

# Texas Tech University Football Media Conference

Monday, October 17, 2016



## Kliff Kingsbury

**Q. Are you expecting to see a lot of rushing this week?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think so. Those two backs are as good a combination as I've seen since I've been in coaching. They really offset each other well. Both of them can catch out of the back field and strong, physical runners that will both play on Sunday, so I would expect to see a heavy dose of them.

**Q. Coach, I know a lot of people want to get this thing fixed as fast as possible, and that's not always possible to do. What do you guys do as a coaching staff? Do you just try to get things set as best as you can?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, there is a lot to fix. There is no doubt. Just midway point, reassess what we're doing, how we're doing it as far as practice goes. Personnel-wise, who we're playing, I think we took a look at really everything on Sunday, and trying to figure out what we need to tighten up and who needs to be playing and what changes we need to make in this last part of the season to be the most effective.

**Q. You guys were coming out flat on Saturday. Was there something that you feel like maybe was the reason for that?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No, I don't. I don't. If you come out flat for homecoming, then it's not very good. I'm not sure what the cause of that was. If we were intimidated. If we were nervous. But it wasn't the normal energy we've had, particularly when we're playing at home.

**Q. When you assess how you practice, are there some changes that you'd make?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We're going to do some different things in practice. The next part of the season there a lot of similar offenses to what we run in the Big 12, and we'll do some more good-on-good-type situations to try to give the best looks possible for each other.

**Q. What are you doing to hold the players accountable for the after play penalties, the personal fouls, those kind of things?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, that's a great question. We have a punishment in place. Murphy got ejected, which he won't start this next half, and then Payton, we should have taken Peyton out of the game, but he was in for Kisean, so we really didn't have another safety.

But, yeah, they'll come out of the ballgame and won't play much if that occurs moving forward. Then they'll have punishment during that week as well.

**Q. You showed plenty of resolve as a player. But right now at halftime, you guys are trailing. You're just 1-19. Just from a coach's perspective, what do you feel like is preventing the comebacks from happening?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: That's a great question. I'm not sure. We've got to be mentally tougher. There is no doubt about it. When you get down and can't respond, that's not what you want to be labeled as a player or a team, and that's kind of where we're at. I think when we get rolling and we're hot, we're pretty good. Right now when we get behind, we don't handle that that well.

**Q. (Indiscernible) before you played you guys, talked about how he changed his approach a few years ago. After a loss like that, do you look at their sideline and say maybe that's where up-tempo teams are headed right now, where they're running the ball a little bit more, investing more in defense? Does that change your approach at all?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No. They've done a great job. They have a good team. But as far as philosophies go, it's very similar to what theirs is. They had really good players, they have a good scheme, and they beat us.

**Q. Do you feel like their philosophy (Indiscernible) is heading in the right direction right now?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yes.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Just knowing what I have seen here and what we have.

**Q. Do you feel like you're going to see that on the field week in and week out through the season?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We did not last week, no.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, probably a little bit different. I don't do anything for show as far as trying to show off for the fans or make a point so the fans see it. But that gets dealt with on its own.

**Q. What is the process?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm not going to go into consequences of what the punishment is or what they do or what's said, but it's handled.

**Q. (Indiscernible) do you feel pretty good that there's not going to be any animosity on the field?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I mean, any time a player was out of school and comes back, there will be some of that volatility, I'm sure. But for me, the way it's worked out, it's been three years. It's just trying to get prepared to beat a very good OU team.

**Q. Do you feel like that situation continues to get drawn out?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I do. I think it's all worked itself out in a way where everybody's happy. He's playing well, so I don't see the issue anymore.

**Q. Is that something you expect to be in the player's minds at all?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't think so. I think we have enough on our minds that we know we have to get better at this week and focus on those things.

**Q. You talked about (Indiscernible) this isn't just something you can pick up (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We'll find out. You know, you just make it a point of emphasis, that we have to play tougher, we'll practice. We'll try to ramp up practices and see if we can bring more energy and more enthusiasm, more mental toughness this week.

**Q. Did you feel like Patrick was rushed at all from Kansas State to West Virginia?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think his lack of practicing caught up to him. I think that first week he was still kind of in that streak, in that zone. And this last week not practicing as much as we would have liked probably caught up to him. Then he tried to do a little bit too much, I felt like, in the second half.

