

Texas Tech University Football Media Conference

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Kliff Kingsbury Justis Nelson Jonathan Giles



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. Any update on Patrick?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No.

Q. You don't know if he's going to play Saturday?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I do not. We're handling it day-to-day. Every day he shows up and we do rehab and we'll see if he can get there.

Q. Was it a sprained shoulder?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It was a shoulder-area injury. I'll leave it at that.

Q. Coach, does he have a chance on offense?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm not sure. I really don't know. From what I've been told different people react differently.

Q. After being looking at the film what players are you happy with seeing with pick-up blocks and coming up with assignments?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Offensively or defensively?

Q. Both.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: The defense as an overall unit I felt was much improved. I felt like they handled adversity a lot better than we had. We had some tough things in that third quarter, but they stood up, made some stands and kept us in the ball game and kept getting us the ball back which was good to see.

Offensively, you know, Nick jumps out to me just being ready, being prepared, going through his reads, really graded out high on where he was going with the football. So he would be the one that stood out.

Q. How did you feel about after watching the film the shuffle with the offensive line and how that worked out there?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think it got better. Still needs to be much improved going into this week. If we play that way this week we won't fare very well. So that's been our emphasis with that unit, to be tougher, physical,

better with assignments.

Q. If Nick is the starter this weekend what is the thing he has to work on this weekend and get comfortable with?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Against this team, protecting the football, it's a team that kind of forces you into making mistakes. They don't make any mistakes. You have got to earn every yard, every point. So we just really got to maximize our possessions and not turn the ball over.

Q. How much are the guys around him helping him ease into that potential first start?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think you saw that last Saturday, or Thursday, I thought the defense stepped up and I thought our playmakers around him really stepped up when he went in there, which was good to see.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He can move. Yeah, he was a really good basketball player. He's not as fast as Pat, but he can escape he made a nice play rolling to his right. But that's not really his game. He's good at recognizing stuff and getting the ball out of his hands, quick.

Q. Were you able to watch K-State and West Virginia?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: A little bit. Not a ton. I've seen the film; I didn't watch it live.

Q. I was curious if you had the opportunity to watch it live versus the film, how different of an experience that it is?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: When you watch the game live I can't see what's going on at all. I kind of watch it look a fan and watch the ball and where it goes and listen to the commentators. When you watch the film you can see the different angles and break it down from different views, so I approach that differently.

Q. Commentators don't tell you anything you don't already know.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: They tell me everything. They seem to know it all! (Chuckles.)

Q. Was the offensive package changing much at all with Nick? What does he do well that you'll tell

Talor to do?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Like I mentioned, he gets the ball out quick, does a good job of reading defenses. Again, good presnap recognition and throws very accurate pass as you saw last Thursday. But he gets a lot of the reps every week of our package and what we're doing and so we won't hold anything back.

Q. Any idea on who will be the back-up if (No microphone) can't go?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Not yet. We'll cross that bridge when we get there.

Q. So Pat is not working out?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We'll see. It's day-to-day. He shows up and they tell me what he can and can't do.

Q. With K-State is that maybe the best defensive play this year?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It appears that way. They are a good defense. There is no question. They've gone a great job thus far watching those games they've played. They make you earn every inch of it. They play around to the football. They're sound in their assignments and technique and they play really hard. Any yards we get we'll earn 'em.

Q. Do you normally try (No microphone).

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Usually varies, usually varies. Sometimes we'll say somebody we're playing on redshirt as we would for a good week of practice, but generally I would say three.

Q. Your concerns about Kansas State's offense? Defense? Can you line those out for us?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think offensively they're going to be a physical run game, more so than we've. Coming downhill, ball possession. Coach Dimel and Coach Seiler doing a great job getting to the right plays. If you're lined up they usually have a plan to attack it. So that's concerning, and defensive they are just a veteran group, and how well they've played together so far. I don't know what they're ranked, top-five in the country in defense. So we'll have to play better than we did last week, that's for sure.

Q. (No microphone).

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we did the first week, I think, that we were on the road. So maybe that's a new streak. We'll see. I mean, I know our offense is confident right now. They're not very happy with how they played last week so we're going to work really hard that week to make sure we put our best foot forward this week.

Q. (No microphone).

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, it shouldn't be. Obviously it

takes time to get used to if you're a younger player but I think with this group being a little more veteran than we've been offensively with the quarterback and some of the skilled positions we feel like we should be able to handle it a lot better than we did the last couple of years.

Q. Seemed like Kansas attacked y'all's screen game. Was that more of a product of them (No microphone) or what do you think that was?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: A little bit of both. I felt we were soft and out of rhythm the whole night. We had those first two drives and then they snapped back and then we started getting some penalties, and it was just not what we expected it to be. When you have 11 penalties on offense that's undisciplined and not good enough. None of us were happy with our offense and we expect to be much better this week.

