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(transcript courtesy of ASAP Sports)

Patrick Vahe

Q. Just talk about this team right now and its confidence level coming off a big win and how you guys can sustain it going on the road where you haven't had much success this season.
PATRICK VAHE: Being able to go on the road, we haven't had that much success, but at this time we feel like we need a really great week of preparation for this team because this team is very good.

Watching the little film that we've seen, they seem to be very aggressive, very dominant up front, so we want to make sure that this week in preparation, we want to make sure we've got that.

Q. Why do you think Texas has struggled on the road this year?
PATRICK VAHE: Just not preparing well. We seem to have that time that we just don't see like -- it's crazy out on the road, basically. The preparation that we have right there, we need to get better at individually, and as a team, team unit, we need to make sure that we're all on the same page when we're on the road, same goal and all.

Q. The running game and the passing game right now, what was most impressive about Saturday? Was it the belief that you guys can throw the ball and throw it deep, or did you learn something new about the running game?
PATRICK VAHE: It was just we were on the same page that day. Coming off of the road from Iowa State, we all were very, very upset that we could have played better, and so that week of preparation for Kansas, we just stepped it up just one step, and so we wanted to make sure that we were all on the same page, and that's pretty much the goal for every week is that we all just are mentally prepared and physically prepared at the same time.

Q. Jay (Norvell) was telling us on Saturday that the struggle and the frustration with you guys is your attention seems to drift away and y'all aren't locked in all the time and you're not consistent. Why do you think that is? Why do you think you guys haven't figured out how to do everything you need to do on a consistent basis?
PATRICK VAHE: That goes back to being on the same page. As a team unit, we all have talent, but talent can only take you so far. The thing that the coaches try to do is they try to make sure everybody is on -- just make sure that we're all bonded together, staying on the same page, staying on the same track, and we seemed it prove it this week against Kansas. So we want to make sure that we do it again.

Q. You talked about the preparation not being there sometimes on the road. What are some things that aren't there that have to get fixed?

PATRICK VAHE: It's just the little simple details, the technique and all that stuff. When you run plays and all that stuff during walk-through, and we want to make sure that it's crisp and all that. But we seem to fall off track because we're in a different environment and all that stuff. We've got to make sure that we're prepared for this one.

Q. Given those road struggles this year, do you see this as an opportunity to prove a point this week at West Virginia?
PATRICK VAHE: Yes. We seem to take this as a point of taking it one game at a time, but this game is very different because we've heard about West Virginia and the crowd and all that, so we're going to make sure that doesn't throw us off our game, so we're going to make sure we prepare, prepare mentally, and make sure we get this win.

Q. Patrick, this offensive line has had a lot of moving parts, especially this last Saturday with all the different subs. What's that do for the cohesion of the offensive line with you guys with the young guys versus the older guys?
PATRICK VAHE: There's two points to that, and one of them is the chemistry that we have. Coach Wick (Joe Wickline) seems to want to rotate everybody, which is perfect, because it comes to the second part where it keeps everybody fresh. Having everybody move, like the older guys move around, it helps -- it basically helps everything on the line because everybody plays a vital role. You have Taylor Doyle playing center and he's the one that calls out the shots, so he plays that playbook for us. So having everybody play around keeps everybody's mindset up and makes everybody hyped in a way.

Q. The offensive line is probably one of the toughest positions to come straight out of high school and play because there's so much development that you can do as a redshirt. Why are you and Connor able to play? What is it about your game that made you able to play this year?
PATRICK VAHE: I'd say the physicality. We both came out of a powerhouse (high school) team, so we knew what we were expecting, especially with Coach Wick expecting us to come out there and ball out. So we came out there during summer ball, and that was a pretty tough time. But we made it through, and we just wanted to prove to everybody that we can be able to step up for the team whatever is needed of us.

Q. What was the toughest part of that?
PATRICK VAHE: Toughest part of summer camp? Waking up every morning, watching film, sitting in there, trying not to fall asleep. But we got it through, and we're just preparing every day now.

Q. You're one of the young guys that got an opportunity early on, but here lately we're seeing more young guys get their opportunities on the field. What do the young guys when given opportunities do to the offensive and defensive side of the ball? What do they bring to the football field when they're given that shot to go out there and play?
PATRICK VAHE: They're giving us a shot of being able to be trustworthy on the field. As you saw, Ryan Newsome was able to get out there and get that great catch for the 1st down, and that just gives us that energy boost. It gave confidence to the coaches, as well, to be able to trust them and get them on the field, and I was hoping to do a lot of that early in the season, but hey, it's

never too late.

