

Texas Tech University
Football Media Conference
Monday, October 31, 2016



Kliff Kingsbury
Cameron Batson
Justis Nelson

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We needed to run the ball more and we weren't as effective at that as we needed to be, but the last drive tells you all you need to know about Pat. He converted that fourth down. He's running around. Plays that he just took the ball and said, I'm going to win this game, and that's what it's about. That's the most proud I've been of any performance, one of his best by far. But that's what you're truly playing the position is when you play that way the entire game and find a way to win at the end.

Q. He looked like he was hurting when he came off. Same shoulder.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He's good. He's good! The best he's been. So I think it scared him. He landed right on it. I'm sure there was some pain, but he sounds like he will be able to practice almost a full week so that should help. Just not being able to throw with the velocity during the week in practice has affected some things, but sounds like we'll have a better week this week.

Q. Is he going to get treatment this week?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He does. He gets treatment every day. It's steadily improved, so I hope this will be his best week yet.

Q. When you looked at the film what stood out to you defensively that maybe you didn't see during the game?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think just, you know, the tremendous effort. There was many times they were put in bad situations and stood up and found a way to get a stop or hold 'em to a field goal that was missed. That had not been the case in the past when we were in tough situations we didn't always handle it as well as we would have liked and they stood up and made plays over and over and over and gave us a chance to stay in the game.

Q. Seems like every time he gets a touch he's getting better every time?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think so and when you look at the stat sheet there were no loss of yardage plays.

He's always getting positive yardage and that's key with our offense. If we're playing downhill and don't move backwards we're tough to stop, and he's done a nice job of that.

Q. Your third down conversions you lead the country. Would you prefer not to get to third downs? Would that be ideal?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, yeah. I don't really like 'em, per se, but it's kind of part of the game. Last year I think we led the country. This year we led the country. When I was at Houston we led the country -- a lot of that has to do with a quarterback who can run, and Pat does a tremendous job of understanding the down and distance. If it's not there find a way to get it with your feet, so it's a credit to him on more than the brilliant third down play calling that goes on.

Q. Why do you think the defense was able to play like it did the other day, as far as progressing and making stops, getting into the quarterback?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I think just an attitude. You sit around all week and hear things and you either get pissed off and do something about it or you pout and get worse, and I think they got mad and took it personal and wanted to prove that they could improve and they definitely showed improvement.

Q. Specifically what do you think about the play your defensive ends and your rush ends, those guys had their best game seemed like.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: They did. They stepped up and caused some havoc there at times. Still have a ways to go, but we're able to rotate in more bodies. That's what we've been missing here is guys that we can consistently count on when we do substitute guys. So I thought as a group they played hard and were pretty relentless throughout the day.

Q. What do you expect from Texas on against and offense?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Defensively, they're athletic as always, really fast group. Can make plays, get after the passer and really stout against the run.

Offensively, I've been impressed with what Sterling has done with a true freshmen. The progress they've made. One of the best running backs in the country. Really good "O" line, speed outside and the QB has

made better and better decisions as the season went on. They're a compete team, playing their best football all year and we'll have to play really well to hang in there.

Q. When you look at Shane Buechele and his progress this year, does something stand out to you?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: The swagger, the moxie. We offered him out of the high school. He came to camp and that's what you see. He walks around and knows how good he is and carries himself that way and he's not fazed by much, whether it's a good throw or a bad throw he's on to the next and isn't afraid to rip it in there. So I think the moxie for a young kid on that stage in the program the way he's handled it is remarkable.

Q. When you look at quarterbacks and the intangibles is that something you like, the moxie?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No doubt, that's huge. You've gotta think you're the baddest dude walkin' and you can tell that he does.

Q. Senior Day being Saturday, what does this senior class mean to you as a group?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, it's an interesting group because there is not many of them, I think there's 12 or 13 and some of them were our first recruiting class and some of them were held over, brought here by a different coach. Anytime you get a group that's been with you four years you just appreciate all the effort, the hard work they put in for you and we have some good leaders that are moving on and will be missed.

Q. There are obviously a lot of moving pieces in that double overtime, but when Pat is coming off the field is there a worry that he might not be able to go if it went to triple overtime?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I don't think so. Having some serious experience with that type of shoulder injury it will sting for a little bit. But in that situation, knowing him and what he's about, if he had to throw it left-handed he was going to stay in that game. That really never crossed my mind. I thought we were going to make the kick and go celebrate.

Q. What was your thought of that final possession? It was unusual to have an overtime possession where you get a field goal to win the game as far as still trying to move the ball but yet trying to preserve that attempt should it come down to it?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, once again they were dropping a lot of guys out of there, so we thought we would run it and center the ball and gave Clayton an attempt and he had been solid ought day, he was on and he's hit clutch kicks for us before and once again

came through.

Q. Do you think moving Justis back you said from the nickel has solidified that position?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He did a great job. I'm not sure where we'll go with that moving forward because we need him inside as well. But, you know, he's been repping so much inside to be able to step outside and cover as well as he did that was great to see and he's one of those seniors that we'll miss. Great kid.

But, yeah, I think him being out there and the way Paul played gave Coach Gibbs a little more confidence with some of those coverages.

