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An Interview With:

TEXAS TECH COACH KLIFF KINGSBURY

THE MODERATOR: Next up this morning, Coach Kliff Kingsbury from Texas Tech University.

Coach, welcome, and your thoughts about the upcoming season.

COACH KINGSBURY: Let's just get to questions.

Q. I was wondering, in addition to the suspension, if there would be any other additional measures by you regarding Nigel Bethel?

COACH KINGSBURY: We'll do some things in-house on our end as a football program to handle that. And that's really it.

Q. Is it more comfortable going in -- it looks like pretty much you've got your quarterback -- than it was a year ago?

COACH KINGSBURY: It is. I think year two for our entire staff, our entire program, there's a comfort level. And having a guy who is an established leader and an established player at quarterback position in our system really helps and has helped the entire off-season.

So we're excited about him. We're excited about our team, and we'll see how it shakes out.

Q. How do you replace everything that Jason Morrow offered your offense and screen game on the perimeter and quick game and even down field?

COACH KINGSBURY: I don't think you ever replace a guy like that. But I think it will be a faster wide receiving crew, which will help. At times I thought we had to play within a box. We've got to be able to take the top off, and I think with

some of these younger guys they haven't played as much but they can really run.

That's exciting for us as an offense. A guy like that 6'6" and 250 and can dominate blocking and has 100 catches, I don't think you replace him. You do the best you can as a group to try to get close to that productivity.

Q. I was wondering, after the instability at the defense coordinator, how much has your defense improved over the off-season with a defensive coordinator in his second year finally?

COACH KINGSBURY: That's big for them, two years having the same defensive staff in place with the same terminology. I can tell this spring they weren't thinking as much. They were actually flying around with the football. I think we've made some additions. Some of those junior college D-linemen will really help the front.

Excited to see their progress. I expect that group to be much improved from a year ago.

Q. You were able to scoop in Patrick Mahomes, one of the most prized recruits in the nation. How do you feel he'll be able to contribute and actually be able to play possibly his freshman year?

COACH KINGSBURY: He's got to be ready to play. We only have Davis and him on scholarship as far as quarterbacks go. But he's a tremendous athlete. Still raw, still learning the position, a guy who was a three sport star in high school. Never focused on quarterback, but tremendous upside play-making ability. And a guy that can really extend plays, which is good as a true freshman because half the time they don't know what they're doing so that comes into play.

And he'll be able to move the football if he has to go in and take some snaps.

Q. Since we're on the quarterback issue, talk a little bit about Davis Webb. Last

year he was a pup; this year seems like he's the old guy of the quarterback group. Talk about his maturation process.

COACH KINGSBURY: I've been excited for Davis, to watch the progress he had. Having not been named a starter, he never pouted, never shut it down, just kept working. He knew he would get his chance. When he did, he made the most of it.

Statistically as a true freshman he had a pretty amazing year. Just have to cut down on the turnovers. And that's something that he really did a good job of in the spring.

I'm excited to watch him play this year. He's one of the hardest working quarterbacks I've ever been around. He's earned everything he's gotten. I'm excited to watch him take that next step and be a leader of our football team.

Q. Can you talk about what were some of your thoughts about your experience last year as the first-year head coach. Team goes on a big winning streak, losing streak, and then up at the end. Were there things you learned about yourself or your team that would help you going forward?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, I think consistency as a program and particularly for myself, each and every day making sure you're bringing the same energy, the same positive message, and you gotta provide the stability especially when things aren't going well. And year one I probably didn't do a great job of that, and hopefully we learned from that and can build.

I think our team learned how to handle adversity. If you continue to work, continue to stress doing things the right way, then in the end you're going to have success. And we had that success in that Bowl game.

Q. Kliff, how big was the Holiday Bowl win? What kind of impact did that have on the spring? And have you guys been able to carry it all through the off-season and now getting ready for summer practice?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, that was huge. Like I said, it proved to our team and our players that if you keep working hard and you keep focusing on your job and your responsibility, good things will happen.

