

Texas Tech University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 10, 2016

Kliff Kingsbury



Q. You won the stat game, you lost the score. How often does that happen to you and what do you do about that?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I think when you look at the areas where we lost it, we're giving up a defensive touchdown on the interception, giving up a special teams touchdown and losing the penalty battle, that's kind of where we lost that game. Had some yards and did some good things at times but in crucial areas on the road we fell short.

Q. In the second half, what do you think about Pat's decision-making how he handled the blitz as well as his confidence?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I thought he did a good job. There were some plays we'd like to have back, but more so up front, communicating, picking up different things. But I thought he hung in there. You could tell by the end of the game his shoulder was getting a little tired, but he kept battling gave us a chance to win.

Q. Did you ever consider putting Nic in at any point in time as a player to do a little relief or do a different play?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No.

Q. What do you think the biggest difference was, like maybe third, fourth quarter that made (indiscernible) what you guys were doing?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't know that they did anything. We just didn't execute like we should have, had some third and shorts, things of that nature that would have kept drives going. Just didn't execute.

Q. Any of those fourth-down calls that you went for it on would you go back and do it differently?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No. The first one just felt like field goals weren't going to get it done. Had a good call on it. Just didn't finish it. And then the other two. Just were going to be aggressive and, like I said, I didn't think field goals at that time would be enough.

Q. It seems like the illegal man downfield is being called not only on you but a lot of teams. Would you like to see that redefined or redone a little bit given the spread offense as far as things go?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think there's a lot of gray area. So you either go one way or the other, but we just have to do a better job tightening up. Some of those plays

the lineman isn't even designed to be down the field and ends up down the field. So we need to clean that up.

Q. What do you see from West Virginia on both sides of the ball, special teams that concerns you?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Defensively I think Coach Gibson is one of the best in the country at playing spread offenses, has a really good plan. Brings pressure, drops eight a bunch, does a good job taking away your run game, and I've been really impressed with him. Year in year out of the he does a tremendous job versus us.

And offensively they run the ball very well. Dana's done a good job adapting to his personnel, has great O line, quarterback's playing at a high level, has some really good wideouts. They're a good team, Top 25 team for a reason, and we'll have to play very well.

Q. [Indiscernible] Brown mentioned in the press conference that second half against K-State they started bringing six-, seven-man pressure and at times looked like offensive line was on ice skates. What's the biggest issue for them and what do they have to clean up?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Just to get better. That's all it is. They brought some pressures. But they brought some of the same pressures in the first half and we handled it and we just didn't play as well in the second half. Like I said, still had a bunch of yards. Had a bunch of yards, could have scored points but just didn't get it done. Have to find a way to finish those drives and score more points.

Q. After you looked at the film, did you like the way that the defense played, at least did it play more consistently, what you were looking for in this team?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I mean, it was improved, I'd say. Had some key stops where we had a chance to take leads and offensively we didn't convert. But still have to clean up a lot as far as their running game. I thought they were able to do some things that we'd like to take away.

But I thought both sides of the ball played hard until the end, didn't give up, kept fighting.

Q. From what you've seen on film so far this year, is West Virginia as much of a Big 12 Championship contender as the rest of the teams that they're up with the top of the standings with right now?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm not sure who all is at the top. I know they haven't lost a game, so I'd assume they're in that conversation. They're a good team. I think they play really good defense. Quarterback is playing at a very high level, like I said, experienced offensive line. Dana does a good job schematically week in week out to try to take advantage of what you're doing defensively. So I think they're a good team.

Q. The spread offense, it seems like they get the rap that they only throw it around the yard, and last year you saw them finish in the top two in rushing. Why do you think that is that they get that rap, that they can't run the ball as proficiently as they seem to show week in week out?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Are you talking about West Virginia? Yeah, last year they ran it I think 57 times versus us. So I've known he's been doing that the last three or four years.

