

Texas Tech University
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Kliff Kingsbury
Justis Nelson
Patrick Mahomes II

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Coach, Saturday night, the Jones, rockin' for the first time in years, but students and fans crossing the line with some of their chants. Your thoughts on that? Do you have any message?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I would like to stay above that. Emotions come into play and we love the charged atmosphere, but obviously that's not what you want to portray for our university, that stadium and our program, so we have to stay above it next time.

Q. Zero second-half stops and zero turnovers in 12 quarts. What is the coaching staff doing to try to fix this?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: They're back there right now working on every angle we can. If I had an answer for the struggles, I would let you know. If I could answer why we haven't gotten any turnovers, I would fix it but they're working diligently to try to put people in the right places to be successful, and the players have to make plays.

It's been a rough couple of weeks, and we'll work hard this week trying to get it fixed.

Q. The naysayers of your offense will say that the offense is a detriment to the defense. How do you respond to that?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I mean, I think you look at the team we're playing this week, right? TCU, runs that offense, and I believe they won a Big XII Championship two years ago and were 11-2 the year after. They play good defense, got a bunch of turnovers, so I don't think there is any correlation.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We felt like it was pick your poison, and we obviously didn't do a good job in coverage. I thought our technique was off, the things we worked on in practice we didn't do. We were different leverages than we should have been and gave some easy throws, and he's a dynamic player and

Baker threw the ball really well, but those DBs gotta play better, do what they're coached to do and put more time in it, because those were throws and catches. They were too easy.

Q. Do you know if that was the scheme on that last touchdown Oklahoma had of the first half, where Westbrook was one-on-one with -- was that the scheme or a mess up?

Q. We should have been over the top on that, yeah. So that was one that we gotta learn from and understand the situation and not get beat over the top at all costs, and that's what we did, and hopefully we learned from it.

Q. Kliff, how much can you do seven weeks in? Defensively.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Defensively? Trying new things. At this point with the performance of the last two weeks, I mean, I think it's all up for discussion on that side of the ball. So we're going to try some personnel groupings and try some different things to change it up and breathe some life into it and get a few turnovers.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Day-to-day, not sure really where he's at; haven't spoke to the trainer about him. I was going to get it right before practice at one, so I will know then. As of now day-to-day.

Q. What is his injury?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Some sort of head injury.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Apparently. Yes.

Q. What was Chris Williams out for?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: The same, some sort of head injury.

Q. Was that from practice?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It was.

Q. What are you expecting to see from the defense of TCU this weekend?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I've always said he's tremendous at reading routes. If you've done something in the previous seven weeks, he's going to see it, he's going to know about it, he's going to have it coached up to

stop it.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: First two weeks really didn't practice, last week practiced more and he played sharper. He still wasn't as good as he can be, and I think this week we may get a full week out of him, which will be good. I think with a full week, he will be able to take another step and really perform at a high level.

Q. Did it turned out to be a sprained shoulder, bruised shoulder, what was it?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: An injured shoulder.

Q. Four primary inside receivers, (No microphone.) Fantastic all season. Does that hold up when you go back and watch the film?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: They played really well getting open and in the space, getting the ball in their hands. We can be much improved in blocking, being physical, there is no question.

But finding space, playing in our system I think that group has been taking really big steps this year.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: You know, I think he's gotten comfortable inside, so we'll probably keep him there, but for special plays, special situations we may get him outside, I'm not sure. That's a great thought because he has been dynamic, but hopefully we can get Derrick and Cantrell back, and those are two guys we really need outside with their length and the way they've been playing.

Q. Do you expect them to practice?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: They're day-to-day. We will know this week. If not this week, certainly the week after.

Q. Both of 'em?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yes.

Q. Mason Reed played a lot of "F" back for you Saturday night. What do you think about him and what's led to his emergence?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: His toughness, his physicality, he brings it every day. He's not afraid to stick his nose in there. He's got good ball skills. He's still learning our scheme, learning that position, but I think his teammates respond to the way he plays. He's always is physical, did a great job with special teams and just earned those reps.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think we just felt like having a little bigger back last week was going to be important

for us. I think some of those third and shorts we were able to hand the ball off. We failed on those early in the season, and kind of learned our lesson that we needed a bigger, more powerful back in those situations, and that was probably the key reason that he got more touches.

Q. So he plays bigger than his listed size?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, he's kind of one of those heavy-headed running backs that leans toward and always seems to fall toward and packs a punch, doesn't stutter in the hole, just hits it and gets what he can get, and that's what we needed.

