

October 31, 2009



An interview with:

COACH MIKE LEACH

Q. Coach, your overall thoughts on the game?

COACH LEACH: Well, I thought our defense played really excited the whole game. I thought that special teams had one of their most inspired efforts, and I think offensively we came together the second half. And I thought, you know, Taylor did a real good job as far as just kind of collecting the group, you know.

And I said this earlier in the week or whenever, you know, the biggest thing is we're just waiting for that one guy to realize how easy it really is to play quarterback, because you've got ten other people helping you out on any given play. Once that happens and we're able to go out there with great tempo, you know, then we're going to be in great shape?

Q. What can you say about the fourth quarter that Baron Batch had?

COACH LEACH: Really good. Really good. Yeah, you know, I think that our -- well, I think a big portion of it was our line. At halftime I thought our line played a lot better.

Then I think our line was patient rather than, you know, yeah, we've got them all blocked, that type of thing. I thought they were patient. Kind of waiting out that dry spell. Then I thought Potts did a great job checking the run. Then Baron made the most out of his opportunities.

I actually thought Baron relaxed and played a little better the second half. You know, he's a real -- he's one of the most conscientious guys I've ever dealt with. You know, he's ambitious, and wants things to go well. But as he settles down and just stays within the parameters of his job, he can be remarkably explosive?

Q. What was Doege not doing in the first half or the reason you made the change?

COACH LEACH: I think that he's -- I think Doege's well ahead of schedule. I think that Doege, you know, the toughest thing is there is this area where experience, you know, meets confidence and all those things. And I think that, you know, the biggest thing is that more reps, you know.

I think that you know, practice played real well this week. And I think in the game as it started moving faster, you know, he's a conscientious guy, too. He didn't want to make a mistake. So I think things moved slowly, and our tempo was slower than it should have been.

Q. Lost the ball a couple of times deep in your territory as a tied game at halftime was ball security also a concern in making the switch?

COACH LEACH: Well, it was a problem. But I don't think he was protected as well. I thought our line played better in the second half.

Q. Any thoughts on tying Spike dikes?

COACH LEACH: Well, Spike's, you know, it's funny. I think the young guys don't do maybe as good a job of thanking the older guys as they really ought to.

You know, when I was coming up in coaching, Spike's a guy that I always really admired. I think that I learned a lot from Spike like all of us do. Well I just really want to thank him, you know. But, you know, there's no new guys without the old guys. The old guys are what made it happen?

Q. Did you like what you saw from Potts? Did he show you what he needed to today?

COACH LEACH: I thought he did a really good job commanding the unit, which is key. You know, all this business, people ask me the quarterback question all the time. You know,

what's it take to make a good quarterback? Well, I'll tell you doesn't have the answer is most of the NFL scouts who select them. And if they did, then all first round draft picks would be remarkably successful.

You know, the first single thing, and I always say accurate and do they make good decisions, but the first thing is how well do they run the unit? And that's what's hard to measure. That's why you get guys from all the big schools. You get guys like Kenny Anderson from Augustana.

Raise your hand if you've been to Augustana. I'm not going to embarrass anybody, but most of this room doesn't even know where Augustana is. If I were to throw out -- if I were to make you guess the state, most of you would get it wrong. And the only reason I know is because I lived by it at one time.

But anyway what division are they and all that, yeah, well -- I played rugby there one time. It was kind of a wild time. You know, the year before we played at Western Illinois one time. Some kid's car ended up in the pool of this frat house. I mean in the pool. I mean like pool here, car under water, you know.

At any rate, I'm proud to say that me and nobody I knew had anything to do with that.

But, well, you've got northern Iowa, and you know, with Kurt Warner who is going to go into the Hall of Fame easily, obviously. Well, then you've got the guys from all the big schools. Well, why is that? Well, the reason that that is is you can develop the skills to make the players around you better and to run the unit in a team context a variety of places. It doesn't have to be a huge school.