Q. How do they change the dynamic, though?
PATRICK VAHE: I would say we're able to throw out more plays that involve more players, as well. I won't get into too much details about the plays, but it's just something that helps the coaches prepare more and more and makes it easier for them, as well.

Q. You mentioned Taylor Doyle sort of calling out plays. We saw Jake Raulerson get in there. Is there a difference between those guys, and what have you seen from Jake that's allowed him to step in there a little bit?
PATRICK VAHE: I'd say those two have their personalities, but when you step on the field, they have that same mindset: Call out the plays and match whoever is in front of them. I like that from both of them because they're both aggressive that way.

Q. What makes D'Onta Foreman so good?
PATRICK VAHE: Oh, man. If I was to call D'Onta Foreman and compare him to somebody I'd say Adrian Peterson; hard to tackle, very big, and as you can see, he's very fast. But we call him the big guy on the block. He likes to run on the field, run through people and all that. That's the way I see D'Onta Foreman.

Q. How do you balance the pressure of knowing how important this game is and just going out there and doing what you're supposed to do?
PATRICK VAHE: We take it as another game. We don't see it as a pressure-type game. We see it as another game that we have to play, go out there and execute as a team, and we want to make sure that we all always are on the same page, and hopefully this week will be the same.

Q. I know you guys are taking it one game at a time, but what would a win in West Virginia, in Morgantown, do for this team as you guys look to become bowl eligible?
PATRICK VAHE: Well, one it would show us how much we prepared for that game, and another one would just show us we're just one game away from a bowl. We'll just see how everything plays out.

Desmond Jackson

Q. What did Saturday's win over Kansas and the effort that you saw on the field say about this team with three games left as you look to become bowl eligible?
DESMOND JACKSON: I think that Saturday's win was a good win for the team. We had a chance to go out there and execute. We had a lot of turnovers. We had a lot of touchdowns, throwing touchdowns, running touchdowns, crazy plays that ended up happening, made some good plays on special teams. It was one of those games where you went out there and we knew what we were supposed to do, and only thing we can do now is just get ready to play West Virginia.

Q. You guys have really struggled on the road in two road games, three games this year. How do you change that this week? Do you change the routine? Do you change the way you

go about preparing? What do you need to change to have success on Saturday?
DESMOND JACKSON: I think the only thing that needs to change is guys' mentality that when you're on the road, me being an old guy, being on the road, it's a different mindset because you're going into somebody else's house, and when you're on the road, the only people that matters at that moment right there is your teammates and your coaches. I think that guys just got to understand that. When you're on the road, only thing that matters is the guy on your left and the guy on your right. You've got to be able to play so you can walk out of there.

Q. You've been to Morgantown. What kind of a funky place to play is that? It's hard to get there; the fans are crazy there; it's an 11:00 a.m. start. What have you told your teammates to expect, especially the younger guys?
DESMOND JACKSON: Well, one thing I just told them, you're on the road, you can't just fly into Morgantown. It's a good atmosphere. Their fans are always crazy. They were hyped up the last time, the first time I actually went out there, it's just one of those experiences that you have to be ready for.

Q. West Virginia can run the football. Everyone has seen that this year. What kind of a challenge do those running backs and the quarterback pose to the defensive line, and do you see this as an opportunity to really shut them down?
DESMOND JACKSON: I think they have two good running backs. Their offensive line is pretty physical up front. I'd say this is a great challenge for the defensive line and the whole defensive room. I think that's one of the things that we've just got to get ready for. We've got to just be able to go out there and execute the plays that are called, do our assignments, have great technique and just get ready for the game. It's going to be a great challenge for us this week.

Q. How do you explain the amount of sacks you guys have been getting this year, and who do you credit that to?
DESMOND JACKSON: I credit that to the players for listening to the coaches and the coaches for being confident in us to start blitzing and us getting the assignments that we need to take care of. I think that we didn't start off the season as we should have with our sack production, and then all of a sudden we just started listening to the coaches, listening to what they have to say, listening to reading what some of the offensive line have done to us. We've got to swap our hands, be able to do the things we need to take care of, and we need to get in the backfield a lot. I think that's credit to everybody around here that they've just bought into the system here, now just go out there and execute it.

