapped out in the run game and they run for 315 yards and you're gapped out for 270 of those yards, they should have to make at least two people miss to get those yards. So I think execution would make me happy.

Players' efforts have been awesome. I thought they played hard again. I really did.

Q. Don't you think a key part of the ballgame Saturday was the fact that you were able to get off the field and stop them five of 15 times on third down?

COACH GIBBS: No question. That's why obviously the whole second half thing, if we can just slow them down a couple times in the first half and let our offense do what they do, then the game becomes a little different in the second half. You realize that they can't -- they have to throw the ball, and there are some certain things you can do.

So getting off the field on third down, any kind of stop to me is a miracle, and I'll take it.

Q. Take a look at Kansas. What are your thoughts about their offense?

COACH GIBBS: It should be a good match-up for us. And I don't mean that -- they're looking at our film and thinking they're going to score 50 points and I would too. We need to worry about ourselves.

Again, I said it this morning, everybody runs the same plays. Everybody's got different players at different positions. But all these geniuses run the same plays every week, which goes back to why you make the same mistake over and over again makes no sense, but it happens. Freshman quarterback looked pretty

good to me. Did not look intimidated by Baylor, so we've got our hands full again.

Q. Is this as bad as you've ever seen it up there?

COACH GIBBS: On defense? I've got my own problems. Come in here, I'll watch our defense with you again. I don't have time to worry about -- I've got to mix this thing, and we will.

Q. One of the ways to fix it is obviously through recruiting. What are you looking for on the high school level from people you're recruiting to come here?

COACH GIBBS: I've got six games left. We're grinding away. We're worried about Kansas this week. Coaching these guys up, doing a better job coaching them and getting these guys to go play hard.

Q. I think you knew you wouldn't perfect it overnight. So six games in the books now, are you encouraged with where you are? Are you disappointed? What you expected?

COACH GIBBS: I'm disappointed. I'm not discouraged. But I'm a perfectionist, so it's never going to be good enough. At the same time, to me, when you have a chance to play good against certain opponents, you need to play good against those opponents because there are plenty of opponents you're not going to play good against. They're not going to let you. So to me, you have to take advantage of your opportunities.

Q. I think you told me way back months ago, you said that as far as (No microphone). At some point in the second half of the season you would come to these guys with the number of interceptions you got Saturday evidence of that?

COACH GIBBS: I was very encouraged by the number of balls that we touched. Again, I understand we played two of the better teams in the country the last two weeks, but at least we were around the football with a chance to deflect them or intercept them. They'll continue to get better at that.

I've said it since spring practice, these kids have done a great job with that. They have owned it. They have worked at it. And the turnovers will come. They will come.

Q. Looked like you played Nigel and Thierry most of the time at quarterback on Saturday.

COACH GIBBS: They did okay. The first touchdown pass was a slant. We're in man-to-man. The theory lets them catch it and run 30 yards for a touchdown. I mean, you can't do that, but they compete. Paul played a lot. Paul Banks played a lot too. They're competing every week in practice to see who starts and gets playing time.

Once you go on the field, if you're playing good, you stay in. If you give up a touchdown pass on a slant and you're in man coverage, you're going to come sit on the bench for a little bit. They're doing a good job. They're getting better. Just got to keep grinding.

Q. Can you talk about Gary and the way he played on Saturday?

COACH GIBBS: I was pleased with Gary's sacks. He was in most of the time on passing situations, so it happens. Then one of his sacks was Pete and B.J., that flush that got to him. But he's a young guy getting better. I was glad to see him play. He didn't play much the two weeks prior, so hopefully he'll continue to develop and get better because he's a part of the future here.

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Eric Morris



An interview with:

ERIC MORRIS

Q. Obviously a really good performance on Saturday from the offense. How do you build on that going into this week?

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, same thing we've been preparing since we started this season is when we don't turn it over, and when we don't go backwards with penalties, which we did a couple times, and luckily Patrick Mahomes scrambled around and made some ridiculous plays on third and long for us. He really helps us look like geniuses on this third down percentage.

But if we don't turn the ball over, it's going to be hard to stop us. So really proud of some of the young guys that stepped up. And up front I thought we had a pretty good game, up front running the football. Morales came in and Robert Castaneda, they both split time and did a good job for us.

We have to continue to get these young guys better. They're playing with confidence and playing faster. I thought that was the biggest thing is we got some of the young kids that are playing with a lot of confidence.

Q. What did you think about your young guys at receiver, not only how they caught the ball but how they blocked and their effort on Saturday?

