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An Interview With:

## **TCU COACH GARY PATTERSON**

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by coach Gary Patterson, head coach of TCU.

Your thoughts about the upcoming season.

COACH PATTERSON: It's a new one. It was only the first time out of this last season in 16 seasons we haven't gone to a Bowl game. For us, went back to work, but really hadn't changed much. We changed offenses. Felt like the foundation was in place. The kids work hard. We've had a great summer.

So really excited about getting that taste out of our mouth. The only way to do that is to get back get going.

Excited about Doug Meacham and Sonny Cumbie, additions to our staff. Felt like it gives us an opportunity to level the playing field as far as being able to throw the football.

I think still I have to have a lot of patience with that. I talked to A&M when they changed from a running play-action type team to a throwing. They were very frustrated, I think, coming out of spring and it kind of went through the summer and they improved.

So just like anybody else, I'm excited to see what that works out to be going into the fall season.

**Q. Could you talk a little bit more about that offensive change? As a defensive guy, does it give you a little bit of heartburn knowing it could be quick turnover for your defense? Is that the biggest con, or can you talk us through that a little bit?**

COACH PATTERSON: I like Gatorade. When you have to beat people 17-13 just drinking water, you'd like to be able to go back and find out what the different Gatorades are and do

everything, you know, for a few years, Rose Bowl year and all that when you score a lot of points.

For me, really, people say it's just a change in offense. I've been looking at it for two years. Truly a change of philosophy. You've got to look at every part of how you practice, how you do everything.

But the surprising part was you just gotta do it opposite. Now I get an opportunity to experiment against five or six of the teams in our league in practice, good on good, whereas we had to work against ourselves working against all the ten personnel sets and everything.

But then the other part of it, then we have to work a lot more tight end stuff with the offensive line to make sure that you can still be what TCU has been known for physical, come after you, do things.

It's about scoring points. We can't turn the ball over. And then on defense it's still about stopping the run, still about making people kick field goals and don't give up the big play.

If you want to win the league, and we came close last year. We probably -- at the end of the season, we were down to 55 players, somewhere within that range, so we have a lot more depth as a football team coming into the fall. And I was kind of surprised Devonte Fields was preseason because he hadn't played a year ago. We've got some guys that I think are as good as he is up front.

And I think there's a lot of good players in the league that I would have also voted for. And so for us kind of just staying quiet. Our whole thing is how do you come back and how do you win ball games and find a way to win the close ball games, and that means you have to be more mature and you have to be smarter. That's what we've tried to work on.

**Q. What do you expect out of the quarterback competition this fall? You've got a couple guys coming in, freshmen and a**

**transfer. Is Trevone still the leader? Do you expect him to start earlier? Later? What are your expectations?**

COACH PATTERSON: Definition of a great player is a great player makes everybody around him better. I think that's what we're looking for in our two guys.

Trevone went from weighing 220 down to 205. He lost weight. He's faster, he's quicker, and he wants to be the guy.

But I think the key is to find the guy that has the swagger, that allows us to move the football, score the points and the guy that's not going to turn the ball over. Felt like last year, if we just would have done that, we would have had an opportunity to win a couple more ball games.

So really that's what we're trying. But we don't really have a timetable or anything else. It's just finding that guy that makes the offense go, and when you put all the pieces of the puzzle together, what makes us the best football team we can possibly be.

We only have one starting tackle in Matt Joeckel and then a wide receiver, David Porter that's here today, that are seniors. Everybody's going to come back even after this season, and so for us how do -- you're not having a one-year plan, but how do you put yourself in a two-year plan to make sure you're the best football team you can be going down the road.

**Q. Which version of Devonte Fields do you expect to see? Do you expect to see the guy that was Defensive Player of the Year as a freshman?**

COACH PATTERSON: I haven't watched him since you watched him. So the key to us, we were still one of the top two defenses over two years without him. If he's able to play and do the things he needs to do, then obviously I think we'll have a chance to be better anytime you have that kind of player.

Right now as a coach, I've always done this, you're only as good as your weakest link. So how do we develop, how does he come on and how does he play. And I'm excited because what people don't understand probably Terrell Lathan was as good a player as he was as he was as a freshman. He comes back, he's 6'5", weighs 290 pounds. People talking about Chucky Hunter and Davion Pierson was also a very good defensive tackle, and I think we're going to have a lot more depth.

