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An interview with:

COACH TUBERVILLE

COACH TUBERVILLE: When, I got here, my wife told me to buy a few new clothes. So I went and bought a flannel suit. She said, it doesn't get cold enough here to wear a flannel suit. We found out the last couple of days, haven't we? It is cold.

Well, it's been a very good day for Texas Tech and the football team. We're very excited about what's happened not just today but what's happened over the last year. This has been a year-long process of making things happen for us on the football field and off the football field.

When I first got here, I told you the biggest thing about what we needed to do, obviously, was go out and be salesmen. I've got a good bunch of guys that do a great job of selling a great product that we have here at Texas Tech. Again, this is today, the 27 players that we signed are accumulation of a lot of hard work and dedication from those guys, the people in our building, academics, training room, weight room, administrators, all of our players, and it takes everybody to do that.

If you look at the recruiting class that we've got, we've got 16 from the State of Texas and 11 from other states. Which, year in and year out, that could change and go up-and-down depending on what we need and where we think we can get players to look at us and have an opportunity to get them to come to your campus and visit then the possibility of signing, that all kind of depends on year in and year out what happens.

But this signing class, and a lot of people talk about where we're ranked and all of that. That doesn't make a lot of difference. The thing that I'm excited about is the potential of this class and how it can help us immediately and how it can help us three or four years from now. I think that is the big thing.

This class this year will go a long ways in terms of making this football program better and in a lot of areas, not just athletic ability, but also guys that are good people that wanted to come here for the right reasons. That were very receptive to what we do on offense and defense.

Last year at this time we were talking about players taking a chance and say, hey, I'm going to Texas Tech because they say they're going to do this or that. Then after the first year, obviously, they had an opportunity to watch the staff and the things that we were doing and jump aboard.

Just looking at this class, it's a class full of potential. Every class that I've signed over the years, you're going to have some people had a do great and some that don't. But I think this class has the attitude and the expectations to be very, very good.

Again, it's going to be a lot of work for them, and it's going to be a lot of things that will have to happen for them to be great major college football players.

You'll hear a lot of guys across the country today. I've watched a little TV about they're thinking they're going to step in and make a major impact and very few do that. But as a group and as a whole, all of them can make an impact if they do it together.

So that's what we've sold this class on, and we're looking forward to them coming in and being part of a class that will do a lot of great things for the next four or five years, depending on how long they're here and how long it takes them to get their degree.

It was pretty much even in terms of offense and defense. Again, you look at the area that's we recruited in, basically linemen on both sides. We had to have offensive linemen; we had to have defensive linemen. But we pretty much covered all the areas on the offense and defense at least one at each position.

The thing that we were looking for, after

character and work ethic and academic integrity, what we wanted to look at what's quickness and speed. Really not worried about the size. A lot of them are going to grow anyway. We're talking about predicting the future of 27 guys that are 17 and 18 years on old, and most of them will completely change physically in the next 12 months.

But the thing that you really can't teach and coach and bring along is the quickness and speed. We've got to have that more here on our football team. I think it's going to make us -- this group will make us quicker and faster, and each year we'll continue to add to that.

Overall, I'm excited about this group. I know our coaches are. They spent a lot of long, hard hours evaluating. If you go back to look at college football now and you look at even this group, when we got here we were way behind in recruiting. A lot of these kid his already made up their mind where they were going to go to school this time last year. So we had to do a great, even better selling job, the coaches did, of getting guys to change their attitude towards other schools and make a commitment to looking at us and having the opportunity to sell they will to come to Texas Tech.

So this first year was really a lot tougher than a lot of people would think. So, again, it goes back to your coaching staff. You really know that you must be doing something right when a couple things usually happen. We get negatively recruited, which we did. A lot of people trying to steal our recruits. The guys that we evaluated and brought in, and a lot of guys are trying to steal your coaches in the middle of recruiting. So that makes me feel good that we're doing a lot of good things in a lot of good areas.

Again, it's a lot of hard work from a lot of people, and you just have to believe in what you're doing and have the philosophy. Again, it's been a great day. Now we have to turn around and start again for next year, which is really what we've been doing since Monday is looking at film, putting everything together to see who we want to offer and try to get those offers out as quickly as possible so we can get a jump on next year. Questions?