He's run heavy. And so I don't know what they call his offense. But he's definitely pushed that way where he's running it more than he throws it.

Q. What do you think about the safety Kyzir White and how far he's come this year?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He's a good player. I think they're entire defense is good really. Like I talked about year in, year out when we play them, schematically they do a great job trying to take away what you're good at and it will be a big challenge. Last year we weren't very physical and they got after us. And we need to be up to the challenge this year.

Q. Do you think this last game may be the best that your group of wide receivers have played from that standpoint since you've been here?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't know. I thought we left a lot out there. Thought Pat had some really good throws, made good plays. We had some balls we could have finished. But they're getting better.

Numbers-wise we're playing a lot of guys they're all kind of keeping that level which is what we want.

Q. When you make the decision to go for it on fourth down, when you're looking at maybe midfield, are you making that decision a couple of plays ahead, knowing that maybe the punt's not going to be that effective just given the field position? Is that kind of what you look at more than anything else or is it about it's fourth-and-seven, we're tied, we gotta go for it?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No, I mean, based on a lot of different things, situationally, how the game's going where we're at, if we're stopping them, not stopping them. A lot of factors, if we cross the 50 we have a pretty good idea if we're going to go for it or not.

Q. You said Pat seemed to be getting tired there and the shoulder was tired there late in the game. Do you think that's something that will linger over the next couple of weeks or do you guys know that?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't. I think he pushed it to be out there this past week. A lot of guys would not have played in that game. He wanted to play. And threw it really well. So it will just continue to get better and better.

Q. When did you know that he would play? When was that decision made?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Later in the week.

Q. How would you or have you handled it if there were any sexist, racist or other offensive language used in your locker room?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: That did not sound like one of your questions. (Laughter) somebody put you up to that one. I mean, I'm never back there to even hear it. So I hope none of that's going on, but we'll leave that to the politicians to discuss.

Q. How is Keke over the last month? Have you seen what you wanted?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He's gotten better. We asked him, after last year, we didn't think he was physical enough in the run game. Talked to him about that being a complete wide receiver. We've always known he was dynamic with the ball in his hands. Has really shown great hands, great speed and great illusiveness in the open field and become a much more complete wideout, and he's still just a true sophomore.

Q. When he returned the punt that one time, was something that you all wanted him to do?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No, it was more, it was just a feel thing. He was kind of hot right then, he wanted the ball so we let him have a shot at it. That's kind of how we go offensively, and special teams the same way, if a player has gotten on a roll or he's hot, we try to give him the ball.

Q. What are a couple of things you feel like your team needs to do this weekend to bring home a win?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We just have to be better in those crucial areas. We haven't won the turnover battle, I think, since week one, which it's hard to win in college football without doing that. Penalties, we had 100

yards last week. We have to bring it way down. And to me those are biggest thing. Special teams can't give up big plays. The week before we had the safety. Had a couple other miscues and this past week the kickoff return.

So I think that's key. We haven't played a very clean game the last two weeks, and we've got to definitely do that.

Q. Special teams something you're going to spend more time on this week or do you think you've done that now, it's a mental thing?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think it's a mental thing. Our kickers have to perform at a higher level and punters. That's where we're at. And we've worked with them. And we know they can do it. We believe in them. They just have to do it on Saturday.

Q. (Indiscernible) situation?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We're not sure yet. He'll be day to day this week and pretty much moving forward.

Q. Has he been on the practice field this past week?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He has.

Q. K-State, you guys were squibbing the ball. As far as kicking it to (indiscernible) right before the half, did you put it in a bad spot where you kicked it, or was it just the coverage unit?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we squibbed it after that play. So, no, we didn't kick it where we wanted to kick it. We didn't kick it through the end zone with the wind, which is something we've got to be able to do. He made a good play. We didn't cover it real well and we decided to start squibbing it.