Really everybody except Jon Lewis and Jon Koontz come back, and so you have a lot of people up front that we didn't have a year ago along with the three, four freshmen that came in, and they've all done a great job this summer.

**Q. Would you prefer for Boyd to win the starting quarterback job, or would you prefer to be able to move him to wide receiver?**

COACH PATTERSON: I would prefer to win. I don't really care how that whole thing works out. I do believe he gives you different components that maybe a Matt Joeckel doesn't.

But the two quarterbacks, they all run well. Matt's more of a prototype, dropback. But they all throw the ball real well. And they can really spin it. And so whatever gets our best 11 on the field that gives us an opportunity to win.

Obviously, as I said a year ago, Trevone Boykin would be a lot better if we had 100 Trevone Boykins to throw to, which when Casey Pachall was out there. So you've got to find a way to get things done. He gives us some versatility. So do some of those other quarterbacks.

So we'll just have to see how it works. I'm excited about it. I think the thing is that the hardest part is going to be after two weeks you're really going to have to, once you have the final, through a couple scrimmages, you'll have to be able to narrow it down. So offensive coaches will have to do a great job of putting themselves into a situation who is the guy who can make everybody better and really fine.

But obviously with that many people coming back even next year it would not benefit us if he ended up not playing one of those freshmen to where you didn't have an older quarterback even a year from now that's played in the offense with everybody coming back.

So I think all those answers are just like you're wanting to know, I think all those answers are the same answers I want to find out, because I felt like coming out of spring with a veteran defense coming back it was a little bit frustrating even playing base defense. So it's for them and offensive line I think is going to be better because we've gotten a lot bigger and we're more athletic.

So how does that work with the running game and how do they get it to where they work it. And I think so far Sonny and Doug have done a great job of the chemistry not only as a staff but also the chemistry as the offensive team.

So our kids are excited about it and sometimes that's half the battle.

**Q. You got some great freshmen coming in, Nick Orr, DeSoto, and you were able to pull Desmon White, the versatile quarterback from the Eagles. How do you use guys like this coming into the season?**

COACH PATTERSON: We lost Jason Verrett. As far as Nick Orr is concerned, we felt we had two and a half corners a year ago. When we went Iowa State, we had to move a receiver over to wide receiver over to DB when we played Iowa State in that win. One of the things we felt we need to do, Nick is going to be the guy that will give us the depth. He's very smart. He's not only playing corner but he's also playing free safety, which he played both of those at DeSoto.

And the other key is you have a guy that can return punts, return kicks, fly, sweeps, bubbles. And so with Des you have a guy who is going to be able to do all those other things. He's not going to be a guy that's going to be easy to find over the middle, but a lot of guys do it, you throw a bubble screen to them, if one guy you're scared to play man coverage on him because he's always going to make that first guy miss.

He reminds me a lot about Skye Dawson, but he probably has more wiggle, maybe not quite as fast, was playing for Tampa, Tampa Bay, but both those guys -- we felt both guys will give us depth even as freshmen.

**Q. This is the first time that you'll have five home conference games this season. What kind of a difference does that make?**

COACH PATTERSON: We'll actually play ten games in the state of Texas. We only leave go to West Virginia, we go to Kansas, go down to Baylor and Texas. Go over to SMU. So for us -- but that's a good thing and a bad thing. Most people would tell you that when you go into a conference you play well at home.

For us, the thing is most teams when they go into a new conference they struggle on the road and that's where we play the best. So for us we've got to get back to controlling and protecting the Carter and being able to play at home and win.

New stadium, new conference, everything is going on. That's one of the things we've talked about as a football team. When we walk out on our own field whether it's a scrimmage or anything else, you have to play at a high level. And I think you could say a lot of people would only say what's

the competition level. But I've done my history and it's been hard, even our first year in the Big 12, to walk out on the field, win four out of your five conference games, to have five conference games at home I think it's a big deal for us and play ten in the state of Texas this season where your fans can all travel to is also big.