Q. Plenty of people in the past, coaches in the past, have said it's impossible to recruit the type of talent you need to win championships to Lubbock, Texas. Can you address that now?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Well, we ran into very little problem of getting into homes. The biggest selling point we had this year is we've only been here one year. We had no problem selling Lubbock and the community and West Texas and the Big 12. There is a lot of interest in that.

The thing you do run into -- and we went to other conferences, and we competed against some of the so-called big boys in this country in college football. We beat them some; they beat us some. But what makes me feel good is they had to take off the soft gloves and put on the hard ones because they knew we were in town. That was fun.

It was fun to get back in the arena of selling, and, again, as I said, you have to have a good product. I put ours up against anybody's. The school, the community, it's a great place to live and we had no problems.

But, if you go back, and as I tell even recruits, when I've recruited at all the other schools that I've been at, every player does not fit at every school. So it's our job as coaches to make sure that we go out and recruit the players that we think will fit into the environment we have here. Because what we're looking for is a long process of growing year to year, getting better as a student-athlete, making progress. Physically and mentally getting bigger and stronger and doing all of those things. If you do that, then you have a chance to have success.

One or two players in this class are not going to make a difference for us, it's going to be the majority of the players that's going to make the difference of what we do here at Texas Tech.

The ones that we really targeted to go after, it was an easy sell. The problem is, and you just have to go out and sell against the other schools and fight yourself, and fight and claw and scratch and sell the parents and the grandmothers and grandfathers and the girlfriends and do all those things.

Again, we've got a great group of guys here that believe in what they're doing. Even though we had a couple of coaches that are not here with us, we had very little problem continuing on with what we had built before that process had happened and we even got stronger after that.

Q. There are I think five guys that you signed today who are not publicly committed to you before signing day, particularly defensive

linemen linebacker types. Were any of those kind of quietly committed to you, or how many of those guys this morning were you holding your breath hope to go get?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Well, there were four or five that were on the fence. And a lot of that was because we did have a coaching change or two. Trying to make sure when we were looking at certain situations to bring guys in, if they fit defensively into what our plans were. But it's like anything else, we had a lot of guys targeted. There were guys targeted that did not sign with us.

Fortunately, for us today and as I went to bed last night and sleeping, the thing that I was thinking about is the defensive players. We've got Leon Mackey that signed with us, who is one of the best junior college players that I've ever seen play. He'll make a difference for us on defense.

You look at Branden Jackson from Pittsburgh. Here's a guy from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that I went to see, oh, it had to be the first week in December. Went to his school, went to his home, visited his coach. It's a long ways between here and Lubbock and Pittsburgh.

Sounded great. We brought him in for a visit. He really liked it, but you just really don't know until the end. The farther away you get from your house, the less comfortable you feel because of the distance.

But guys like that that stayed with us, that believed in what we were doing, that understood the situation of, hey, I saw them play this year. I think I can go in and make an immediate impact. If you look at all those guys that signed late, were guys that were really in that situation.

There were some that we would have loved to have had, but obviously the ones we got, we're very proud to have. I think more went our way this year than went the other way.

Q. You said yourself there are a lot of rankings and things like that. And in the Big 12 they rank you guys behind the natural power houses of Texas and Oklahoma. What does that say about the group of guys recruiting and the excitement surf rounding Texas Tech football?

COACH TUBERVILLE: I think the biggest thing this group has and what we said we were going to have when we got here was the philosophy on what we are going to do, how we were going to do it, not deviate from it.

We started from day one recruiting the players that were signed last year at this time. We

only had a three-week period. Then after that we hit the ground running trying to make sure we picked up a little ground on everybody on this year's recruiting class.

So I think just being consistent on what you're doing. Selling every day. We do something every day in recruiting. As we speak, we've got one group of coaches in the weight room and one group of coaches evaluating film for next year. So we're picking up speed for next year's class already.

We've already made a decision, really, on about half the guys that we want to offer scholarships to with a lot of film work over the last few weeks. So it's just an ongoing process.

Again, it's a group of guys, nine, ten guys that believe in what they're doing and do it together. We had a lost piggy-backing with guys going on the road, covering for other guys, going to homes. Selling themselves either as a position coach or a coordinator, or as a recruiting coach in that area of doing a good job of selling Lubbock and Texas Tech.