So those are the principles of our entire team. And for them to see that and see that result, that positive result was huge. And it was particularly great for the quarterback to have the

ups and downs he had and become Holiday Bowl MVP as a freshman was huge. He had a tremendous spring, and I expect that to carry on in the next year.

Q. You have a local kid of ours from Sherman, Kahlee Woods, a linebacker. Could you talk about him a little bit?

COACH KINGSBURY: Kahlee going into the second year I think developed well his freshman year. He redshirted and has gotten bigger stronger, all the things you look for. And I expect him to contribute this year on the field.

So he's a good kid, works hard, and we expect him to find a role this year.

Q. Can you discuss what went into the decision to block Baker Mayfield's practice?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, just team policy. That's it. And NCAA has that in-conference policy for a reason. And that was it.

Q. Kliff, seven of ten coaches in the Big 12 have been at their current school throughout their tenure as FBS coach. That's the highest of any of the power five conferences. In this day and age, cutneck with coaching and everything, what's that maybe say about the success, the longevity among these coaches in the Big 12, and what kind of pride do you have in that?

COACH KINGSBURY: Yeah, I think it's a league that has some very good coaches that, as you can see with the results, like you said, guys hold onto their job like that, they're doing something right. Each and every Saturday you better bring your A game and be prepared because the guy on the other sideline is going to have his team ready to go.

And that's exciting for the league and for the fans, and I think that's why you see year in and year out the amount of parity in the Big 12.

Q. Kliff, Kenny Williams moved from running back to linebacker. We don't see that every day. What went into all that process and how did it start the conversation?

COACH KINGSBURY: Kenny asked if he could do it. He saw there was a need. He's a very selfless player, team player, and he wanted to do it.

So we were for it. He's one of our best

football players on our team and we wanted to find a way to get him on the field as much as possible. And he'll still have a role on offense and he'll be great on special teams as he was last year, but the majority of the time he'll be on defense.

From his progress we're really excited to watch him this year.

Q. Last year the five-game losing streak you had, five of the toughest Big 12 teams, this year how do you think it sets up for you trying to achieve a goal like a college football playoff, and what are your thoughts on your schedule?

COACH KINGSBURY: I think last year it was what it was, but in our conference you have to play everybody every year. Doesn't matter when you play them; you gotta gear up and be ready for it.

We didn't do a good job handling that and I didn't do a good job preparing them each week and taking those challenges. I don't think it matters when you play them. You're going to play everyone each year anyway. You just have to be up each and every week.

Q. Off the field -- excuse me. On the field, what does Nigel Bethel bring to the table for you guys and how good of a football player is he?

COACH KINGSBURY: I think it remains to be seen. He brings speed at that position we don't have yet, which we'll see how that translates. But with those young guys, true freshmen, you never know how it's going to go. Being suspended for the first three weeks, we'll see how his freshman campaign goes for him. But he definitely brings some speed that we don't have at that position.

Q. Could you talk about your receiving corps for the upcoming season?

COACH KINGSBURY: It's a group -- I mentioned earlier I think our speed profile is much improved. Jakeem Grant is a guy who came on late last year. Expect him to have a big year. Bradley Marquez will slide over, take Jason Morrow's position, which he's not as big as Jason, but brings speed to that position we haven't had.

And then young guys on the outside, Reggie Davis and D.J. Polite-Bray, Devin Lauderdale, young guys that haven't played a ton but are faster than what we've had and exciting players. And I expect all those guys to have a great year, expect to be able to throw the ball

down the field a bit more than we did last year which is fun for us and we'll see how it all goes.

Q. You guys had that game with Baylor, Cowboys Stadium, the next two years, is there any talk about bringing it back to the home stadiums, doing a home-and-home type deal?

COACH KINGSBURY: I haven't heard. I think the game is great in that stadium for our players to experience that. I think it's a special atmosphere, this year especially with what Baylor had going on is a great atmosphere on both sides. I hope that continues.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.
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