And that's the thing that's most elusive about selecting quarterbacks is how well do they run the unit, you know. Then you go out there in a game and you're going to change speeds on them and see how they like that, you know.

So that's the trickiest part of it. Then are they accurate and making good decisions? I wish I had a dollar for each time somebody said all he's got to work on is his accuracy. Well, name one of these guys that all he had to work on is his accuracy that became accurate? I'd be interested to hear who because I can't think of any. You guys probably watch it more than I do. Anyway, so it goes.

Or he's really big. Well, have him play defensive end, you know. He can throw the ball really far, he just has to work on his accuracy. I've

got a whole bunch of defensive ends out there. They'd love to play quarterback. They'd really like to. They can throw it a long ways, but at any rate, that's kind of a digression?

Q. You talked about the linemen. Did Olsen and Edwards give you some better feel there in the second half putting them on the left side?

COACH LEACH: Yeah, I thought so. I thought so. I just thought as a unit the line as a whole could play better. I thought they took control at halftime. I thought they worried about their job instead of a bunch of external stuff.

You know, regardless of what the score is, regardless of who is playing quarterback. Regardless of where you are on the field. You know, how does your job change? If you have a drop-back pass, how is your job different? If you have a run, how's your job different? It doesn't change at all.

I think the perspective of that and a couple of those key guys out there taking charge on that I thought was very good and thought was very important in this game. I thought our fans did a great job hanging in there with us.

Q. How big was this win going into the bye week and what are your plans for the bye week? Are you surprised that the "fat little girl" comment made it all the way to the Jimmy Kimmel show?

COACH LEACH: I didn't know that it did.

Q. It did, it was Thursday night.

COACH LEACH: What did he say? Was he pleased with it?

Q. Yeah.

BARON BATCH: I think Jimmy and Jimmy think the same way. I'd like to meet him some time.

You know, figure of speech. When I first heard it, see, here's the full version of it. An offensive line coach I had the opportunity to work with one time at a camp, and I don't want to get him in any hot water -- and I certainly don't feel like I'm in any, because we live in a great country that protects my rights to express myself freely.

But what he used to originally say and we've said it, too, is, you know, maybe he's upset. Maybe he's happy I'm proud of you, you did this.

Or you guys got to pick it up and do that. Then after that you can go sit under a tree with your fat little old girlfriend and have a fish sandwich and drink a lemonade.

Well, so, that's kind of floated around our place for a while. And, you know, it's a figure of speech. You know, too high a level of relaxation. Too much listening to the outside. You know, so to those that are offended, I'm offended that you don't think I get to exercise my First Amendment rights, so that makes two of us. That's pretty much all I have to say about that.

But I'm shocked that Jimmy Kimmel or any of these other people would even care what I have to say or what my opinion is on nearly every subject.

Q. How important was this win coming off last week and going into the bye week? And were you expecting such a defensive struggle out of Kansas?

COACH LEACH: I think they're all important. I think they are. I have a hard time saying one's more important than the other, you know. Heck, last week was really important, you know. The week before was really important.

You know, I think momentum going into the bye week is good. You know, it's a big win. I was proud of the way our defense stepped it up, because our defense had played really well for two weeks, then they played as bad as you can play last week. Then they played good this week, you know.

You know, Kansas is a good team, good players. Two really good receivers, a senior quarterback that, you know, is respected by everybody that coaches and most fans, you know, he is accurate. He does make good decisions. He runs the unit great, and he's been a guy that's ridiculously competitive to the point where he's succeeded where others didn't think he was going to. So playing against him and overcoming him I think is pretty big.

Q. Is your quarterback decision just kind of a week-to-week thing now? Or had what you saw today you watched it unfold?

COACH LEACH: No, we're kind of into this game-time decision stuff. I think it's very suspenseful and fun for everybody. So we're looking forward to it, you know.

I'm on the edge of my seat waiting to see myself. Well, I mean, because we really took us all

the way to halftime in a way, so, so we don't want anybody leaving early.

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