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, really good blocking. We've got to get better. Up and down they had some nice ones that sprung some big plays. I thought Ja'Deion High was probably the best blocking receiver we had. He didn't crush anybody, but his guy didn't make the play one time. And DeAndre's long run, he blocked the guy ten seconds down the field.

Really proud of Ja'Deion. Made nice catches on third downs. He's a possession guy, and he blocked really well. So good to see him step up in a time that we need him.

Q. With Giles, it seems he's gotten better every week he's played. So what have you thought about his progress so far this season?

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, really good. He's probably as good as we have when we put the ball up in the air, his

natural ball skills, when times his jump, the way his hips open up and has great hands. So we'll continue to find ways to move him outside a little bit to get some of these jump ball verticals because he's really good at it.

But, yeah, he's getting better. He still has a little bit of a quarterback mindset as far as his physical toughness, and we need that to step up a lot. The kid's making a lot of plays. He's going to be a really good player around here, but he's got to become tougher in the run game for us. That is the only knock on him I have right now.

Q. You think over the last few weeks even with not only Mahomes' injury but being down three of your top four guys, you've even been a little amazed at the production that Mahomes has been able to create with the lack of starters around at least?

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, no doubt. He's pretty special. It's fun to watch him create these plays and find people down field, and how accurate he throws the ball on the run is what's really remarkable to me.

But some of these young guys are going to end up passing up these older guys. They're doing a great job right now. They have some real skills on the outside. So we've seen that throughout it.

I think the more impressive thing is Pat more so than these young guys. We trust these kids. For them to get this experience at this time is great. The stretch that we're about to go through here in the last six weeks of the season, we're going to play some really good defensive backs. So they'll be battle tested. They've seen the speed. They've made plays during games.

So that is the key thing to me is they're getting experience. But we have plenty of firepower at receiver to win any of these games we have left to play.

Q. What do you see as the strength of the Kansas defense?

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, I think their back end is pretty good, actually. They did some really good things on the back end against Baylor last week and got them into third down a lot.

This is a week that we'll focus on us, and we have to

execute and play really hard. They're not as bad as some of the scores show. I know Coach Beatty really well. He'll have them coached up and playing hard.

So we have to go out there -- it's an early morning game at Kansas -- and just focus on us. Come out fired up just like we did last week.

I thought we had the best practice week last week that we had since Arkansas. So that really showed up and carried over. So that's something that we're going to have to do again. We'll harp on it all week, and then we have to continue to play fast and make the plays that are out there.

Q. How impressed have you been with Patrick being able to work with all these young receivers coming into the rotation?

ERIC MORRIS: We throw with them all summer long. There's been a lot of timing worked for a long time. Over six months now he's been working with them.

The thing is is a bunch of these -- it's not like we pulled the red-shirts. They've been working with him in practice every day since fall camp. So you have KeKe, Ja'Deion's been there for two years, Zach Austin has been here for two years and got plenty of reps with Mahomes. Tony Brown has been playing a ton this year.

Giles is working more and more into it right now. I think it's not as surprising to us just because they have had a ton of reps together. They know each other. They know the timing of each and everything. Jakeem's kind of leading us right now. He's playing really hard and explosive and doing things he needs to do in space.

So we'll keep leaning on Jakeem and give these guys some time to grow up out there.

Q. Do you get a sense of confidence of how explosive the offense has been, it just keeps growing and spreading through the whole team?

ERIC MORRIS: One thing we have to do is a better job of playing together. When they do get stops, we have to capitalize. We could have done it earlier in the game, I thought. When something happens bad to them, we have to do a better job to respond right there.

It's getting better. I don't think it's close to where it needs to be right now with all three units playing together and feeding off each other.

But I thought the defense came up with some great stops. It's remarkable. They come out in the second half it seems like every week and do great things and

give us the ball, and that's what we need to continue to happen.

The turnovers are really good. For us to get the ball and switch the momentum, not a very good performance when we get the ball inside the 10-yard line. That first drive of the game we had two plays that we love that we didn't execute on. And we have to settle for a three. We get the ball back right after that first play and get to go down. We thought that was a huge play in the game, and it gave us early confidence that we needed.

Q. What is your in-game reaction when you see Mahomes do his thing and scramble it? Coach Kingsbury said over the headset it's almost like no, no, and then yes.

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, no doubt. He missed a couple early reads that he'll continue to get better on. And he made a lot of good early reads too. But it's definitely a sense of that. I'm getting more and more used to it up there. You keep thinking he's going to run out of luck one of these times and throw an interception, but he never seems to do it.