Again, I heard that when I got here. It's going to be hard to sell a school out in West Texas. It's not anymore difficult than selling anywhere else I've been. I've been in some good places. What you have to do is have a plan and a product to sell, and we've got one here to sell. As you can tell by what we did this year potential-wise of the class, the rankings really make no difference.

But potentially of what we signed, this group can do a lot of great things when they're here.

Q. You've got running backs, Marquez, Daniels, those guys, Washington. Where do you see some of them fitting in because they could play a couple of different positions?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Yeah, I read a couple of blogs this morning where we're going to put a three-back offense in. We won't do that. The thing about all those running backs that we've got, they're the type of running backs that can play other positions in terms of offense and catching the ball, moving them around, giving us some options.

The big thing I like about all those running backs is they have quickness and they can run point they can make a difference in the open field. There were times this year where we looked like we can make a play, and once we broke out in open and we were going to score but just couldn't

get it done.

Our main objective this year on offense was to get some difference makers when they got the ball in their hand. We really didn't worry about size.

Jakeem Grant, one of those guys in particular. He's not very big, and he's hard to find. But he's really hard to find when he's got the ball in his hand and running away from you, because you're not going to catch him. That is the type of person we were looking for.

I'm really excited about the quickness and speed part. Again, potentially all these guys can do a lot of things. But I think that is the biggest thing we'll see from this class once we talk about them in two or three years when these guys really get to playing and playing a lot. They'll make a major difference in what we're doing because of those two qualities.

Q. The stable of running backs here, what's that say about the future of what you guys want to do on offense?

COACH TUBERVILLE: We're not going to change. We still want to throw the ball more than we run it. But the thing that we did last year, I think we averaged 150 yards rushing a game. I would have never even thought we could even come close to that last year after we'd gotten through the middle of spring practice.

But you have to stick with what you're doing. Our offensive line got much better. We're very lucky we did not get a lot of guys hurt on the offensive line this past year because we didn't have any did go at all.

That is the reason if you look at our list, we've got four guys on the offensive line that are tall, big, not real -- not guys that are going to have to come in and lose weight. Most have to come in and gain weight. They have the athletic ability. That is the type of offensive linemen we want.

So we want to run the ball, but we want to throw the ball to set up the run. We're not going to change offensively. If you look at all the positions we signed, they're pretty much the type of players that fit into the offense that we ran last year.

Q. Who was the biggest surprise on the list today when you got the fax morning?

COACH TUBERVILLE: I worry about all of them. There were some guys that we really didn't know if they were committed or not. Obviously, Cooper Washington from Muleshoe. He's a guy that's close to home, and he had some family ties

at the University of Oklahoma. We made an evaluation on him pretty quick of being one of the better players up in this area.

But it's one of those things that happens. He felt like he fit in there. But in the last few days he had a change of heart, and we were excited about that. You like guys like that. They come for the right reasons. They look and say pretty close to home. My family can watch me play. My friends, I have a lot of them at Texas Tech. I want to be a part of that. I want to be able to go home some. I want the people in my home to watch me play.

And it was just talking to him on the phone a couple of days ago kind of brought home what this is really all about. It's about relationships and people. I think he started understanding it. Not it that Oklahoma's a bad place. Obviously, they've got a lot of tradition and done a lot of great things. But when you've got a school at your back door that you can see that's making progress, he felt like, hey, I want to be part of that.

So we do appreciate the confidence he has in us, and we're excited about him deciding to jump on board with us.

Q. Can you talk a little about Kenny Williams? Does he remind you of any of the great running backs you've coached before?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Kenny reminds me a little of Karnel Williams. He's built below the ground. He's a tough guy. He loves lifting weights and being in great shape. He has very little body fat. I think he's a guy that can run a play on the outside and inside. Run the ball well on the zone play, on the inside zone and the outside zone.

So he was one of those guys that we were very fortunate early in recruiting this summer to decide to commit to us. It was a fight all the way to the end because almost everybody in the country offered him a scholarship.

But he's going to be a guy, I think, that can do a lot of things physically for us. He's not just a speed guy. He's also a guy that can make his own hole and run over people and also run around people.