Q. Is the moral suffering because of these three losses?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't think so. I think they know what's at stake. There are five games left to try and make a successful season out of it, and TCU last couple of years haven't got it done versus them, so we should be highly motivated and I think they are. I didn't sense a lot of pouting this morning. I think they're excited about this opportunity.

Q. Coach, seems like your defense had a few shots to get to Baker to put him on the ground. (No microphone.) Your defense immediately jumped. Was that something you were specifically coaching thinking you could get more tipped balls?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I don't think so. I think in that situation where they had him outside the pocket, you just gotta make the play, you gotta get him down. If he's in the pocket and you can't get there, that's a different time to get your hands up, but the instances you're talking about you gotta find a way to get him to the ground.

Q. What concerns you about the TCU offense?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I just know how good they are. I know Kenny really well. He's a guy who I thought was going to be a star, and he's heading that way.

Dynamic receivers, running back one of the best in the conference, good offensive line, Sonny and Meacham do a great job with their scheme and have been really good offensively. The way we've been playing defensively we're going to have to step up, find a way to get some turnovers and make some stops.

Q. Are there similarities between your offense and theirs that you might be more one-versus-ones this week in practice so you can see that speed?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we get a lot of that every practice so I don't think that will make much of a difference.

Q. Were you very much involved in Kenny Hill's

recruitment at Texas A&M?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I was.

Q. How have you seen his development from high school to this point now?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It was good to see him get a fresh start, I think. He's a great kid. I know he got a bad rap at A&M, and probably deserved some of it, but when I was recruiting him, loved what he was about, comes from a great family. His dad was a pro player and carries himself with swagger, confidence, and I always thought after Johnny he was going to be the next guy there and be a star, and I think he has star quality. You watch him play, he's still learning their system, still getting comfortable, but the sky is the limit on his potential.

Q. I know you felt like Pat left some throws out there, you even talked about that after the game. Given the national stage, setting the NCAA total offense for a single game, is that one of the greater individual performances you feel like you've witnessed out of Patrick in general nationwide?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think because of the situation with his shoulder and being banged up and how much he's had to push through, and just participating in 100 plays, 88 throws, 12 runs in that shape, it's incredible that he just kept getting up and kept going and kept converting third downs. I think we were at 20 of 25, and he probably converted 18 of them on his own. Yeah, his will to win is second to none.

Q. Do you feel like the offensive line played better in the second half when Murphy returned?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think so. I think he brought some stability. I thought they were solid all night. There were times here and there that we let some guys through, and Pat had to avoid them, but as the game went on and Murphy got in there, I think their confidence was raised in the second half.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: That's a great question. That's a Corey question, you would have to ask him. I like Corey, I wanted Corey to be here, he knows that, he knows how I feel about him and I wish him luck.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Last week.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He had not, no.

Q. Will he stay with the team the rest of the season?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Am not sure what his plans are. I believe he will be in school but not with the team.

Q. Given how the match-up went the last time in Ft. Worth, the 82 points, and when you look back to last year, the tipped ball by Jackson and Derrick Green coming down with it, do you feel like the motivation to go back and almost have a type of redemption is there for this club?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think guys that were there definitely understand that and what it felt like. We have a lot of new guys who weren't there, but I think even the new guys will understand what this game means to Tech fans and to us as a program. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Pat.

Q. How is the shoulder?

PATRICK MAHOMES: It's better. It's actually feeling the best it's felt so far since I've had the injury, and I'm going to keep rehabbing and keep getting out there and practicing and it will get better every day.

Q. Did you feel like you had the same amount of zip and everything on your passes in the second half after all the attempts to throw?

PATRICK MAHOMES: I felt like the whole game I didn't have the zip I had at the beginning of the year, but it was definitely the best so far, since I had the injury, and, I mean, it's something that will just keep getting better the more I rehab, the more I get out there and throw and let it heal.

Q. What was it like growing up with a dad who was a major league pitcher? Does that still impact you as you play Division I football?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Yeah, I mean, seeing the competitive nature of the sport, just always growing up around him. I talk to him whenever I first had the injury, too, he was a guy that played through injuries and he knows how competitive it is and how much he wants to win, so being around that my whole life has driven me to where I am today.

Q. Did he encourage you to ice your shoulder a lot after the injury and especially after Saturday night?

PATRICK MAHOMES: He really just -- he told me to let my body tell me what to do, so that's what I've done is respond to how my body feels and decided from there.

Q. How much did you change up your regimen leading up to West Virginia to this past weekend against Oklahoma? Did you change it up that much?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Yeah, I think going to West Virginia, I didn't get comfortable, but I kind of relaxed a little bit, I would rehab and stuff like that but didn't necessarily get in there and work on my footwork, watched more film. Going into Oklahoma I knew they

were going to have a great defense, and I knew they were a powerhouse team so I really got in there and really worked at it.