Q. What did you think of DeShon Elliott's performance on Saturday?
DESMOND JACKSON: It's been a long time coming. I know he[DeShon Elliott] got hurt during fall camp and wasn't able to do the things he wanted to do, but just seeing him go out there and just execute, to have heart. He's actually worked this season just to be able to get back from his injury. I think he had a broken toe, and I think just him being able to come back from that and being able to execute the way that he did, I think that was a proud moment in his life…to go out there for the first time. Just going out there and executing and getting two interceptions in the game. That's pretty big for him.

Q. What do those young guys do to the offensive side and the defensive side of the ball

when they get that opportunity? How do they change the dynamic?
DESMOND JACKSON: Some guys think that because they're young they won't get a chance to play. When you've been out there one play or you've been out there all game, you're a starter, and that's been my mindset when I first came here as a freshman. When you're on the field, you're not looked at as a freshman; you're a starter. I think when you get a chance to go out there you've got to go out there and execute. I think some guys on the field it doesn't matter you being a freshman, true freshman, redshirt freshman…you've got to go out there and execute.

Q. Why has this been such a roller coaster for you guys in terms of consistency? It just seems like sometimes you get it and you think you've turned a corner, then it goes back the other way. Why do you think it's been so tough across the board to get the consistency?
DESMOND JACKSON: Guys just need to humble themselves a little bit more than what they used to. I think the guys just need to understand that in the game of football you've got to be consistent all the way around. You've got to be able to the same mindset you came in with, like when we came in as a junior or a senior back in high school, you had a mindset of 'I'll make sure I get known.' I think that some guys kind of get a little complacent. I think there's some guys that just understand that you've got to be able to humble yourself and go in there and do the same thing. Like certain games we have guys that watch a lot of film and sometimes we've got guys that don't want to do it all the time.

I think that's just one thing that as a team we've just got to be able to come together and just be able to do the things we need to take care of.

Q. What kind of sense of urgency is there not only for this week's game but these final three games as you fight for your bowl eligibility lives?
DESMOND JACKSON: I think it's just it's the next game up. That's my mindset right now is it's the next game up. It's the next important game because it's the next game. Right now I'm not really worried about trying to make it to a bowl game, I'm just worried about the next game that's coming up.

Taylor Doyle

Q. Why do you think you guys have struggled on the road, and what's it going to take to change all that?
TAYLOR DOYLE: It's all about executing and playing with fundamentals and technique, and that's something we haven't done consistently, whether it be on the road or at home. I think in order to improve we just have to find that balance of executing every single play. But we need to figure out what it takes and continue to work towards that, and I think we're doing that as a team and just being more consistent.

Q. Seeing this game is like a make or break in light of the road struggles, talk about the mindset.
TAYLOR DOYLE: We absolutely need to play well on the road, and that's something we haven't done yet. So that begins today in preparation and watching film and working on the mental side of the game, and it carries over to practice this week, and it's something we have to

put a lot of focus on and a lot of emphasis on in order to have success on the road, and at the end of the day, it's all about preparation.

Q. Does it feel different, though, this game?
TAYLOR DOYLE: We just want to put ourselves in position to have success, and we have to. We have the utmost confidence in our coaches that they're going to do that. Going into this week we need to be consistent. We need to play well on the road in order to have success, and all that boils down to is just playing solid downs, fundamental football, consistently, play in and play out.

Q. Talk about the young guys that have been given an opportunity on this football team.
TAYLOR DOYLE: Our young guys have been great. Coach Strong always says they haven't been freshmen since week one. After they got their first game under their belt, they're old guys just like the rest of us. And they've just done a tremendous job of doing what's asked of them and then some. They came in here ready to work, and you can see that with the way they're playing and the success they're having. You know, not once have they been a distraction. They bring a lot to the team. We're better for them.

Q. How exciting was it to see you guys finally throw deep and throw the ball?
TAYLOR DOYLE: It was very exciting. We know we have a lot of guys on this team who can make big plays, so it's always exciting to go see them do that, especially all our skill players did extremely well this past week. The Foreman brothers were great. It was fun watching them play. I feel like when one of them scores you have to congratulate both of them just because they're so invested and so excited about each other's success. It was fun to see them do well. It was fun to see both our quarterbacks play well. We know that as an offensive line if we give our skill players time, they're going to make big plays.

Q. You guys get shut out a week ago. What makes you think things will change within a week?
TAYLOR DOYLE: It's all about preparation. One thing we've learned this season is you have to play well on a weekly basis. Previous games don't define upcoming games. In order to have success, we're going to have to prepare and prepare like this is the last game. This is the only thing we have on our mind. We aren't thinking about the rest of the season. It's all about this Saturday, and so we just need to take that preparation and carry it into the game, and hopefully we can have some success.