**Q. In hindsight, do you feel like maybe (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't think so. Watching Pat play the week before, did a lot of good things. Felt like he'd be better this week. But I just think not getting as many reps as he's used to getting probably had an effect on his play.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It sounds like it. Sounds like he feels a lot better this week early in the week, and we'll be able to get him into practice a little bit more.

**Q. How much did you feel like his shoulder wasn't there or the offensive line just was gun shy**

**because it felt like he was running around on his own?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, a lot of those he was running around on his own. I felt like he had some things early in his progressions that probably could have taken, but got out of sync a little bit. Made some big plays as he always does, but we weren't our sharpest offensively, that's for sure.

**Q. As a former quarterback, how tough is that when you don't feel like the pass protection is there, exactly, to be able to hang in there and hang in the pocket when you're a little bit gun shy and feeling like every time you've got to scramble to make a play?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, like I said, I don't feel like he had to scramble as much as he did. He did some of that on his own. But when there's pressure as a quarterback, the great ones are able to stand in there, step into their throws and make plays.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Just continue to get better, continue to gel, have some experience. Have some young guys that are trying to figure it out. But I thought they played well enough. We've got to be able to run the ball better. There is no doubt. But we were just off skill position-wise we turned the ball over, but I thought they were serviceable. Not what we want. Not ideal, but it wasn't just the worst.

**Q. Speaking of (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, he did good. We felt like his presence, tough runner, little bigger body than we've had. But we needed to get him in there, get some touches and he did a good job.

**Q. Has he passed (Indiscernible) on the depth charts?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't know if he's passed him as much as he's understanding what we're after. He played in a similar offense in high school than what we're running. I think he's picked it up quicker. Corey is talented. We're going to find ways to get him touches. He's just got to do a little more studying on his own and get caught up as far as the scheme goes.

**Q. Rotating through some of those running backs, how much is factoring in just being able to pick up the pass protection?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we're not as good as we should be. We missed some easy pick ups last week that cost us, and that's just a focus deal, concentration deal, and once again, that's part of the reason you saw Ward in there was to get somebody that could help us pick some things up.

**Q. With Murphy out for the first half, does Akamnonu get back in the mix?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we'll see. We'll have a competition this week in practice and see who plays the best and go from there.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Day to day. I have not seen him yet today. Saw him yesterday. So we'll see if he can move around today and kind of take it from there.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I do not. I do not. He's kind of the same way. It's going to be a deal where if we feel like he can play and be protected, he'll play. If not, I would guess it will be next week.

**Q. Is Pat looking down field too much on the plays instead of taking an easy three-yard or five-yard scramble?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm not sure. I think that he just really was trying a bit too hard, trying to do too much at times. Last week we get behind big and probably pushed the envelope a little bit too much. But prior to last week's game, had been playing at a very high level, and I think not practicing, having some discomfort in that shoulder probably effected him. I know it effected him, but hopefully we can get that resolved this week.

**Q. What did you think of your defense's performance?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, it wasn't good enough. There's no doubt. Didn't get lined up. Didn't make tackles when they were there. Their quarterback, I thought played well, but we had plays to be made and we didn't make them.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about Oklahoma's defense coming up?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, watching them, they've continued to get better. I thought last week against Kansas State they played very well. Good front. They've got a couple of those guys back that didn't play last week. Good linebackers, athletic, physical. Coach Stoops does a good job bringing people from everywhere and keeping you off balance. So we'll be challenged to be one of the better defenses we play.

**Q. How crucial do you feel like this game is right now with where you're sitting at 3-3? And what it could do for the rest of the season?**

KLIFF KINGSBURY: All of them are, from here on out. There is no doubt they're big conference games and we need to play our best in these last six and be much improved from last week.

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## Luke Stice

**Q. What's the morale in the locker room? It's not expected that your team would score just 17 points. How tough is that to get some confidence back going into playing Oklahoma?**

LUKE STICE: It was disappointing Saturday. There's no two ways around that. That was one of the first things we did after the game on Saturday was really just apologize for our performance to the entire Texas Tech family. The standard of excellence is very high around here, and we take pride in that. It's something moving forward we have to do everything in our control to make sure that performance doesn't happen again. And not let that performance dictate how we perform the rest of the way through. Let it be a positive deal moving forward.

**Q. Is the morale pretty good?**

LUKE STICE: Morale is something that needs to continue to increase. The demand in every aspect of the game right now needs to continue to improve. That's one thing as leaders in the locker room we've got to ensure.