Q. Can you talk about what you saw from Cooper Washington athletically and what you liked about him?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Very physical. Tough, hard-nosed guy that can play a lot of

positions. He played some quarterback. They moved him around to play different positions. You could tell he was a difference maker on his team. Players looked up to him.

He's one of those guys that was tough, hard-nosed. He'll have a chance to play for us next year because he is that type of guy. He is the type of guy that's played different positions and we'll try to find the area that he'll fit in the quickest.

But, again, it's about heart and wanting to get it done and wanting to do it and really wanting to do it here. A guy that's been committed to one school in your conference for so many months, almost a year, and then changed his mind and decided to come to your school, again, gives us a lot of confidence that we're making progress in terms of selling what we're doing and how we're doing it.

Q. Can you talk about Jace Amaro being the first true tight end you've brought in here? How high was the tight end on the priority list, and how much playing time do you think he'll see this season?

COACH TUBERVILLE: It was the number one priority. I've never coached a football season without a tight end. I don't think many people have. Very early last year we started looking at quarterbacks, junior college quarterbacks, and high school quarterbacks, and Jace is a guy that fits exactly what we do. He can stand up and play.

He can put his hand down and play in a three-point stance. He can block. He can block on the perimeter on the screenplays. He can catch the ball out of the backfield, in motion. He does a lot of things. He's I think one of the most dynamic tight ends I've seen in a long time coming out of high school.

His love for the game of football too. He loves sports but he loves to play football. He's going to have an opportunity to come in and play early for us. Right now he's playing high school basketball and is doing a very good job there. He's got good feet.

Having him around, getting off the bus, first game, I'm going to let him get off the bus with me. I'm going to put my arm around him knowing we've got a tight end going to the game to have a chance to block on the corner and catch the ball on play action.

Q. Can you name some of the other guys that might potentially have some impact here early on in their career at Tech?



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COACH TUBERVILLE: Yeah, there's probably too many. Defensively you win championships with every position, but you can't win them without defensive linemen. We had to step up with our defensive line this year.

If you look at the defensive linemen that we took, of course, Leon Mackey. We talked about him earlier. When we went out to recruit defensive linemen, the number one thing we looked for was height, quickness, and somebody that could pass rush. Because in this league, if you can't rush the passer, we found out last year after losing Scott Smith and Andre Barr, if you can't rush the passer, your defensive backs are in for some pretty, pretty tough situations. And we put them in that last year.

I'd say Leon Mackey. Branden Jackson, we talked about him earlier, coming from Pennsylvania, 6'4", his height being 6'4" is a guy that's really going to help us on the outside.

Then Kindred Evans, very dynamic player around the football. He's a guy that can jump. He's very thin. Only about 210 pounds, but he's got the height. We got him at 6'4.5". But the thing I like about him is his wing span. He's got long arms, and he's a guy that can get his hands up in the pass rush lanes, put pressure on the quarterback.

If we were thinking about one thing we needed to many improve on going into spring practice by bringing some people in, was the pass rush, and guys with height and guys that can really throw off the quarterbacks in this league.

One guy I want to talk about is LeRaven Clark. 6'6", 275 pounds from Rockdale. And he was a guy this past spring when we went and looked at him, he was 6'6", 230. You have to be able to project this guy's what we're looking for. His wing span almost goes across this room. It's just amazing how long his arms are.

He's a prototype offensive lineman, and offensive tackle for what we do. He's gained 50 to 60 pounds in the last six or seven months. He'll be close to 300 pounds by the time we get him here in June.

So even after the season, he had several scholarship offers. He had committed to us, and then they all started coming in. So those are the type of guys that we were fortunate to have gotten on early.

That is the reason you try to get out and get your early offers out and early commitments to where you can get your foot in the door first. But

we're really excited about LeRaven. I think he'll make a huge difference on this football team.

Q. Can you discuss with the change of defensive coordinator schematically do you go to a four-two-five like the new coach has coached before or will you continue to base more out of the three of-four?

COACH TUBERVILLE: We'll pretty much do what we did last year. We'll do some different things just because of personnel, not really by what our defensive coordinator knows or loves to do. Once you get into this league there are a few things that fit what you need to do to be successful defensively against all the passing team that's we play.

So a lot of it is going to be going back and looking at the film. How did we lineup last year? I liked a lot of thing that's we did. There were some things we went in and played a three-man front and put both our five techniques inside the tackles and forced the running game outside. I thought that was very good.