Q. What do you remember about the last trip to Morgantown?
TAYLOR DOYLE: Well, I remember it was a close game, went into overtime. Great environment. Really cool place to play football. We expect the crowd to be loud and in the game, and we expect to get the best out of West Virginia. They're a really sound team who's going to play hard for four quarters. That's shown that the past few times we've played them, especially that game in West Virginia when we went into overtime.

Q. How tough is it to play a team like that on a road when you're looking to become bowl eligible?
TAYLOR DOYLE: They're a really good team, and in order to have success, we're going to have

to go back to basics and prepare and work hard this week through practice and carry that into the game.

Q. We saw Jake (Raulerson) in there for some plays on Saturday. What's the relationship like with you guys? Are you kind of a mentor?
TAYLOR DOYLE: You know, it's great. He's very talented and went in and did a great job, and I know that we make each other better through competition, and we know that there's depth at the center position and that he can play. It's made me better as a player. It's been great having him as a teammate, so I'm excited to have him there.

Q. How does it feel to have that relationship and have the offense being a strength of this team?
TAYLOR DOYLE: Last year was tough. We didn't have the success we wanted to. Part of that was just being guys who hadn't had a lot of experience, injuries, like you said. But this year through guys stepping up and having a little more experience and us being able to play a little more as a unit, we've had a little more success, but we aren't playing where we want to be and know we can play. Every week we're focused on getting better and improving, and we know that there's still things we can do to play a better game, so we're focused on improving, and we're confident that if a guy goes down there's going to be someone right behind him who can step up.

D'Onta Foreman

Q. Is it hard to fathom nine games into the season that your team has yet to win on the road this year?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Right now we're just trying to find ways to get better on the road. This week we play on the game and it's a big game for us. We've got to go out there and play hard to win this game. So, just preparation at practice, we've got to come in and try to find a different way to prepare to win on the road.

Q. What does that look like, that preparation?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I believe the coaching staff puts us in the best position, so however they change it, whichever way, we've got to go out there and practice hard and give it our all.

Q. Why do you think the team has struggled on the road?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I think we've struggled, but you know, as of right now, we can't look back. We've got to continue to move forward and try to win these next two ballgames we have on the road. We've got to go out there and practice hard and just continue to play.

Q. You must have some sense of what's going on on the road in order to not let it happen again when you make this trip to West Virginia; have you given any thought as to why it's not clicking for you guys and you're not bringing it home?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I really don't know. I think that's something that the coaches have to sit down and try to figure out. As a team we just need to rally together and just continue to fight, continue to play hard, and I think things will work out for us.

Q. West Virginia has the ability to put up a lot of points. Are you guys prepared for that?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: You know, whatever it takes. We've just got to go out there and win the game. If they put up points, we just have to match it on offense. But I believe in our defense and our defense goes out there and plays hard every game. I believe in them to make stops, but we have to put up points on the offensive side of the ball.

Q. You surprised many people on Saturday. Can you talk about that?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Actually I surprised the coaches during the off season. We ran a 40 (yard dash), and I ran a 4.4 something. They didn't think that was going to come, but yeah, I surprised them, and they kept messing with me telling me how I need to run faster and stuff. Then they were messing with me when I got caught in the Oklahoma game. They were like, 'What happened to the 4.4?' So I knew this week I couldn't get caught. Once I broke (the long run) I had to floor it.

Q. Are you guys getting tired of hearing about the road (game) issues?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Yeah, definitely. We've just got to go out there and play hard. We know it's going to come, but we have to go out there and just play hard and prove to people that we can play on the road.

Q. Patrick Vahe calls you Adrian Peterson. Is he crazy or do you feel like AP out there?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I wouldn't compare myself to AP[Adrian Peterson]. I just go out there and do what I can do and play to the best of my ability. That's a great comparison; I appreciate it, but I don't look at it like that, I just go out there and play hard.

Q. Why do you think you guys have struggled to find consistency this season?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: I know we go out there every day and we put in the work. In the off season we put in the work. I just think it's little mistakes that we have during the game. You know, like Coach Strong always says and I say, we are a good team. I really feel like that. It's just the little things that we have to work on and get better at, and I think that's what hinders us from winning some of these ballgames on the road.