**Q. (Indiscernible) on Saturday. When you go back and you're making adjustments this week in practice, is there anything you feel you can do (Indiscernible)?**

LUKE STICE: That really just goes back to improving all aspects of the game. Controlling what we can control. Whatever play call or situation we're put in, just execute your job to help the team be successful. And that's just going back to everybody doing what they need to do to help this team win.

**Q. What do you think between now and Saturday afternoon, early evening to not come out flat? Where everything went well right up until you ran out of the tunnel, what changes so that that doesn't happen?**

LUKE STICE: There's got to be increased accountability with everybody in that locker room. There's no two ways around that. Everybody has to say, look, we're in this together. We've got to play for each other, and know that everything's out in front of us. We can continue to improve and get to where we need to be. We just needed to increase in every aspect of the game and continue to improve on all phases.

**Q. But what specifically changes? There's got to be some dynamic of changes where somebody says something, does something or does something different?**

LUKE STICE: We need to demand more of each other. I couldn't agree with you more. It's unacceptable, like I mentioned starting this deal off, it's unacceptable, the performance we had Saturday. Whatever needs to happen, we need to accelerate that process and demand more of the man next to you, and know that everybody needs to do their job to put ourselves in position to be successful in this coming week.

**Q. What do you see in Oklahoma's offense that you aren't looking forward to or are looking forward to?**

LUKE STICE: It's going to be a great chance to compete on Saturday. There's nothing we're not looking forward to. It will be a great test for us, and it comes back to doing what we can control. Taking care of getting ourselves in the best position to make a play. Executing the scheme, there's nothing wrong with what we've been -- coaching hasn't been the issue. It's been executing what we've been receiving, and that's what we need to really focus on this week. And stay like that mentally and physically to put ourselves in the best position Saturday to be successful.

**Q. Do you know what might be able to help your preparation at all, facing a team that does a lot of similar things on offense?**

LUKE STICE: That will definitely help. When it just comes down to, as I mention, doing what we can control, and that's everybody doing their job and setting up more accountability for the man beside them to do their job as well. Continue to just build an overall team chemistry and work on that morale to make sure we're mentally in the best shape to go into this game and be ready to compete.

**Q. Do you feel like after two weeks against Kansas teams where you felt like you might have taken a step forward, where you guys progressed and took a step back against West Virginia?**

LUKE STICE: It was disappointing. There is no excuse. There are no two ways around that. West Virginia was an inexcusable performance and we're disappointed. But all we can do now is focus on this next opponent coming up. Know that we can use that adversity to push us to a higher level. Let this continue



to build the character in the locker room, and continue to push forward to become better men on and off the field that are going to help and make a better team on the field on Saturday. That's what we really need to focus on.

**Q. Do you feel like defensively, execution-wise, you guys took a step back?**

LUKE STICE: It was disappointing to see. I mean, West Virginia, that was a tough performance. Whether we took a step back or forward, it didn't change the fact that everything is out in front of us, and we need to do the best we can do and control what we can control moving forward. That's what we're focused on.

We're not going to let that loss create issues moving forward in the future. We've got to let that performance against West Virginia be something that's inexcusable and not allow it to happen in the future.

**Q. When the team's facing adversity like last week, who do you all look at? What leaders step up to try to bounce back from that?**

LUKE STICE: That's got to be a demand of everybody in the locker room, to be honest with you. It doesn't need to be one person that does that role. It needs to be increased accountability across the boards. Regardless of the preparation, mentally and physically you've put forward up to this point, that needs to increase. I feel like that was evident last Saturday.

The leadership, that starts with me. I need to do better in whatever role I have to help this team be successful as well as the other seniors in the locker room and everybody else in their role. Everybody needs to do their job to a higher level and do whatever we can to compete at a higher level come game time.

**Q. Have you guys met as a team without coaches yet?**

LUKE STICE: Yeah, sure.

**Q. What was the purpose of that meeting?**

LUKE STICE: We talked about team unity all the time. What we've been through. The bonds that we've forged and the adversity that we've been through is built for times like this. This is why you train. This is why the culture of Coach Whitt was praised so much throughout the off-season. It was where we really need to come together as a team and we're all we've got. The brother on my left, the brother on my right, that's who I can count on when it's time to go to work, and that needs to continue to improve and do what we can to control and play at a higher level.

What we did last Saturday wasn't good enough. But we've got another opportunity this Saturday to get right

back after them.