It's pretty remarkable, the play he threw to Reg and in the back of the end zone, which is -- that rule is a little bit different. You all know the Hill rule? I don't know, because I'm watching it up there because we have a TV, and I didn't know that rule.

The heel, I didn't think it counted as a toe. It touched his heel first, so it counts. His heel came down in, and the rest of his foot landed out near the ball, so it counts just like as a toe touching first. So a little bit of a change. I'd never seen that before. That was good. When he found Jakeem, it was just remarkable.

I think our offensive line is getting better at continuing on their block and being able to redirect because you never know where he is behind you. So, yeah, I think in game, you just kind of let him do what he's doing.

Q. Have you been giving Jakeem tips on how a guy who has not been blessed with a lot of height can see down field?

ERIC MORRIS: No, he's way more athletic than me. I don't know how you tackle him in open space. It's really almost impossible for these guys that do it. We do scramble drill, more so than we have ever done here. We know their breakpoints and where they're trying to get.

We kind of have a little method to how we want the guys to operate within the route schemes, once he does break right or left. We work it a lot. I think the guys are getting more and more used to it, and they're

anticipating it a little more and getting to those spots faster, which is helping us.

Q. The old adage of playing quarterback is you're not supposed to throw across your body to the middle of the field (off microphone).

ERIC MORRIS: He's better at it than anybody I've ever seen, which is remarkable. Him going left, I've never seen anyone throw it as accurately as he does throwing left. It's hard. It's the old saying when you keep scoring touchdowns, and it's hard to correct them when they keep scoring touchdowns doing what they're doing.

We've got to continue to just get -- I thought the running game was key to this game. At key times we were able to put it in Stockton and DeAndre's hands, and then it set up some play action stuff down the field when they have to move safeties down.

So we'll continue to try to run the ball. It's going to be a staple. We're going to change schematically things up each and every week to try to force the issue on getting the ball in those running backs' hands.

Q. Blocking from receivers seems like a remarkable improvement from last year. What would you attribute that to?

ERIC MORRIS: Just them wanting to do it. We've drilled more of it, and the drills aren't even really drills. They're toughness drills where we put them in hard situations and they have to run into people and be tough and have the want-to.

So I think it's 80% just the mental capability to want to do it, and 20% technique and effort. I think kids are closer to each other, they're bought in, blocking with each other, celebrating with each other when they do. We've got some boards in both receiver rooms that kind of show the knockdowns and cuts that we've had. The big touchdown blocks, as we call them, so home run blocks.

Kids are taking responsibility for it, and they come in and look at it. Inside guys compete with outside guys, and they're trying to win.

Q. Who won the belt this week?

ERIC MORRIS: The belt has not been given out yet. I'll tell you tomorrow.

Q. How much of that improvement is because they're hearing the same voices from the coaching staff? These guys have been with you guys since the beginning.

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, I don't know. You'd have to ask those kids that. But to me, it's if a kid wants to do it,

he's going to get out there and do it, if he wants to do it for his teammates and block for each other. That's how we've sold it to them. They have to be good teammates and willing to sacrifice their bodies for the other guy.

That's why football is the greatest team sport in America, is because these kids actually sacrifice their bodies for each other every single play. Some people don't understand that. But it's tough for Cameron Batson at 5'9" to block a 6'2", 295-pound guy. Now he can do it. But he has to be willing to sacrifice his body to do it.

Q. Donta Thompson (off microphone). Where do you feel like they're at, and how do you feel about taking the red-shirt off those guys?

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, they're getting better, that's for sure. I think both of those kids are going to be really good players here. None of them are even close to a bus. I think we've signed five really good wideouts in this class.

Donta we moved inside last week. So he's going to turn into a big wide. We're going to try to put 20 pounds on him and make him into a little bit of a smaller Amaro. And Quan is going to be a really good player here. Just need a little bit of time to adjust to the system as fast as we run call plays.

So I don't think we'll take either one of them off. I think we've got enough, and it's too late in the season, and the guys -- we've got a couple guys coming back from injury here in the next couple weeks that will help us.

Now, what's going to be hard is figuring out how you get Giles enough touches when Sadler comes back, and how you get Zach Austin some touches. So we've got plenty of kids that are playing hard, playing good, so we'll be all right.

Q. Coach Kingsbury said Lauderdale will be back this week. How big is that for you guys?

ERIC MORRIS: It's big from experience. He's going to have to prove to us that Tony's doing some stuff better than Devin can do. Devin has the big-play capability down the field. We're going to split those guys, and Devin's got to prove to us each and every day in practice that he's better than Tony.