Q. Did Iowa State kind of shock the team? Were you guys stunned when you left there and came back here?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Yes, definitely. But I don't take anything away from Iowa State. We knew we had to go out there and play hard. We had a tough game against them here last year. Going into the game we knew we had to play, but it was just the little things that we didn't finish the game how we wanted to. But it was just preparation. We have to prepare a different way and go out there and work harder and go out there and try to find a way to win the game on the road this week.

Q. Was it fun to see Jerrod and Tyrone throw it all over the place and help out the running game with some of those bombs?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: It was wonderful. Just to see the receivers get into the game more, it was wonderful. John Burt had a wonderful catch, my brother (Armanti Foreman) had a wonderful catch, Lorenzo Joe (too). So, just to open it up for us, you know, just to play a complete game, all around game instead of people just stacking the box, it really helped us out a lot.

Q. Did the Kansas game give you confidence?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Oh, definitely. We've just got to go out there and just continue to put it together in practice and keep going like that in practice. I feel like Coach Norvell will put the plays in and put us in a position to make those type of plays, so we've just got to make them.

Q. What have you heard about Morgantown?
D'ONTA FOREMAN: Not that much. This is going to be my first time ever going there. I just want to go out there and have a great experience, hopefully get the win, and just play as hard as I can.

Dylan Haines

Q. How hungry are you guys to get this first road win of the season and end the three game road streak?
DYLAN HAINES: Very hungry. You look at the way we've played on the road and it just hasn't been our standard. I think if we put together a complete game on the road and did lose, I think we would be okay with that, but we have not done that. We've just got to take the excitement and the passion that we come out and we play with at home and take it on the road, and I think that's the million dollar question at this point. I think if I had the answer to that, we wouldn't be 0-3 on the road. Just looking to get it done this week, however possible.

Q. Do you change up the routine, do anything differently in Morgantown?
DYLAN HAINES: I don't know. It might be something as simple as eating a different breakfast or just something completely different. I don't have the answer to that, but I trust in Coach Strong at all the other coaches that they're going to get us prepared the way that they want us prepared and the way it's going to give us the best chance to go out and win.

Q. Why do you think you guys haven't played consistently this season?
DYLAN HAINES: When you look at being great, you have to be consistently good, and that's just something that we have not done, and I don't know the answer to why we're not playing consistent. It takes everybody, and we have games where one phase of the ball plays good and one phase doesn't. And then we have the next game, one phase does, one (doesn’t) and it just takes everyone. We have to put together a game where all three phases of the ball, offense, defense, special teams plays good. In order to get that done, we have to just play how we play at home on the road, and I don't know how that's done. But it's been done before, so I think we just kind of shut everything out, shut the crowd out, shut the media out, just everyone focus on getting yourself ready, and then I think at that point you can go out and execute and play good.

Q. How big would a win in West Virginia be toward getting you bowl eligible?
DYLAN HAINES: Huge. We know we've got to get two out of the next three. Dropping one to Iowa State really hurt us and put us in a bad position. But it's still possible, and it's definitely still a goal for us.

But you have to play well on the road. We have two of the three on the road, so we have to win at least one road game. We've got to end that losing streak and we've got to do something different to prepare this week to play West Virginia.

Q. If I had told you two years ago that you would have all of these interceptions and rank No. 4 all-time at UT in interception return yardage…
DYLAN HAINES: I wouldn't have believed you. I would have laughed and said I don't know what you're talking about. You know, it's just great, and I don't really pay a whole lot of attention. I think my mom texted me and said, 'Hey, Dylan, I think you're fourth or something on return yards of interception. I think a lot of those stats really don't mean anything, but that's just something really cool that maybe my name will stay in the record book here at Texas, and that's something that if you had asked me three years ago I would have said you're crazy and you don't know what you're talking about.

But that's just something that's great that I was able to accomplish. I know I'm not anywhere near where I want to be, so I've just got to keep looking to improve because someone asked me down there, they asked me, do you remember the ones that you got or the ones that you don't, and I remember the ones that I don't. I'm still remembering those ones against Kansas State that I dropped and then all the ones that slipped through my hands. I just know that I can be better in so many areas, and that's what I look to improve on.