**Q. When was that meeting?**

LUKE STICE: October 11, 5:15 in the morning.

**Q. Did you see anything during practice last week that would have led you to believe that you'd come out flat, maybe complacency from the team?**

LUKE STICE: You know, that complacency is a tough word to hear because that's something you can control. That's just due to just poor execution. Mentally and physically, as I mentioned, we've got to continue to raise the standard of what's accepted, however good or bad that you feel a teammate or yourself performed to get ready for that game, everything's got to increase.

Every day leading up to this next game, there needs to be a sense of urgency and increased accountability across the boards to make sure we're ready to get after them Saturday.

**Q. Kind of turning it all on the team, but West Virginia is no slouch. I mean, they did some things that maybe prompted play that wasn't up to standards. What do you think will happen going up against Oklahoma in that same perspective?**

LUKE STICE: Well, you say you turn it back on the team, this is the ultimate team game. That's why I love it. That's why it's such an unbelievable game in my opinion. And you've got to do what you can control.

We've put ourselves in poor situations from what we did wrong, and that's one thing you can't have competing against great teams each week. Just going at it each day, you have to continue to mentally and physically do everything you can to put this team in a situation to be successful come game time.

**Q. I think Coach mentioned after the game that at the time you guys weren't (Indiscernible) keeping him out of the read option. How challenging is it to see (Indiscernible) kind of running up the middle and you kind of want to get in there and stop it. All of a sudden you have a play outside of the system, and they burn you the other way. How challenging is it when things are going that way to take a step back and know that I just have to do my job and not worry about trying to make every play?**

LUKE STICE: The dual-threat quarterback without a doubt brings another element to the game, but that goes back to just doing your job. You've got to know that I'm going to do my job to the best of my ability for the man beside me. And know when he does his job, have faith in the call that's been called. Everybody executes their job, and you'll be successful. Playing with the utmost maximum effort to take care of situations that don't go as well, you help the team in

the long run.

**Q. You talked a little bit about the mental fortitude of the team. On Saturday on the sideline, did you feel like that was (Indiscernible)?**

LUKE STICE: It was disappointing not to see us respond like I know we're capable of responding to. We've taken pride to reverting back to our training during tough times. We failed to see that. That was obviously which indicated the performance we displayed on Saturday. You know, as I keep mentioning, we've just got to, moving forward, we've got to make sure we continue to increase and demand more out of each other to get after this next opportunity.

**Q. (Indiscernible) after the Saturday's loss to West Virginia, what is your message to the fan base?**

LUKE STICE: First thing I did was apologize for our performance. It's unacceptable. No two ways around that. This is an unbelievable university, and it's a privilege to be a student-athlete here. It really is. All I can promise is we're going back to work with everything we can in this next opportunity to protect the Jones and get back on track and play at the level we know we're capable of playing for each other.

It's an unbelievable opportunity here to be able to compete each day with these guys in the locker room and to play for these coaches. Moving forward, we have to do everything we can to play for each other and compete at a higher level.

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## Jonathan Giles

### **Q. What's the morale like, Jonathan?**

JONATHAN GILES: It's disappointing. Homecoming game, we were excited to play in front of the former football players who played here. So for us to come out there and play the way we played, it was very disappointing.

### **Q. What do you think the cause was for you guys coming out flat?**

JONATHAN GILES: Just not being focused mentally and physically. It was an 11:00 game, so I guess we weren't just physically and mentally focused into the game.

### **Q. What do you do to change that?**

JONATHAN GILES: We get better each and every day at practice. Get ready for OU because there's another big opponent coming up, and we know how big that game is. So just getting better each and every day, starting today.

### **Q. Can you turn that morale around in a week?**

JONATHAN GILES: Yes, I feel like we can. We have great leaders on this team, like Luke Stice, Pat Mahomes. I feel like we can easily turn it around.

### **Q. Your team didn't have a good game, but the inside receivers, you, Batson, Keke, Sadler, all had productive days. Do you feel like y'all had a good day inside?**

JONATHAN GILES: I feel like we had a pretty good game. But overall we were more focused on the wins than losses. Even though we had a good game, we still weren't too excited because we knew we didn't come out with the win.

### **Q. (Indiscernible) how much does that affect you guys throughout the week? It seems like it's quite a bit?**

JONATHAN GILES: I feel like it affects us a little bit as a whole, but Pat is a competitor. He works hard each and every day. So I mean, you just have to know what was going on and go with the plan.