Q. What were you feeling when you saw your team (indiscernible) down the field?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Somebody sent that to me. Looks like the tape is sped up. That's how fast he is. It's awesome to see how hard he's worked and it's paying off for him.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Same deal, day to day, saw him in the training room today walking around. Not sure of his status just yet, we'll try to get him loosened up today and tomorrow see if he can go.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No, sir.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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Luke Stice



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Luke Stice.

Q. How would you assess the defense from Saturday in terms of what you've seen prior to last week?

LUKE STICE: Well, obviously first off, our goal is to go 1-0 this week and handle this week in conference against Kansas State. We failed to do that, obviously that was disappointing, but a positive note from the defensive side of the ball, I was very pleased with our effort. I felt like our preparation leading up to the game was where it needed to be both mentally and physically, but obviously leading to this next week all that needs to improve and continue to work on little things to help us compete at a higher level.

Q. They're probably going to do a lot of running, they're run heavy. Something that the defense has had trouble with, what do you do to staunch that?

LUKE STICE: You know, obviously you mentioned it. Stopping the run is the first thing, the primary focus. And I think that just goes throughout the week. Preparation, you've got to know that's got to be your main focus and stop the run so Coach Gibbs can execute the calls he needs to to stop the pass where you put them in situations where they're past-oriented, second and third and long. Stopping the run is primary focus going into each week and this week's not any differently.

Q. What do you think works so well on the first three drives second half, you forced straight three-and-outs. Offense not able to do much with it but seems like whatever something obviously started working for the defense?

LUKE STICE: I just believe throughout this entire season we continue to make strides moving forward. I've mentioned before we've had a lot of young guys. That's not any excuse, that's not taking anything away from them but they just continue to play more as a unit.

That's one thing I'm really excited about moving on to conference play is that the effort, the preparation, the intensity, everything is continuing to improve. As you get ready to go to the stretch in conference that's what needs to happen for a successful team.

Q. Schematically was there much that you changed going into that second half or just more --

LUKE STICE: Coach Gibbs is a phenomenal play caller and he'll put us in the best situation to be successful. It's all about execution. Any plays, any big busted assignments that we were in a play call that was inferior, we didn't execute and that's the main focus is execution.

Q. You mentioned earlier, what have you seen from Jordyn Brooks. He's come a long way since the first game?

LUKE STICE: Jordyn Brooks, he came up here back in June and just kind of one of those guys that put his head down went to work. Pleased to see that. That's the same approach I took when I got to Texas Tech. Just to continue to see him develop on and off the field is something I'm really excited about. And I'm not sure if he's even realized the potential, his full potential. That's the exciting thing and we're going to continue to develop him and, as well as other young guys to make sure they know the importance of their role this season, that you may be a true freshman but you have a role to help us win the Big 12 Championship, and you need to make sure each week that you put the execution forward to make sure you're in the best situation when it comes to game day. So he's doing a great job with that.

Q. What impresses you most in terms of his physical tools?

LUKE STICE: He's just physically gifted, no two ways around it. Being a true freshman, 240 pounds, a little over six foot. There's a lot you can do with that. As I mentioned earlier, great role for me to really just help him work on the preparation throughout the week, both mentally and physically, and help when the game comes, when the game time comes on Saturday. You just go out there and you turn it off and you go back, revert back to your training when it comes to game time. He's done a great job with that and just as an entire defense and him individually continuing to improve each week that's what he's done.

Q. What's the biggest problem in the special teams at times? Is it just consistency?

LUKE STICE: Well, back to the whole -- Coach Robinson is one of the best special teams coaches I've been around. Same thing I mentioned with Coach Gibbs, it's not anything wrong with the game plan or the play calling or anything like that. It's just about

execution.

And we just gotta continue to do a better job as we get in more of these competitive games in our conference. We can't have any mishaps. Special teams has to be a momentum changer for us in a positive way. It's inexcusable to have something like that, especially on the road, happen. And moving forward we've just got to make sure we sharpen our focus mentally and physically and do whatever we need to do to help this team win moving forward.