Q. What did you think of DeShon Elliott's performance?
DYLAN HAINES: Yeah, he[DeShon Elliott] played great. He had two interceptions and had a couple of really nice tackles there, had a couple really big hits. And that's a guy that was injured all through fall camp, missed out a lot of camp, and that's when you really develop as a player. Then he just played on special teams the first few games and then was able to go in there against Kansas. He kind of told me that when he went in there at first, he was really nervous. I said, yeah, that's how it's going to be; I don't care who you are. You're going to be nervous on your first few snaps in there. But I think he played really well, played consistent, just showed that he can play, and that's a true freshman. So I think he's going to be a great player for the years to come. I mean, yeah, he just overall played great, and then P.J.[Locke], too, another true freshman got in there. What they were able to both them two played, both true freshmen out there, and they were getting people lined up and they knew what to do, so I think they both played really well.

Q. What goes through your mind when you hear that you've been outscored 112-10 on those three losses on the road?
DYLAN HAINES: Yeah, that's not so good, and we're just looking in some way to improve that. Like I said, all three phases of the ball have to play well, and when we're on the road it seems that none of our phases of the ball play well. We've got to do something different. The fact that we've been outscored that much, we've let up that many points on the road is just…that's just a burning feeling that everyone knows that when we go on the road has all these questions and is kind of just writing us off, 'Oh, Texas can't play well on the road, you know, not consistent; they're hot one week, they're flat the other.'

I think we've just got to take that and just kind of use it as energy, use it as fire, and get ready for next week.

Q. When you think about West Virginia's capabilities, their change of pace, run the ball in different ways, and you hear the word shootout, how does this defense think about that word?
DYLAN HAINES: Obviously when you hear the word shootout, it's something that as a defense you want to stay away from. You don't want to get in those games. We've been in one against Cal this year where it's just who has the ball last. That's not the position you want to get yourself in. You look at West Virginia, and I don't think their record shows it, but they're a really good football team. They played Oklahoma State into overtime, an undefeated team. They're going to be really physical up front. They're going to try and run the ball because that's something that they do, and like you said, they change the pace. They try and get you on your heels. They kind of go up tempo, so we've got to slow them down, and then you do that by stopping the run and then making them sit back there and just kind of try and throw into zone coverage and kind of pick apart your defense, just try and present them that challenge. Not looking to get into a shootout, so really just looking to dominate the line of scrimmage, stop the run, and make them make plays, not let them make plays.

Q. Have you been up there?
DYLAN HAINES: No.

Q. If you end the streak, will it prove that this team has turned a corner?
DYLAN HAINES: I mean, I don't know. I don't really like to use the expression turn the corner because I think actually Coach Strong, he wants to stay away from that because I think when you're at Texas you win one game and it's, 'Oh, they've turned the corner.' And then you lose, and then it's, 'Oh, this is a horrible football team.' So you like to stay away from things like that.

I think we've been on track the whole year. I think all the work we've put in, we've been on track and we've played good and we've shown we can do that, but then we just come out and that flat one week. I don't have an explanation for it because it's just something that happens.

But I think a win here just really gets us on the right track to a bowl, and that's our goal right now is to make a bowl game and to get the seniors to a bowl because that's something that everyone deserves to do as a senior, just go to a bowl, and that's one of our main goals. A win here is huge for us and puts us in a really good position to go do that.

As far as ending the losing streak (on the road) and all that, I think that would be a great thing to do, just go beat West Virginia and get a road win and not go out with another loss.

Peter Jinkens

Q. This is a big game. This is a road game. This gets you over .500 in the conference and gets you to .500 overall. Talk about the ramifications about how huge and important this game is.

PETER JINKENS: It's important to me. You know, we need two of these last three games to make it to a bowl game. So, it's really one of the biggest games of the season that we've got so far, so we've got to get our minds right and come out ready to play.

Q. What has to change on the road because you guys obviously haven't been very good?
PETER JINKENS: Just more preparation. Everybody just gets to get in the film room, or everybody needs to be more locked in than they've ever been. So we've just got to get right.

Q. Why do you think you haven't done that? Why do you think guys aren't in the film room more and not doing the things that are necessary to get you where you want to go?
PETER JINKENS: If I had the answer to that question, I'd tell you.

Q. Dylan (Haines) said this feels kind of like a bowl game. Do you feel that way, and do you think that will help you have the right mindset?
PETER JINKENS: I guess in a way it is a bowl game because if we don't win this game, we're going to have to win the next two out of two to get to a bowl game. We've just going to go out there and just get this one, just take these games one game at a time.

Q. What did you think of the play of DeShon Elliott on Saturday?
PETER JINKENS: It was incredible. He's pretty fast I guess you could say, but it's just good to see the young bucks out there making plays.