**Q. I've been asking all the coaches this same question about the concussion situation, NCAA restrictions on contact in practice. Tell me what you do at TCU?**

COACH PATTERSON: Number one, I think we've already been -- you don't talk about it but when you get into the season you basically only have one day, Tuesday. I mean, everybody wants to get into it. But we're all smart. We've got to get our good players to Saturday. For us, we don't have pads on them Sunday. We don't have pads on them Thursday. We've been doing it that way and people think TCU is usually known as very physical football team.

So for us two seasons a day we're full we go in shells and for me live contact is taking guys to the ground. That's usually where a lot of problems happen, people get hurt. So I think there's a lot of us already doing it the right way anyhow. It's one of those situations where it's a violent game played by violent people and you have an opportunity.

But I think coaches want to protect our players. It's as simple as that. You've got to get your best players to Saturdays. So I don't think media or a lot of people give us enough credit for what we do try to accomplish to protect our young people.

**Q. Last year you had six losses by ten points or less. Are there areas that you're looking at this year that you feel like that you can improve that can make the difference from close losses to close wins?**

COACH PATTERSON: You can't turn the ball over. We've got to score points. Defensively we've got to keep making people kick field goals and you can't give up the long play and stop the run.

I don't think -- and keep playing well in special teams. For us it's finding that four or five plays. You've got to be a smarter football team. In this league the margin of error is different. There were good teams in any league we've played in.

But on a week-to-week basis the margin of errors is less. And so you have to be able to understand that when those four or five plays happen that you've got to make sure that you make them and do it and that comes with more like a team like a Rose Bowl team where you've got 27 seniors that's going to be a lot more smarter, more mature, where the difference if you're playing two years ago played 17 true freshmen.

So we got back to a Bowl game. So for me it's all been about understanding it wasn't broke, you've got to make sure you go out, gotta be physical, gotta trust each other, gotta play together as a group and also you've got to find a way to make those plays at the end of the ballgame in the fourth quarter, whether it's a stop or run down, get a touchdown, a field goal, to get it done.

It's always going to come down to the last three series of the game in this league. Always has. Everybody can score points.

**Q. This is your third season in the Big 12. The transition of coming into the league, have there been any areas of surprise that you faced and how do you feel like you're better situated this season than you might have been coming in?**

COACH PATTERSON: Being in the state of Texas and playing a lot of Big 12 teams there wasn't any surprises. We knew how high the competition level was, and we've played a lot of those teams. So I wouldn't say that.

For us, if you take our 2008 through 2011 teams of older NFL guys, all the difference, I think you've seen a difference. Not making excuses. You guys know how I am. You gotta stop them, you gotta score points. You shouldn't look around look at anybody else for any surprises. But for us if anything I thought I was too positive coming into Media Days the last couple of years.

I've kind of been back to being my old self, to be honest with you. My wife, she loves Gary but she's not really sure about Coach P either. So we're all getting ready for two-a-days and getting ready to go. It's a lot of fun. The same reason I like coming to Media Days. I wish everybody was here because you get a chance to meet everybody's four best and they're usually also their best kids, leaders, everything that goes along with it.

You're in a conference like the Mountain West where you get a true champion, where everybody plays everybody and everybody's got

great kids. They've got great coaches, they've got great support staffs, they've got great fans. And wouldn't want it any different than what we went into.

When people ask me are you glad you changed, yes, because TCU is in a far better place than it ever had been if we hadn't changed conferences get a chance to have a true champion, financially, media-wise, nationally everything that goes along with it. As a coach you wouldn't want it any different. Did my job get tougher? Yes, no doubt about it. Even though this being my third time, a lot more comfortable coming into this setting. You understand who you have to play. You know the stints, you know the players. There's not going to be any surprises as far as you get -- everyone's going to have good players.

For us, our kids are excited. They understand the talent level. They understand how they have to play every ballgame and you're just like everybody else does. It takes a little bit of time to go do that. I said it before, we played our first ballgame, and I'm still saying it, would I have liked to go to another Bowl game, still playing for a championship last year? Yes. Was I patient? Probably not as much as I needed to. But we finally had to make changes.

I thought going into the league two years I thought even on offense that I thought I was going to have to tweak it just looking at the history of how we played against Big 12 teams on offense and other teams going down through the years that we played.