Q. Special teams is more mental than anything else.

LUKE STICE: Right.

Q. Do you agree with that?

LUKE STICE: That's really the disappointing thing is you gotta be able to do what you control to the best of your ability, individually help this team be successful. And it's disappointing when that doesn't, when that doesn't happen, you put yourself in situations to possibly hurt the team by lack of mental sharpness. That's something we've got to recognize, learn from it and you're ready to get after it heading to West Virginia on this Saturday.

Q. What do you think about Donald Trump's classification of his phone comments as locker room talk?

LUKE STICE: I can't speak for Donald Trump, but I know as far as locker room talk is concerned, we're a family. This is Texas Tech. There's guys in the locker room that are my brothers, and the locker room talk needs to be, in my opinion, just encouragement, what we need to help this team be successful to win a championship. And that is my role as an older leader in the locker room is I gotta maintain that and make sure there's no negative talk that's going to deteriorate the culture of our team.

We've done such a great job over the past span since last January of instilling that positive culture and doing whatever we need to help a championship. We need to make sure that any negative comments don't bring down a team.

Q. What's your main concern going against West Virginia this weekend?

LUKE STICE: She mentioned it, start off the whole deal, stopping the run is obviously the primary focus. And doing what we can control. We still haven't played to our best of our ability in all three phases of the game. We know that. That's something we're somewhat optimistic about, that we'll be able to compete at the level we have been knowing we haven't played our best game. And at this time we have our

backs up against the wall and we know we need to continue to fight each day and continue to prepare for West Virginia. It's a one-game season. We need to do everything we need to get after them going into this week.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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Cameron Batson



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Cameron.

Q. What's the mood amongst those on offense, putting up some great stats and not coming out with a win?

CAMERON BATSON: It's definitely a tough feeling. You know, you practice hard each and every day, and on Saturdays you don't get the outcome that's expected. We just have to keep pushing as a team and things will get better.

Q. What do you think was the biggest problem through those first three offensive drives of the second half? Defense able to get some three-and-outs but only able to get 3-points out of it. What do you think was the biggest trip there?

CAMERON BATSON: Definitely penalties. Penalties have killed us all season, all game. We squandered drives ourselves. It's not like other defense are really stopping us. We've really been stopping ourselves with penalties, making it third and 15, third and 20, and then that's a hard position to be in. So we have to cut out the penalties and be more disciplined.

Q. So the fourth downs, were those just lack of execution, being able to go get those short yardage situations?

CAMERON BATSON: Definitely. It was definitely lack of execution. Sometimes the linemen don't get the push that they need. And running back, it's hard for the running backs to hit the hole.

So it was definitely a little bit of both. We could have probably made some better calls there or Pat could have checked out of some things. But it was still, at the end of the day it's a tough loss.

Q. Do you think because you guys have been so penalized you don't necessarily get the benefit of the doubt on some things and that you're going to have to play cleaner maybe than normal?

CAMERON BATSON: Could you repeat the question one more time?

Q. Do you think you've been somewhat targeted from the standpoint that you've had so many penalties that you don't get the benefit of the doubt? And as a result you're going to have to play cleaner?

CAMERON BATSON: Sometimes. You know, it just all depends on what referees, how they're calling the game. It was like a particular play we're dealing with blocking downfield, we didn't think that it was a penalty. He just finished the block.

But, I guess, since we do get a lot of penalties that the refs are definitely looking for it.

Q. Have the coaches talked much about it or is it to a point where you feel like you've heard it so much that they don't need to harp on it?

CAMERON BATSON: They definitely don't need to harp on it anymore. We know in this room as an offense and as a team, period, that we have to cut down the penalties.

One of our big goals is to be disciplined. And we haven't shown a lot of discipline in these past few games.