Q. What about your play? I mean, you looked like Ray Lewis, Dick Butkus out there this season, Coach (Strong) is bragging on you, and you shined.
PETER JINKENS: I wouldn't say all that. I've done okay in my opinion, but I don't know. I just think the coaches and my teammates to give me the opportunity to play and show them that I can make plays.

Q. You guys have come close all season long to turning the corner and being that great team that everyone expected. Do you feel like you've been close to turning a corner?
PETER JINKENS: We still left a whole lot of plays out there on the field this season. We've just got to do good the last few games and hopefully get to a bowl game.

Q. Everyone is talking about West Virginia's brand of game. Do you enjoy that kind of challenge?
PETER JINKENS: Yeah, it's always great, too, when you get to play one of the top 25 rushing teams in the nation. That's a challenge for us. We have to go out there and stop their run offense, and we know what they're going to do. They're going to try to run the ball on us just like every other team tried to do. We've just got to get our minds right and just come ready to play.

Q. What do you remember about the environment up there in Morgantown?
PETER JINKENS: Hostile from what I remember two years ago. Their crowd, the crowd is never quiet. They're always into the game. Some of the fans are mean, but you know, that's everywhere you go.

Q. In those three road games you've been outscored 112-10. What goes through your mind when you think about that?
PETER JINKENS: We've got to do better on the road.

Duke Thomas

Q. What did it mean to wear No. 28 and what a humble honor that was? Did you feel humbled and channel what Freddie (Steinmark) was as far as a player and person he was?
DUKE THOMAS: When Coach[Charlie Strong] approached me to wear the jersey, he actually asked me if I'd be willing to wear it, and I said yes. It was a great honor to be a part of something like that and definitely out there to just play and be representing a person like that.

Q. When you first got here you guys were road warriors, seemed like you won every road game there was, and now you haven't won a true road game all season. Is that hard to fathom and believe?
DUKE THOMAS: The preparation is always key. Going to the next game in Morgantown, that's going to be a tough game, and we've already pushed past Kansas and definitely trying to focus on the next one and going up there expecting to get a win.

Q. Why do you think you've struggled on the road?
DUKE THOMAS: Really I don't know. Thinking back, I really don't like to dwell in the past because I just know going forward what we've got to do. We've definitely got to prepare better and the focus got to be definitely getting out there and getting ready to execute. Those guys are going to move fast, have a big-play offense. They're going to run the ball, and we've got to be physical going up there.

Q. What did you think of the play from the younger guys, specifically DeShon Elliott? Were you surprised at all?
DUKE THOMAS: It doesn't surprise me at all. He makes those same plays at practice. I always expected to see that type of capability from him along with all the other freshmen. I already told them when they came in during the summer what they were capable of, how athletic they were, and it's just the mental side of the game they had to get caught up on. Once they get that, they'll be great players.

Q. What do you remember about going to Morgantown and how do you plan to stop their offense?
DUKE THOMAS: We've got to stop the run. We've got to make them one-dimensional. Their running backs are very physical. They run downhill. No. 4[Wendall Smallwood], No. 7[Rushel Shell], just watching a little bit of the tape, those guys are definitely getting after it. They're not looking to stop at all, so really got to get up there and stop the run and then limit the big plays on pass offense they have.

Q. What about just trying to get -- if you win this you get over .500 in the league and back to .500 overall. Is there a certain importance to this game that you could turn the corner here?

DUKE THOMAS: We're not really proving to us anything. We already know what type of team we are. We've just got to get ready to get out there and execute, and preparation is going to be the key to that. It would definitely be a big win for us to go into Morgantown and get the W. Like I said, if everybody gets ready this week the way we've been getting ready for Oklahoma and last week…if we prepare like that going up there to Morgantown, we'll be able to take care of business.

Johnathan Gray

Q. In the middle of November did you think we'd be asking you about trying to get your first road win of the season?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Ooh, no. We wouldn't be talking about that if you'd have asked me a long time ago. But that's where we're at right now, and we know we still have a chance to be bowl eligible, and we know what we have to get done to go execute that, so we've got to go out and play.

Q. When you got here your freshman year, you guys were dominant on the road, like a home game. What happened?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Lost focus and execution. That's the name of this game, and we haven't been able to do that on the road, and we have to get back to that.

Q. I know this is not the best memory for you going back up there, but what does it mean to you to go get another chance to go back up there?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: It means a lot. Unfortunately I had an injury last time I was there, but that's life. That's the game of football. So you've just got to move on and help your teammates out in any way possible. I get another chance to go out there and do that, and that's what I plan on doing.