Q. As far as the shoulder is concerned, you didn't really, you know, change it back that much, whether it was throwing in practice or --

PATRICK MAHOMES: Not really. Really -- like Coach Kingsbury said I didn't practice much the week before but I did the same stuff, got in there and practiced and worked on my footwork and stuff like that, and that really changed.

Q. (No microphone.)

PATRICK MAHOMES: I mean, to me I was focused on the team and I felt like I need to be out there to lead our team to get wins and we didn't get the wins but I wanted to be out there with my teammates. I mean, I worked so hard this off-season I wanted to give our team the best chance to win, and for me, in my mind, it was me playing, but I know Nick could win the game, but I wanted to be out there and try and win the game.

Q. (No microphone.)

PATRICK MAHOMES: I don't know exactly what it was. I know I was good enough to play. I didn't feel any pain while I did play, so I knew that I could play and I felt like I could still make stuff happen.

Q. When you look at the TCU defense what do you see?

PATRICK MAHOMES: They're always good, they always have a great scheme. It's a team that you have to come in and have a great many plan, just like this last week with Oklahoma you have to have a game plan, you can't just go in there and try to make stuff happen every single play, and Coach Patterson always has a great scheme coming in against us.

Q. Given how the last two match-ups with TCU have gone, is there part of the team that wants to have redemption in Ft. Worth, given maybe two points two seasons ago and the way the tipped ball -- how it all went down last season?

PATRICK MAHOMES: For me, being there two years ago and just playing a little bit in the game and kinda feeling embarrassed, I guess you would say of how badly we were beat, for sure for me I want to get in there and win a game there, especially for Tech and the university. You don't want to get embarrassed and not respond.

These last two years have been two very heartbreaking losses, and you want to get in there and get a win against a very good football team.

Q. The lost to TCU last year, did that hang with you

for the season?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Yeah, I mean it was more me looking back on it after the season. I usually get past losses and try to work on the next week, but with that one, especially me being injured that game and playing through it, you fought to the very end, and they got a tipped pass touchdown and it changed the whole dynamic of the season. It was something I looked back on after the season, but it wasn't something that I just really looked at the next week.

Q. How much pain did you have to fight through in that game?

PATRICK MAHOMES: I did have pretty significant pain in that game, just because it was such a fresh injury and it was something where I couldn't really run at all at the time, but it was something that I really had to fight through.

Q. (No microphone.)

PATRICK MAHOMES: I think it's just confidence. When you start making plays you can tell his confidence went up and you started wanting to give him the ball, and he started making plays happen, and it's something you can feel when you're around him, and that's what let him take off this season.

Q. Didn't he have a good fall camp, too?

PATRICK MAHOMES: He had a really good fall camp. He really showed that he deserved playing time. Cameron Batson of course was killing it all off-season, all fall camp but Kiki showed that he needs to be in the game, and he will make plays as well as Cam.

Q. What's the general feeling in the locker room, three losses in a row? Is the short memory at work, or are people feeling down?

PATRICK MAHOMES: I mean, three losses in a row does hurt, but at the same time you know how football goes. You lose games, you have to respond, you have to bounce back, and it's something we need to be better at, and I feel like the team is excited about this, getting to go to Ft. Worth and play.

Q. What's the feeling like to have another Light House guy in the World Series, and will you be cheering for the Indians come the Series?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Yeah, I will be cheering for Josh Tomlin. I got to see him a little bit when I went back home at one point this off-season, and he is a guy who worked for everything he got. He wasn't highly recruited coming out of high school, went to junior college and came to Texas Tech, which is another awesome thing, and he really has responded well and made a great career.

Q. Have you guys had the chance to cross paths

before?

PATRICK MAHOMES: I work out back home, I usually get to see him every once in a while. He's a guy who works hard, and that's what you respect about him. He's not a big guy, he's not a super, throw-hard guy, and that's what's got him where he's at.

Q. Do you miss baseball?

PATRICK MAHOMES: I mean, I miss this time of year for sure, but I mean, I love football a lot, so I don't think about it that much.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Pat.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Justis.

Q. How is the locker room? Everybody feeling okay?

JUSTIS NELSON: Everybody is fine. I will say that we weren't discouraged, looking forward to getting better.

Q. You're not discouraged at all?

JUSTIS NELSON: No, no.

Q. At the risk of sounding silly, do you feel like you guys have pulled every straw out of the hat that you could defensively and do you feel like you're still turning over ideas of what to do next?

JUSTIS NELSON: No, I mean, we know what we did wrong. Guys are not relaying on their technique, kinda just freaking out in the moment and not fitting up, you know, the run.