So those guys will continue to battle out. That's what's made us better as a team. We've had so much competition from camp and even until right now. I mean, Zach Austin and Giles know each week, whoever practices better, that's who is going to start the game. So we're able to force these guys' hands a little bit by competition, and we'll continue to do the same thing with Devin and Tony.

Q. What is Tony Brown doing better than Lauderdale? You said some stuff. What specifically?

ERIC MORRIS: Yeah, he's running some routes really good right now. He's a natural route runner. He gets better and better each week, so Devin's got to keep bringing it.

Texas Tech University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 12, 2015

Branden Jackson



An interview with:

BRANDEN JACKSON

Q. What do you expect to see from Kansas offensively this weekend?

BRANDEN JACKSON: I expect to see them try to stretch the field, run the ball a lot. I know their quarterback is a really good athlete. There is probably going to be a lot of zone read, things like that. Get the hands into skilled position and make plays.

Q. Is it going to be this week, we've already said this a lot, but everybody do their 111s specifically this week?

BRANDEN JACKSON: Yeah, absolutely. You've got to know what you've got on each possession and execute that. As I said, they're going to get the ball to the skill position and those guys are going to make plays. If we're not doing our part and anyone's trying to be superman, they can go for a big run or a big pass.

Q. I realize you're only doing your 111. But how do you stop specifically those big runs and big passes?

BRANDEN JACKSON: Yeah, it's really simple. Just do your 111. When you break it down and look, and whenever a big play hits or big run or big catch, there is always a guy who wasn't there. We've gotten to the point now where it's not hard to break down film.

When a big play happens, we can see exactly who didn't do what they're supposed to do. That's why we keep going back to doing your 111s, make sure you do your job. Everyone does their job, we're gapped out, and you have to make sure you're there to make the play.

Q. Turnovers has been a big thing that Coach Gibbs has harped on. When you guys are able to force three, what's that do for the rest of the defense?

BRANDEN JACKSON: That just gets us going. That's just another reassurance that what we're doing in practice is paying off in the game. I'm not surprised whenever turnovers come, because, as I said, we harp on it so much during practice. These guys make those plays all the time. It's just I'm happy to see it showing up on the field. Any time we get the ball back to our

offense, it's a good day.

Q. Coach Kingsbury said looking at your tape last year to this year, it was night and day compared to each play. Is that something you've been focusing on for yourself?

BRANDEN JACKSON: Yeah, absolutely. Coach Smith always told me that I could go as far as I wanted to go, but I have to be able to go hard every single play.

And then Coach Gibbs came in here and did a self-evaluation of me before we got started. He said he liked the player I was, but I don't play hard enough. And I just really took that to heart. I tried to go out there every play and give it all I had. It's my last year, so there is no point in holding back.

Q. (Off microphone) move from corner to safety. When you see guys (off microphone), what does that tell younger guys?

BRANDEN JACKSON: It just tells younger guys we don't really have positions here. Coach Gibbs and Coach Smith always say the best 11 players will play for us on Saturday. The guys who do the right thing, the guys who you can use in multiple positions, that's who they're going to put on the field.

The guys who started at safety last year, got hurt, came back this year, they wanted to move in the corner, move to the corner, play a little nickel and corner, move back to safety. Had a big game this past week.

It's just embodies what we want this entire program on the defensive side to be: A bunch of guys who do a lot of things and do a lot of things well.

Q. Where have you seen the biggest improvement in the defense since the beginning of the season?

BRANDEN JACKSON: I feel like we're starting to play better together. A lot of times we had great individual efforts. We had the Big 12 sack leader, guys on watch lists and things like that. But we never really played well together. Besides a guy who made the play, there wasn't a guy celebrating with him after the play. There was a guy overlooked because someone made a great play.

I think we're starting to play better together, and it's

looking cleaner on film.

Q. How do you feel the defensive line played? Because there was a lot of pressure on the quarterback.

BRANDEN JACKSON: Yeah, I really wasn't satisfied with our performance last week. I feel like we let them sit back there a long time and stroke the ball. He went through heavy reads before we were getting to him. We had some times where we had pressures, and at the same time we popped a few gaps. And that talented running back they had shot up there for a couple long runs, 300-something yards on the ground solely on the defensive line.

And we talk a lot about being different characters and stuff like that. But right now there are times we don't show we're a better group. So I expect a hard practice this week, and I know Coach Gibbs is going to rip us when we get in there as a team and evaluate the film.