### **Q. I don't know if we've seen an offensive struggle with you guys like that in quite some time. In your estimation, what was the biggest issue?**

JONATHAN GILES: Penalties. I feel like penalties are the one thing that slowed us down. They could see

throughout our losses, penalties being the main key and not being disciplined. So I feel like that's what happened to us Saturday. Us not being disciplined.

### **Q. Who do you feel that falls back on the most, just the undisciplined play and penalties?**

JONATHAN GILES: Just us, the players. The coaches preach that to us every day being disciplined. We have it on the wall, be disciplined. So for us to come out and not be disciplined, it hurts.

### **Q. Fans criticize Kliff for not jumping on players immediately on the sidelines and not saying come here (Indiscernible) or whatever. What is Kliff's punishment structure say you get a silly penalty?**

JONATHAN GILES: Well, usually if we have a false start in practice or some kind of stupid dumb penalty in practice, we'll do up downs and then also we just hold each other accountable. Instead of Kliff getting on us all the time, we have our leaders come talk to us and get on the players. Makes it much easier for Kliff.

### **Q. What happens (Indiscernible)?**

JONATHAN GILES: Just punishment during practice, during the week. Just punishment. Lot of punishment.

### **Q. (Indiscernible)?**

JONATHAN GILES: Running too, board pushes, lot of different stuff after practice.

### **Q. Would you like to see people be a little more vocal on the sideline when things don't go well? Maybe a little more emotion, whether it's from the coaches or your fellow players?**

JONATHAN GILES: I think so. It also, just bringing more energy to the sideline. I feel like that's one thing we didn't do a good job of. Like when things didn't go our way, everybody was looking down and looking inside instead of keeping the energy up.

### **Q. Who do you all usually look to for that type of leadership in those moments of adversity?**

JONATHAN GILES: Usually it comes from quarterbacks or even our defensive captain, Luke Stice or Justis Nelson, that's where it usually comes from. Also, like I said, holding each other accountable, holding yourself accountable.

### **Q. I guess that discipline in practice, why do you**

**feel like it doesn't translate to the game?**

JONATHAN GILES: Just not being mentally focused, I guess. That's probably one of the main things is not being mentally focused.

**Q. (Indiscernible) wasn't sure. How much falls on you and the inside receivers to step up your game when some of those guys are out?**

JONATHAN GILES: I feel like it falls on us a lot, especially as a group, we always like to make plays against our receiver group. But also we have our outside group. We still have Ben Lauderdale, Tony Brown, Quan Shorts, so we still have great players at the outside position. We've just got to continue to get better each and every day and get ready for OU.

**Q. Patrick made mention in the postgame that we've got to have people running the routes. Were there people just not running the right routes?**

JONATHAN GILES: I'm not sure. We'll have to watch film today and figure that out. I know there were a couple times where we get tired and the routes aren't as crisp as they used to be in the first half. So that's something we have to fix as a receiver group.

**Q. You mentioned you looked to the quarterback in moments of adversity when you guys are in a hole. Is Pat very much of a vocal leader, or is he more of a lead-by-example-type person?**

JONATHAN GILES: Both. I feel like he leads by example and he's more vocal. He does both. He's very good at deciding which one to use at the right time. Like sometimes at a point in the game he'll be more vocal rather than lead by example, then he'll lead by example rather than leading by his voice.

**Q. At this point, do you feel like you need more of those guys to be vocal leaders?**

JONATHAN GILES: I feel like we do. Just because at the point in time where we're at right now, I feel like I said, I'm holding myself accountable and everybody's holding each other accountable, it really helps the team a lot.

**Q. You're six games in and at least halfway through your schedule. How crucial does the locker room feel like this game is in terms of how the rest of your season finishes?**

JONATHAN GILES: It's very important just because it starts the second half of the season. It's especially important also because it's OU, and we know how big of a game that is for us, especially after this past game. So we're going to watch a lot of film today and tomorrow and get ready for them.

**Q. So just to be clear, you would like to see more sideline motion, whether it's from your coaches or**

**your teammates and you feel like that might be something that needs to change so you don't lose your focus and you don't lose your energy, and maybe helps change the dynamic of things?**

JONATHAN GILES: Right, yes, sir.

**Q. What do you focus more on coming into this week? Is it penalties?**

JONATHAN GILES: Usually Mondays we'll focus on this past game and focus on the mistakes we made. Starting tomorrow, we'll focus on OU and get ready for them.