

July 22, 2014



An Interview With:

OKLAHOMA COACH BOB STOOPS

THE MODERATOR: Coach, welcome, and your opening comments.

COACH STOOPS: Okay. Great to be here, 2014, starting another year here in the Big 12. We're really excited, really, about what our team has done through the winter and spring, and we've had a great summer. So I know our guys are really anxious to get back on the field here next week.

And I've got five great players down here with us. On offense I've got senior tackle Daryl Williams, quarterback Trevor Knight. And then on defense I've got three seniors, two up front, Gene Grissom, outside linebacker, and then defensive tackle Chuka Ndulue. And then senior quarterback/nickel back Julian Wilson, who has been a three-year starter, going on three-year starter for us.

So you'll get a chance to visit with them here soon.

So open it up, I guess, for questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Just curious, you were way out in front of the curve as far as playing fast, speed of tempo, all that. Five, six years ago you were ahead. Now a lot of teams are following suit, most of the teams in the Big 12 playing faster. Is there anything we can look forward to how you can even tweak this a little bit more than what you had?

COACH STOOPS: I don't know that there's a whole lot that you can do to go much faster, to be honest with you. You still have to be able to get lined up yourself and officials to get in place and still snap the ball.

So I don't know that there's much more that can be done that way, really, quite honestly. But we'll keep looking for ways.

Q. Are you still hopeful that Dorial Green-Beckham can play this year? Can you take us through the process of how he came to Oklahoma?

COACH STOOPS: Yes, there's an appeal being processed, so that hasn't been ruled on yet. But as far as the process of him being a part of our team, through extensive conversations, first of all, I had a close relationship as did Coach Norvell, our receiver coach, from recruiting Dorial personally as well as with his family.

And then through extensive conversations with the people at Missouri and our people, it was something that we felt the person that he is, the potential that he has as a young man and as an individual, that we felt the opportunity to give him a second chance at our place could serve him well and be great for his future and believe in him as a young man and what he's able to maybe continue to become.

So through that process we gave him the opportunity to be with us.

Q. With the new rule changes and the coaches being allowed to hold mandatory practices during the summer, what benefits have you seen from that? And also if you could comment on maybe some on the freshmen and their development so far.

COACH STOOPS: Yeah, the new rule is great in that you just keep players -- we're so accountable to these young men through the summer and really year-round in what they're able to do. Just the ability to be able to see them daily, to go into the weight room, put your arm around them, interact with them, motivate them, how is school going, that's just the positive side of it just to have more interaction with them and to hopefully influence them in a positive way that way.

So it hasn't really affected or changed the way we've gone through our summer working out. Coach Schmidt won't give me any more time. He uses it. It's allowed us maybe an hour a week to go over some film study with the players. So that's really helped the freshmen in particular, your new guys that have come in.

And then the opportunity to watch them work out, and I'm really excited, the freshmen really look strong. Some of the key guys that everybody's paying attention to really have been impressive in the summer and being able to handle the volume of our running and lifting and just a different level from high school and not everybody can handle it. And a lot of these guys really handled it well and looked to be in position to really affect this year.

Q. Coach, how much do you have to rework things in your coverage of Aaron Colvin going to the NFL and which defensive backs will be building around this year?

COACH STOOPS: We really don't -- we won't change our coverages at all. The other guys that will be working in there, I already mentioned Julian Wilson was recruited to be a corner, has been working out there along with a good number of other guys, Dakota Austin, and you already have Zack Sanchez on the other side, Stanvon Taylor, Cortez Johnson, all those guys will be battling.

We really like some of our young freshmen that just got in. So there's talent there. Those guys, we're just going to see who is the most consistent and making the most plays.

Q. Charlie Strong is a new addition to the Big 12. Could you speak about your familiarity with him and what you expect him to bring to Texas?

COACH STOOPS: Charlie and I have known each other for a good number of years now being former defensive coordinators together and even our background back at Florida, all of that together we've had a chance through the years to get to know each other some.

I think Charlie's a great coach. He's an excellent person. We've really enjoyed the times I have been around him. So I gotta be careful. I can't wish him too much luck, but I know he'll do a great job and he's a great coach.

Q. Trevor got knocked out of a couple of games last year. Do you look at those

situations as just being fluke or are there some things you try to talk to him about that might keep him a little safer this year?

COACH STOOPS: Yeah, I think that's very correct in that there's always a little bit of both. Some injuries you just can't avoid that are just going to happen. But at the quarterback position, regardless of how much or little we run him, when he has the opportunity and he is out on the perimeter running, we want him to avoid and take as little contact as possible to step out of bounds, slide, get down if you already got 13, that's good enough. Someone's closing in on you, slide, get down, avoid the big hits.

So it's something that we'll talk a lot about with him and even tried to a year ago. But I think another year more experience he'll be more familiar and used to doing that.