There were some good things that we did from a four-man front. So what we'll do is go back through last year, look at the good, the bad, the ugly, which there was a little of all, and then what we'll do is look at the type of players that we have coming back after the seniors now have gone. The recruits that are coming in, and we'll make a decision from that point. But there will be some small changes, but there won't be a lot of dramatic changes.

Q. Of the four running backs that you've signed, do you see all four of them playing at running back and kind of a two-part question, what are the advantages of having all of those weapons in the back field?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Yeah, again, if you look at all the running backs -- except for Ronnie Daniels. Ronnie Daniels is a buying guy that's going to run downhill, a physical type of guy that can be a stand-up blocking back, stand-up small tight end move guy. But he can run the ball. So he's going to be an athlete on the offense.

Then you look at the other running backs, most of those guys could play in the back field or play in the two-back set or all could play receiver.

We made sure every running back we looked at could catch the football because we're going to throw them the ball as much as we're going to hand it to them, so it was good. We evaluated all these guys not just from film, but

going to watch them. Going to camps, talking to other coaches, talking to coaches that played against them. And I think the evaluation process has been long, but it's really going to pay off with this group, and the type of player that we need in this offense that we run.

Q. Can you talk about the ones that got away that were most disappointing?

COACH TUBERVILLE: We won't bring up any names, but there's always some that you'd say why did he go to that other school? Why didn't he come to our place? He would fit in here a lot better.

But the thing that happens is they have to go with their heart and where they think they're going to fit in the best. We hope that all the 27 guys that we signed say hey, this is the best place for us to go to school, best place for us to play, best place for us to grow up and be part of a family.

I think there were several guys that could have come here and played well for us, and been very successful. But, again, that is the part of the growing up process. I tell them it's two tough decisions they have to make in their life. One is where you're going to go to college, and the other is who you're going to marry. I don't know which one is the toughest.

The decision that they all made, hopefully everybody made it for the right decision. There will be some in our group and some other everybody else's list that after about a year or so, they'll say I don't know whether I made the right decision. But hopefully they'll all stick with their decision and make the best of it.

Q. You're known as a great recruiter. Would you describe a day like this, national signing day as kind of a big win?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Yeah, this is really the end of our year, the entire year. This is the last day of the year for our season. When we get up tomorrow, it's a whole new year, whole new season.

We'll go through spring, off-season, summer workouts, spring recruiting, fall, fall recruiting, fall season into the evaluation period through the signing period and through holidays. Hopefully play in a Bowl, and then into signing day again, and the signing day will end it up.

This is basically our last game of the year.



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We had some success during the season, and I think today was a major victory for us, to be honest with you. We had a lot of people that I would say when you have a new coaching staff and some that come from so far away, I'm not going to say making a gamble, but they're making a decision hopefully based on what we've seen and what we've talked about, and they've made it for the right reasons.

So it's been a fun ride for a year. I've been here a year now in about two or three weeks, and we've made progress every day. This will get even better. We will do better at times, and there are going to be some times when we might come real close as we did this week on some others and they might go the other way.

But we're still going to throw our hat in the ring. We still feel we have one of the best products out there to sell, and we'll sell it to everybody that we possibly can and, again, most of our player, as you saw will come from this state and the surrounding area.

But we'll venture out into other areas because we think, again, we've got something to offer everybody in this country to come and get a great education and play football.

Q. Guys you mentioned earlier, Kindred Evans, Desimon Green, Branden Jackson, Cooper Washington, Donte Phillips, are any of those guys hand on the ground guys or are those all stand-up guys?

COACH TUBERVILLE: Donte Phillips will be hand on the ground. All the other guys, and as I said earlier, if you look at this group, they're all tall. Most of them are thin.

I've been on some teams where we had a lot of these guys and they thought they were going to stop gaining weight at 235, 240, and ended up being 280, 290 once they got on weights and started eating three meals a day. The thing you want to do is recruit potential, and let the Good Lord take care of it after that.

Some are going to stop gaining weight and some will keep gaining weight, but they'll change positions. That is the beauty of college football. You come in, use your potential, work hard and make the change, whatever it is, to make yourself better and give yourself a chance to play the best you can.

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