Q. Were those two drives scripted?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we're calling it like we always do. Everything was off my script, so even when it got bad it was still off the script.

Q. Starting with this week how important is it to shore up special teams as he get into conference play?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Our kickers have to be better. We had a conversation with them, they know that. They work hard, they're talented and they just didn't play very well and put us in tough situations. So Kansas State and somebody who prides themselves on special teams and we'll have to be much better moving forward.

Q. Is your punter, do you know who your first punter is this week?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I do. I'm not going to share that but I do know who it will be.

Q. Is it musical chairs at all those spots right now, based on how they perform this week in practice?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we'll just have a competition. See who can handle it and who steps up and plays better. But they look one way in practice and it's not translating to the games and whether it's nerves or immaturity I'm not sure, but they gotta grow up fast.

Q. With the success that Clayton had last year, did his struggle the other night surprise you at all?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No, he hadn't been as sharp and he's got to step up for us and I think as he goes, some of the other specialists go, and when he's hot everybody is playing well and if he's not playing well some of the other guys go that way and so he needs to definitely step up and be the leader and be the player he should be.

Q. Did you and Coach Robinson see anything mechanically off with him?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No, I didn't see anything mechanically. It's just focus. When you miss an extra point that's focus, you can kick that left footed, so we just gotta get better.

Q. Big XII defenses as a whole, what does Kansas State do better than the rest of the conference?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: As far as this year?

Q. Yeah, this year.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: This year, first off, they really haven't seen probably a spread type like we have seen with some of the these other teams may have been facing, putting up these numbers. But that being said I think watching them on film they're consistent in their play. They have a plan and each guy does his job to the fullest every snap. There is no best, there is no guys running wide open. You're going to have to make an accurate throw or block the perfect technique to get your yards.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'd say this year just watching them in their first few games they've done a lot more. Stanford, they looked a lot differently to take away the run and even against West Virginia, a lot different looks than we had seen in the past, usually it was this is what they run and they stuck to it. But they mixed up looks a lot more and I'm not sure how they will play us, but it's been more varied this year.

Q. Do you think that has to do with the older guys, maybe on the defense because they've got a lot of sixth years in that group?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, they feel more of comfortable getting into different looks and fronts and blitzes and coverages, and that probably has something to do with it.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We'll see. I'm not sure just yet, but I would say within the next two weeks he'll be back.

Q. When he does come back, assuming he does come back, how ready will he be to work into the rotation?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He will be ready. We've been doing extra conditioning with the intent that day one he is back that he can step in and play a lot of snaps for us.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He played okay. I thought he handled himself well, didn't seem too big for him, made

some plays that he would like to have had bad. But he's a hard worker, does everything right and I was excited to see him get that first start.

Q. Coach, do other coaches look at what Bill Snyder has done and the fact that he's still coach, do you look at him and go, wow?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It's amazing, when you are around him, particularly in those head coaches meetings, when he speaks everybody sits up in the chair and listens and he's poignant and calculating on what he says. He's a brilliant guy, and the way he's been able to do it year after year is incredible and I think the world of him.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Justis?

Q. Now that you have had a chance to kind of look back on film what did you see from that Kansas game?

JUSTIS NELSON: We had a couple of busted assignments, but for the most part guys were giving a lot of effort which is what we harped on during the week and just guys responding adversity. You know there was a lot of third downs, a lot of bad special teams things that went on but we responded so that's what we could ask for.

Q. What do you remember from your last trip to Manhattan to take on Kansas State?

JUSTIS NELSON: I know it wasn't a pretty game. They're a disciplined team. They've got athletes. They got size for sure. I don't know. That was a long time ago, but I remember Tyler Lockett, for sure.

Q. What did you see as improvement on the defense from last week to what you saw on Thursday night?

JUSTIS NELSON: Like I said, effort, guys wanting to make plays rather than expecting somebody else to make a play. I felt like everybody was, you know, focused on what they had to do, everybody was, you know, knew their assignments pretty well. Got off the field on third down.

Q. What's the biggest difference in Kansas State's offense compared to some of the other looks you've got from other teams this year?

JUSTIS NELSON: They're not going to spread it out as much. They're going to run it down your throat. They're going to put a lot of guys in the box. Their quarterback is an athlete, too. He's going to run the ball, too. They're very unpredictable. They do a bunch of different stuff, so they're well-coached, and that's the biggest difference. They don't have much tendency.

Q. Has that changed the way you will practice this

week?

JUSTIS NELSON: Like I said, just goes down to guys knowing their assignment, knowing where their eyes are supposed to be. If your eyes are in the wrong place they will definitely hit you with a pop-pass over the middle or a double move on the outside.

Q. Have you talked to Patrick?

JUSTIS NELSON: I have not.