Q. One of your weapons this year is Michael Hunnicutt. Talk about how much he brings to the offense and how much easier it is to know you can get points when he kicks it?

COACH STOOPS: Michael Hunnicutt is a true guy that has a chance to be a First-Team All-American, was definitely within an eyelash of being that a year ago. Very consistent, very strong leg.

Michael's been a mainstay for us now going on three years and excited about he continues to get stronger every year.

He really works hard in the out of season, so we're really expecting Michael to have a great, great year.

Q. A lot of the conversation from the commissioner on down here has been about full scholarships, potential for additional compensation that some people are seeking for student-athletes. Just generally where do you stand on that issue? Do you feel like scholarship is enough?

COACH STOOPS: I've always been in favor of cost of attendance. So whatever that entails and the more we can continue to support these players in different ways, whether it's transportation home, on and on, I think it's always good that that cost of attendance obviously would benefit us in being able to transport players back home and back to school on breaks, that kind of thing is -- were always positive steps, and hopefully we can continue to take them.

Q. Bob, will you be tempted to use Blake Bell at quarterback some or just at tight end?

COACH STOOPS: Not at all. That's funny, it keeps coming up. Blake was recruited definitely as quarterback. But when you look at him now after three years, he is the pro type at tight end. He's got great hands, great size, 6'6", he's almost 260. He can run. Natural spacing as far as where to be in his routes.

And I go back to even it's in his genes, his dad was an NFL tight end for eight years. So he fits the bill perfectly and it's a position that we want to continue to make stronger.

So I think he's really going to impact us in a great way at the tight end position.

Q. On your other quarterback, Mayfield, the fact that he transferred and he was a walk-on at Texas Tech, do you think he should be eligible to play immediately?

COACH STOOPS: Well, I do. I think it's one thing if you've invested a scholarship in an individual and he decides to leave, heck, they even half the time allow them to play immediately. But a guy that you haven't invested a scholarship in, I don't know why that would even be something -- why it would be an issue.

But in the end, it's something that we're working through.

Q. And how good is he?

COACH STOOPS: Baker is really a good player. Through all our scrimmages in the spring, it was obvious to everyone that he played a year ago, that he's been on the field, in action, the way he handles himself, the poise, the plays he makes, he really does an excellent job.

Q. You lost your big trio of running backs coming back this year.

COACH STOOPS: They weren't that big.

Q. Who do you see emerging at the position?

COACH STOOPS: Three bigger guys (laughter). We lost Roy Finch, Brennan Clay, and -- who was the third? Damien. Damien was pretty big. But these guys are all, when you look at Keith Ford, Alex Ross, and David Smith, they're all 215, 220. Six foot. 6'2". They're really strong, big players.

So those guys -- you've got Daniel Brooks, also a speedster that's in there that's a little smaller. But all those guys are very capable.

And of course we've got Joe Mixon who is all of 220, 6'2", runs great, looked really impressive in the summer. And so has Samaje Perine who is about 240 and runs great. So we've got some physical guys in there that we're excited about.

Q. Joe Castiglione has done such a fantastic job with your nonconference schedule the next decade or so with teams like Tennessee this year, Ohio State, Michigan, LSU. Do you think that has eyes for the committee because they'll be looking at things a little bit more from a human angle than the computers in the past to get the four teams at the end?

COACH STOOPS: I would think so. But I think it would open the eyes of a computer as well if it had eyes at the end of the day. Joe has worked hard on our schedule. He has always confided in me, and we've been in agreement on who we were to play in the out-of-conference schedule. And we're proud of that. We just came off the last four years series with Notre Dame and Florida State.

Now, like you said, we've got Tennessee and Ohio State coming with Nebraska and Michigan, on and on down the road. And it's been intentional, that -- in the BCS formula, and even now with a playoff formula. When all things are equal with records and whatnot, if someone has played a tougher nonconference schedule, to some degree it would usually benefit you. Otherwise, why play? Otherwise, you might as well just schedule three yawners that no one will pay attention to and not put yourself at risk of losing that game.

But in the end we felt, and it's worked well for us, that it prepares you for a tough season but it also in the formula helps you have an opportunity to be one of those teams competing for the National Championship.

Q. Can you describe how beating Alabama like you did in the Bowl game sustained you in the offseason, an extra pep in your step, I guess?

COACH STOOPS: I don't know. I think, like all experiences, you build off of them. And you build off of some that are negative, you build off

some that are positive. In the end we were fortunate that we were able to build, finish recruiting in a really positive way. I think that really did give us a boost in the last week or two of recruiting. And then it also, I think, as much as anything, it inspired our players to really to build on it in the winter in the way we trained, the way we went into spring and we had a fabulous summer. One of the best. I've never seen my strength coach, Coach Schmidt, so happy because he can be hard to please and he's really elated at the way the guys have worked.

So I think it's just really maybe our guys have built on it in a positive way, just the chemistry and their willingness to work when they see the benefits of it like that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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