So all of us, you gotta make good business decisions, but you've got to make them that you build your foundation. We don't want to build something you go out take a lot of junior college once every five years that you can become successful.

What we want to build at TCU and the Big 12 is that we can be one of the top-tier teams and always play for the conference championship one out of three years or two out of three years, that's what we want to be able to do.

When you have the recruiting base that we do plus the financial means -- how many people can talk about everybody's doing new stadiums and everything else, and we've built an indoor locker/training/weight room and we went all year on it, it's all paid for. That's how we were able to start on a new basketball arena, a new Hall of Fame.

TCU has been an unbelievable place for me. Very few times you get an opportunity to do something nobody else has been able to do. Everybody always asks why (indiscernible). Find a great place in a great state in a great conference, great kids, great players, great people around you, and then go make it work, and that's what we're trying to get done.

**Q. Commissioner Bowlsby was talking a little bit about this unionization with players and he anticipates there will be scholarship changes. Where do you weigh in on the issue?**

COACH PATTERSON: Number one, you've got to take care of your kids. I mean, we can make them eat better. They can eat better, they can do things. I still think it comes down to growing young men up. I think it comes down to the scholarship is worth something. Do I think that it can be tweeted and you can have stipends and do things? Yes. But like everything else, if you're not careful, it gets abused also.

Everybody talks about the money of college football, but you got a lot of conference -- a lot of schools that are not in the black, they're in the red, and a lot of coaches not necessarily in the last 15 years if their salaries are that much better. I mean, everybody looks at maybe 50, but there's, what, 10,000 colleges playing college football. You count Division I and 1AA and Division II, Division III, so for me, we need -- if things have changed and things have gone up -- but it's no different than I've also said about coaches salaries. I've always said abuse leads to restriction. If you take less, it would mean the betterment of the game, yes. I've been saying it four, five years. It's not just something that came up because of all the things that went on.

I think we all have to be careful about what we wish for, and that means even in this playoff system all the different autonomy we want to have, it's all about -- because I've been on both sides of the street. And so I think it's about the best thing for college football.

Now, am I a Big 12 advocate? Yes. Am I part of the college -- because anything we voted on we said that I'm a team player. That means I'm a playoff system guy. Do I think our kids need to be taken care of? Yes. But not to -- not at the stake of all a sudden it's like the pro level where the coaches don't have any control over their players and they don't want to go to school and they don't want to get a degree, because knowledge is power. If we ever get away from

knowledge is power and giving our kids something that they can go out and they can do something, because, I mean, we had Jason Verrett, a first-round draft choice last year. All the rest of the seniors had to go get jobs. How do we do that?

So for me I think we need to just make sure we go at this slowly, make sure we do the right thing for the kids, whatever that is. And I know that people that are in charge of that will make good decisions. And I've got to believe that. As coaches we've got to make sure we stick up and help all those out there understand all the facts of what's going on, and how we do things.

We've got to win ball games to keep our jobs, but also some of us, as I've told some people with the media, I'm glad I'm 54, not 34, for all the things that goes on for young coaches. I want this game to be around when those guys get to be my age. So how do you do that?

So that's my fight. I'm on a couple different boards. I'm on rules committees. How do you help, how do you make sure that we have this game or else we can come back to Media Days in 20 years still have the same kind of game we want to have.

**Q. This one will be a little lighter for you. Digging back to your roots a little bit, is there any extra anticipation or a different mindset when you get to face Bill Snyder and K-State?**

COACH PATTERSON: I look forward to the homecoming last year. I'm not sure it was a homecoming. I found out that that was 30 years ago, none of the kids are in the cheering section behind me knew who I was.

But Coach Snyder obviously is well respected, somebody I look up to. For three hours you want to beat them. A lot of Kansas kids. Most of my family went to KU. I went to K-State. But obviously every coach in this league has got here because of a reason. Coach Snyder has built a dynasty at his place. He showed he could win at a place nobody else was able to do.

So for me you have to respect and you have to watch from a distance. And we put things in our program I felt like even before we got in the Big 12 that I thought he did that helped us get better. I study people across the nation. All coaches, coach Snyder is obviously one of the top guys being able to do that. But he's a guy that's proven that you can -- I'm not sure -- I work hard,

but I'm not sure I can work as many hours as he does.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.  
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