Q. So you don't know how his morale is or anything like that?

JUSTIS NELSON: I don't. I've seen him in the locker room, but I haven't talked to him.

Q. How important is it against a K-State team that will try to lull you to sleep with a run and keep you honest and be careful with them throwing over the top?

JUSTIS NELSON: Like I had, you have to have your eyes in the right place at the right time. They don't have much tendencies. They like to switch it up, so it's important that every guy is doing his job at every play, knowing exactly where you're supposed to be, knowing what gap you have and then just fill in the hole when you have to, making plays when you have to.

Q. Do you know where you were most proud of the defense last week was given the short fields?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, definitely. Like I say, Coach has been on us. We haven't played our best football yet. Last week was a piece to that puzzle. Every week we're trying to get better and continuing to play, play hard.

Q. What does your best football look like in your mind?

JUSTIS NELSON: A lot of turnovers, a lot of tackles for loss, a lot of points on the board. Just everybody making plays.

Q. How challenging is it in your experience when you were a younger player just mentally talking about Kansas State and how they constantly change-up looks to kinda go through a whole game of staying on edge like that? I imagine it's fatiguing mentally. What's the key for these younger players to be able to overcome that?

JUSTIS NELSON: Studying throughout the week, guys watching film on their own, not just coming in here and watching it with the coaches, but actually applying themselves off the field. Just staying in that film, you can't watch enough film knowing what this guy is going to do on this play or even people's footwork. So studying outside the week and practicing hard.

Q. Is there a difference in Manhattan than other

places that you've traveled on road games throughout your career, small little town in Kansas that seems to show up similar to other stadiums when there is nothing around there?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, I mean, they have a nice stadium, real big stadium. What I can remember is that they're family oriented. That's what they have, something about family on their stadium, but it's a nice stadium. They always have a lot of fans out there, a lot of support, all Kansas, really, so we're excited to play out there.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Justis.

Q. Jonathan, talk about any differences that you feel between quarterback and receiver, whether it's Patrick or Nick?

JONATHAN GILES: I don't see it as a difference. They both are very hard workers, especially on and off the field. Nick and Pat, they work out together in the weight room so they push each other each and every day. So I don't feel like it's a difference.

Q. As a receiver, is there a change in the offense when Pat is in there versus Nick?

JONATHAN GILES: No, sir. The play call is the same, because we have a lot of faith in Nick because he's a hard worker. He's a good kid on and off the field, so I don't think it changes the play calling.

Q. Jonathan, do you think opposing teams might start game planning for you or start to double you or make things harder?

JONATHAN GILES: I think so. We noticed in the Kansas game in the second half they started to double team me more, but it helps out because we have so much great talent throughout the other receivers. Willies is doing great. Cam, and even Ian and Devin Lauderdale, so I feel like even though they double team me we have other players that can make plays.

Q. How do you feel about them double teaming you?

JONATHAN GILES: They had a nickel over me and then a safety over top.

Q. Jonathan, how much pressure do you feel like you guys take on yourself as the wide receiving unit and the rest of the offense if it is Nick, in fact, that is the starter to help him out and try to alleviate what could be a first start for him?

JONATHAN GILES: We don't feel no pressure and actually we think it's fun because Nick is going to give everything he got on the field, so for us it's to do the same thing for him, give everything we got for him.

Q. Did you guys notice on tape when Nick came in,

the offense, more players were playing better in that moment? Seemed like you started to score a little bit more?

JONATHAN GILES: Right, that's something we noticed on film, and when Nick came out he was so hyped and energetic and we were all like, let's keep it going then. So it was fun.

Q. Have you talked to Patrick?

JONATHAN GILES: Yes, ma'am.

Q. How is he feeling?

JONATHAN GILES: He's feeling good. He always have a positive attitude, so he's feeling good. He's still smiling.

Q. The slant route that you scored a touchdown on the other night, was that the same play that y'all scored on against Louisiana Tech?

JONATHAN GILES: No, sir, it was a little different. Against Louisiana Tech it was more of a run-pass situation in that situation it was a straight slant route.

Q. (No microphone.)

JONATHAN GILES: Yes, sir, it was the same route.

Q. Was the excitement when Nick came in more about you guys knew you were going to have to rise up a little bit more or was it something he said?

JONATHAN GILES: It was something he said, let's keep it rolling, that's the kind of person that Nick is. He's that kind of person that likes to bring energy to the team, and so when he came out on the field he said, "Let's keep it going." So we all stood behind that.

Q. Nick came in and he made some passes, and did he make some throws that impressed you that maybe you see in practice but actually seeing it in a game in a live situation it was a little bit different?

JONATHAN GILES: It was fun to watch him play. I think one of the plays that impressed me was when he was rolling to the right and he threw it across his body back to me coming across the field, and I think that was pretty impressive.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Jonathan.