So we definitely -- we know what we have to do. It's just going out there and executing.

Q. Why do you think that keeps happening? We hear that a lot. In your opinion, you've been around here, played so much, why do you think that continues to happen?

JUSTIS NELSON: I think it comes down to mental toughness, being able to handle the adversity, the pressure. You can try and practice that all you want but there is nothing like a game situation. So guys have to be mentally tougher and we have to try and simulate that as best we can out here.

Q. Do you feel like there is a reason that that mental toughness is lacking?

JUSTIS NELSON: I wouldn't say there's a specific reason. I think Coach Whitt and them, they're instilling that in us day in, day out, regardless of what's going on. They're still harping on it, still doing what they're supposed to be doing, and it's going to pay off. I'm very hopeful, very positive in that regard.

Guys just have to go out there and do it. I mean,

there's no rhyme or reason, there's no quick solution to it, you just have to go out there and play like you're capable of playing and execute and practice hard.

Q. Mental toughness, if you're really physically in the best shape you can be in, makes it easier to be mentally tough. Do you think there's a problem with fitness?

JUSTIS NELSON: Absolutely not. I'm positive we're able to run and physically we're able to run and play with the best of them. I'm very, very confident in that, and the coaching staff and the strength coaches have done a great job with us.

Practicingwise, coaches, they're changing up some things, trying to get us in a different routine. I think that's paying off as well. I think we have to go out there and fight every snap.

Q. Is it hard to respond to a loss when you're headed on the road to another hostile environment as opposed to hosting a team here at home? During the week is there anything in particular, especially what you guys do to get ready for an away game coming off a loss?

JUSTIS NELSON: Nothing specific. Like I said, Coach changed up the routine a little bit, just trying to get us in a different mood, different mojo. Practice, I would say, has been more physical, trying to execute and do the things that we're coached to do every play, regardless if you're tired or not just doing it day in, day out, and there's no specific changes that go from home game to a road game.

Q. Can you give us more detail about changing the routine that you're talking about?

JUSTIS NELSON: We have -- we've added some different periods, just a complete run period where offense is trying to run the ball and defense is stopping the run.

Just hustling. We're adding more effort, everybody has to be in the picture, whenever. Despite if the ball is 50 yards down the field, we want all eleven guys in the picture, so emphasizing stuff like that.

Q. Were there times on the sideline against Oklahoma where after a Sooner series it was -- hands were in the air like we don't have somebody that can cover Westbrook?

JUSTIS NELSON: Not at all. I'm very confident in the players that we have. It just comes down to going out there and not being afraid to play like you've been coached and rely on your technique.

Q. Is there an emphasis on creating turnovers from last year different than this year, or is there still the

same amount of emphasis there?

JUSTIS NELSON: It's the same amount. That's Coach Gibbs' signature and unfortunately we haven't been doing our job as players to get those turnovers, and that's something that we still harp on in practice and we're going to keep doing. Like I said, I'm confident they will start coming as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Justis.

Q. Justis, it seems like middle of the third quarter on, all the defense had to do was get one stop. You stopped 'em three times I think in the first half. Was there a discussion on the sideline about we gotta get this stop?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, definitely! That's what Coach said. Every time we're about to go out there, the offense is doing their job, they're giving us a chance to win the game, and we didn't get it done. That's just what it came down to, and we're going to fix that. Like I said, we just didn't get it done, but that's something that we have to change and we have to hammer down wherever the offense puts the ball in our court like that.

Q. Do you feel like a physical week of practice last week accomplished what Coach Kingsbury intended it to going into Oklahoma, and do you feel like it's something that you will continue throughout the rest of the season?

JUSTIS NELSON: I definitely think it did. I think he was trying to get across the message of fight. Regardless of the score, regardless of what the clock says, just fight every down. Don't look up at the board or anything. Last week it seemed like we had a lot of guys tap out, and I think he was just trying to, you know, instill in us that "want to!"

Q. Do you ever think about that play from last year against TCU and the frustration, I guess, for you guys at the end of the game?

JUSTIS NELSON: What play is that? Sorry?

Q. (No microphone.)

JUSTIS NELSON: Oh, right, right, right. Don't think about it much. Ball rolled their way. We could have done a lot of things that could have prevented that throughout the game. But don't think about it much.

Q. Given how the last two meetings having with TCU, is this one circled on your calendar as being able to have a shot at redemption?

JUSTIS NELSON: I wouldn't even say redemption or anything; it's another game. The past is the past. We're just planning on getting better every week.

Q. (No microphone.)

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, I would say me personally they do. Play it back in your head a couple times. All you can control is what you can do today.