Q. A lot of people talked about the first half from the second half all year. Have you taken that on as one of the senior leaders to say we're getting the right calls, we just need to execute? Because Coach Gibbs has not changed it so much?

BRANDEN JACKSON: Absolutely. It always started with Coach Kingsbury. He did this weird thing where every day after practice we stopped in the middle of practice, we stop practice and we go to a period called halftime period where we get ourselves amped up and talk to our position coach individually, and they make adjustments based on how practice is going and how to pick it up. We kind of took it from there.

As a senior on this team and as a leader, when we get into halftime, to see a guy like Coach Gibbs in there coaching us hard and telling us he's not going to change what he's doing. Just go out and execute the plays. Just know we're in position, and we've got to make the plays.

Q. Do you see you guys getting closer to where you want to be in the first half?

BRANDEN JACKSON: Yeah, we're starting to play three quarters of football. We've got to play four. That's what we're focused on: Going hard and playing strong for four quarters.

Texas Tech University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 12, 2015

Jared Kaster

An interview with:

JARED KASTER

Q. You guys put up the most yards in school history on Saturday. So what's that feel like?

JARED KASTER: It's good. It shows what our hard work is going towards and it's paying off. Whatever it takes to win a football game. I mean, we can put up 20 yards as long as the defense does something good. It doesn't matter. As long as we win football games.

But that's good. It just goes to show all the hard work that we're putting in during the week, it is paying off.

Q. Do you think that record meant something to the team? Doesn't seem like you're ecstatic about it.

JARED KASTER: What, the 700 yards?

Q. Yeah.

JARED KASTER: It's great. It's great to put up that many yards. But right now we're taking one game at a time. W's are a little bit more exciting than 700 yards. Which, don't get me wrong, it's pretty impressive to be able to do that against a great Iowa State football team like that. But, yeah, it's fun, exciting, and it's all in next week.

Q. Have you noticed how the receivers this year have done a better job blocking down field?

JARED KASTER: Yeah, they're doing a tremendous job. That's what it takes. That's what a receiver has to do in this type of offense. And they're doing a great job. We're kind of -- I told -- I forgot what game it was, but I had a little competition, big guys versus little guys, who was going to get the most knock downs. They were a little eager to hear that.

But it's fun to see that. Give it that effort to go down there and put somebody on their back or extend the play by the blocking. But, yeah, in this type of offense, receivers are going to have to do that.

Q. Do you ever have some of the younger receivers come up to you after practice and try to (off microphone)?

JARED KASTER: No, not really. They seem like they've got it under control. They know what they're doing out there. They do drills, blocking up drills during



practice. But, yeah, not yet. They haven't asked us.

Q. Coach talked about how difficult it is to block when you have Pat moving around. For you guys, how difficult is it to do that?

JARED KASTER: It's something we have to do. We just have to finish our block until the whistle blows. We don't know where he's at because he's able to do that. But it just goes to show when you're able to do that, he throws the ball a mile down the field to Jakeem and scores a touchdown.

He's able to do stuff like that. That's why you have to keep your block going until the whistle blows.

Q. What goes through your mind when you hear the crowd and it's loud, and you think it might be another one of those plays that he makes? What's that moment like where this could be a good play, I don't want to mess this up?

JARED KASTER: For us, it's trying to find somebody to hit because you really don't know where he's at. Yeah, it's exciting. One second you're blocking somebody and the crowd goes crazy, and you're wondering where's the ball at? Where's Pat at first? Let's find out where he's at, and then let's block somebody else so he can make a play. But it's exciting to block for somebody like that, yeah.

Q. Where have you seen the biggest improvement from the defense you face every day in practice?

JARED KASTER: I think just sticking together. Sticking together. They've gone through adversity, and so have we. Just being able to be together and really work on their craft as individuals. I think they've got great leaders on that side of the ball with Pete, B. Jack, and Micah. You hear them every day in practice, and the young guys start to step up and to see that. It's great to see that, and it shows up on Saturdays.

Q. Where have you seen improvement from the offensive line?

JARED KASTER: There's a lot of things we've still got to work on. I think effort. My effort individually, I need to pick that up. Communication is a big key. We kind of have guys shuffled in around there. And us all staying on the same path and same page is a good thing.

We've just got to keep growing at that and getting better at that.

Q. How do you feel it went with Tony in there at right guard?

JARED KASTER: He got his mind right. He was prepared, and he went out and did a great job. That's the type of player Tony is. He's going to give it his all. He's been through everything. The only thing he wants to do is go out and have fun and play football. You root for a guy like that. It's exciting to see him out there really give it his all for the game that he loves.