Q. Why do you think that is?

CAMERON BATSON: It really just stems from practice. You know, sometimes we create penalties in practice and we have to cut that out. We have to minimize the mistakes, and sometimes on game day, I don't know, sometimes guys just getting nervous or it's the crowd that you really can't focus or hear.

But you definitely just have to -- we have to get in there and we have to focus more. We have to definitely get in there and practice and take that more seriously as far as penalties and mistakes that we make.

Q. Have you looked at the defenders that you're going to be up against Saturday and have any take on how tough you think that's going to be?

CAMERON BATSON: We haven't actually watched film yet. We'll get in there today and watch some film. But I can remember last year, West Virginia, they're a very physical team. They play a lot of man to man. And so we'll have our hands tied this week.

Q. The catch that you made at the goal line, where you had to dive for it, what was the difficulty for making that catch?

CAMERON BATSON: I don't know. At the time, it was definitely adrenalin was pumping. You are just trying to make a play on the ball. Pat put it in a great spot

where it was either I could catch it or the defender couldn't get to it.

So it was definitely just -- I would kind of say a routine play because we practice those plays each and every week.

Q. Are you looking forward to playing against man to man or do you prefer zone?

CAMERON BATSON: I definitely prefer man to man. I proud myself on man to man to get open and single man coverage. You know, zones, they work well too. We definitely can find holes in the zone. So we're really just going to see how they play us and make our moves from there.

Q. Who is better you or Tramain?

CAMERON BATSON: Tramain was a great player, of course I would say I'm better. But Tramain, he's taught me a lot, and I love Tramain to death.

Q. Do you communicate or how much do you talk to him say in the last month or so during the season?

CAMERON BATSON: He actually texted me. He texts me before every game, wishes me good luck. Tells me to go out there, execute, be disciplined and just have fun.

Q. How inspiring was it to see Pat and what he did for you and your teammates just the offense as a whole?

CAMERON BATSON: Pat did a great job. You know, with everything going on as far as his shoulder, that happened last week, he came in, he stepped in. And he did a phenomenal job of getting the, moving the ball around.

He did a lot with his legs as well. So Pat, he's definitely tough and he'll do anything for this team. He puts his body on the line for this team.

Q. How would you describe the locker room talk and is it what Donald Trump says it is?

CAMERON BATSON: We really don't, you know, worry too much about that. We have a great culture here at Texas Tech as far as keeping ourselves held to a higher standard.

Q. The fact that you catch a touchdown pass every game this season I think you're one of two players in the nation to do that, how do you feel -- does that show how much progress you've made since last year or do you feel like you've progressed to get to that point where you've been consistent?

CAMERON BATSON: Yes, definitely last year I played behind Jakeem, I was his backup so I didn't get as

many reps as I thought that I could have got or should have got. But I definitely worked hard this off-spring, during the summer, just to instill the trust that the coaches trust me very well.

And it's definitely starting to pay off. The man above has definitely done a great job of giving me the talent and the ability to play this game at a very high level.

Q. I know you guys felt you left points out there but looking at the case on defense, is that the stiffest defense you felt like you guys have faced this year?

CAMERON BATSON: Yeah, definitely K-State they did a great job of showing some different coverages and everything. They played a lot of bracket. And they really played base, but they were very disciplined and physical in what they did.

So we just -- we could have made some adjustments on how we went about the offense and everything. But I definitely have to give credit to those guys because they were there each and every play.

Q. Special teams obviously has a lot of different phases, but just seems like whether it's on kickoff return or punt return or whatever it is, just seems to be a game-changing mistake it seems last few weeks. What has Coach Rob preached to you guys in practice, what are you guys working on most? Is it consistency?

CAMERON BATSON: It's definitely consistency. We work each and every day on special teams. We just have to clean up that side of the ball. We'll have to come in and practice harder, watch a little bit more film, see what those guys are doing, read our keys. So it's a lot of things that play into it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.