Q. Last time you played West Virginia, what do you remember from that one?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: We were clicking on all cylinders on offense and defense and special teams, and we had momentum. We kept running the ball, and it was working well for us, and hopefully we can do that this week and get prepared and stay focused on what we have to get done.

Q. How hard is Morgantown for you?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: It's not so much hard, it's just their fans are just wild, and you've got to tune all that out when you're on the road and be able to focus and execute plays and help -- be clicking on all phases of special teams, offense and defense when you're on the road.

Q. Jay (Norvell) told us Saturday night that this group has been frustrating because you haven't been able to figure out a way to do it on a consistent basis and attention kind of drifts away for some guys. Why do you think that is?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Lack of focus and lack of execution. Like I said, that's the name of the game, and we get on the road, we just lose that for some reason. We don't know. We have to be more

mature, and us as senior leaders have to be able to keep those young guys and some of those middle guys to just stay focused and know what we have to get done to get to a bowl game and win games.

Q. Charlie told us that you stood up at Iowa State and tried to get all those guys' attention. Sometimes that doesn't work?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: You've got to keep working with it. It's not just a one-time thing with the young guys and some of the old guys. You've just got to keep drilling it in people's heads until they get it. It has to click sometime soon, and hopefully it starts clicking for us and we'll be able to start winning on the road.

Q. A couple years ago I would imagine it would have had to have been one of the more emotional times in your career, getting hurt, coming back. I remember seeing you on the sideline cheering on your team. Talk about just the range of emotions for you particularly.
JOHNATHAN GRAY: My sophomore year I was the last injury on the team, so looking back at that, that was kind of shocking, but there are some things you have to get through. It's football, it's life, and you've got to find a way to keep yourself up, keep playing for your teammates and keep producing. You know, we come back last year and beat them, and you know, fight for our teammates, and now we've just got to keep doing that this year.

We have our road game against West Virginia, and we have to go out there and execute.

Q. Getting back to the injury, how hard was it for you to come back out on the sideline and cheer your team on and be encouraging?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: It wasn't hard at all. Once I knew I tore my Achilles, it was like, all right, let's go back out; we still have a game to go play. That time we went into overtime, and I'm cheering, yelling, and talking to the running backs and telling them to get in the end zone when they get the ball because we've got to win this game. To go out there and win in overtime and be able to cheer on my teammates, that's fine with me.

Q. We talked about it after the game, kind of joked where the passing game has been all season, but you look down the stretch here, and is this team's ability to pass going to be the missing piece of the puzzle and make or break whether this team makes a bowl game or not?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: We definitely need our passing game to be clicking. It helps the running game out. We did that a lot this weekend against Kansas, and John Burt and all the other wide outs did a great job of catching the ball and getting in the end zone, opened up the run game for us. We need that to be clicking on all cylinders so we can have the running game and the passing game.

Q. Do you think there's been a lack of focus on the road? And what exactly does that mean?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: A little bit complacent, might be distracted. Who knows? Like I said, you can't pinpoint one thing. We have to fix that within ourselves and with the team and be able to get that corrected and fix it.

Q. If you get this win, you're .500 overall and over .500 in the conference. Would it be an indicator that the team has turned a corner and is moving in the right direction?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: We get this win on the road, it definitely changes our season around. Like I said, it's a one-game season for us and we know we have to get it done to be bowl eligible and just go on for next year. You know, we need this win in the worst way. Guys know that. Hopefully we'll stop talking about the lack of focus and the lack of execution, and we'll just go out there and play each and every game like it's our last and be able to start winning games.

Q. How do you make sure guys don't go in there feeling that pressure and just go out and play?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Keep drilling it in their head. At the end of the day, it comes down to you; how do you want to help this team win games. You've got to look at yourself in the mirror, 'Is my effort a championship effort that can help this team win?' If everybody looks themselves in the mirror on this team and say my effort is a championship effort, then we'll be able to win games.

Q. Did you give D'Onta (Foreman) a hard time when he got run down against Oklahoma?
JOHNATHAN GRAY: Oh, it was great to see him break for that long run. He got a second chance. At Oklahoma he got caught, but this time he was determined not to, and he knows once we get to the goal line we might call Tyrone (Swoopes) in, so he's not going to let that happen. So he got in the end zone and we were excited. The guy is going to be a special kid. He's a great running back, and he'll help this University get back to where we need to be.