Q. What made y'all make that switch?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Just personnel stuff. Just felt like there were some longer wide receivers out there that we needed to match-up with sizewise.

Q. What do you think about Coleman? He made several good plays.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, it was great. He's a competitive young man and played wide receiver in high school, was dynamic, so you see the ball skills going up and making that at a high point. Likes to compete. Had a great attitude out there. Had another great coverage on the touchdown they caught in overtime. Really has an edge about him. Midway through the season, or seven games in, you expect those freshmen to start not feeling like freshmen and that's what you saw on Saturday.

Q. At times this year it seemed like when opposing offenses would get in the red area they were going to come away with points. Only allowed two touchdowns to TCU. What do you feel like was the difference for the defense in the red zone?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: That's a great question. I can't tell you what changed. I just think they stood up and there were times they were in bad situations and had to have a stop to win the game and they got 'em. That's a credit to them and their mind-set and progressing from the week previous.

Q. Couple times on third downs where y'all brought some extra pressure. Cutting off the corner and there was another time y'all overload with that rush 4. Were y'all thinking you just wanted to change the look of pressure?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I think so. Think we saw some thing in their offense that we thought we could attack schemewise and I wanted to make 'em get the ball out quick. I think Kenny is one of those guys if he holds on to it he can see. He's pretty good if you force his hand. Makes it tough on him.

Q. What is Justin Murphy's status?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm not sure. I would say day-to-day. If not this week, I would assume he will be back next week, but we will have to see how he handles practice today.

Q. Devin Lauderdale going to play Saturday?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We're still holding out on that.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No, it's a coach's decision and it's kinda where we're at.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Same thing, holding out with Gary. Coach's decision.

Q. How disappointing is that when you have given somebody a second chance and they seem like they earned that and then you find yourself on the road and not with them because of a decision?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We all make decisions that we gotta live with and that's part of it, part of growing up. I don't have much else to say besides that.

Q. Is there a chance that this is Patrick Mahomes final home game?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We'll see. I hope not. He's got four games left in this season, hopefully five. And our goal is to make sure he plays at the highest level he can, and like I said, the shoulder deal, hopefully this is the last week that we have to deal with it. Hopefully it's healed up completely after this week and he can continue playing at a really high level.

Q. Do you plan on doing anything with the punting? It's been two games now where you have had turnovers based off --

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We will see. It's something you have to look at, if you can't catch a snap you have a hard time playing punter. We're going to look at that this week and see if we can find options there, because that's disappointing to be able to do it in practice over and over and over and you get to a game and you can't do it.

Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Justis?

Q. What are you expecting to see out of Texas' offense?

JUSTIS NELSON: Trying to pound the ball. Be real physical. They have size for sure. They have talent at every position, but, you know, they're probably going to come here and try and run the ball and we gotta be prepared for that.

Q. What changed last week with defense that let you guys be able to step up and probably have your best game of the year?

JUSTIS NELSON: I wouldn't say much changed. I would say we prepared better. I would say we were consistent. Not getting too high, not getting too low, despite what the offense is doing. Just guys trying to do their job and just being consistent every down.

Q. How much was it mental compared to physical? Last week you were talking about, hey, we gotta be mentally stronger, simple as that. Was that the case Saturday?

JUSTIS NELSON: I think so. I think guys gave great effort. We had our share of mistakes, but effort often covers that up. Guys were mentally prepared and like I said, that consistency, not letting the emotions of the game get into your head and just going out there and doing your job.

Q. Do you feel like there was a difference in the red zone though? You guys gave up some yards to TCU, but it seemed like you buckled down once they got in the red zone?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, we tried to do some things, apply pressure, get the ball out of the quarterback's hand quit and D line did a great job getting the quarterback coveragewise, making 'em hold the ball. So it was an all-around team effort and we got off the field when we needed to.

Q. Depends on how some look at it may be they might say Tech caught some breaks because TCU missed a couple of field goals, but it was the defense that put the special teams in that position to even have them have the opportunity to miss it. What do you think it says about the defense to buckle down in that area to fight for the field goal to even have that miss?

JUSTIS NELSON: Their offense, they live off big plays. If you make teams execute, nickel and dime down the field it makes it tough on any team. Just being able to get off the field on third down and hold 'em to field goals and even get a block at the end of the game. You can't ask for much more.

Q. Is there a sense of relief on the defense when you guys got that interception, the streak of quarters without a turnover and you finally get offense back the ball?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, definitely. Something we had been looking for for a long time. We had plenty of other chances to get interceptions. Didn't come up with those, but just hoping to keep those rolling.

Q. Last year Texas was able to run for a lot of

yards. It looks like at least barring a miraculous recovery one of the running backs won't be make the trip to Lubbock. What made them difficult to stop on the ground last year?

JUSTIS NELSON: They have talent, size, a lot of it was self-inflicted, guys missing gaps, guys not being physical at point of attack.

So, you know, we're just focused on what we can do, how we're going to be physical, how we're going to fit up the run. It's all up to us and what we want to do.

Q. How do you feel playing outside on Saturday?

JUSTIS NELSON: What was that?

Q. How did you feel playing at corner instead of nickel on Saturday?

JUSTIS NELSON: Felt just like any other position. I mean, it's not new to me. They throw me around, put me in a lot of different positions. So just wherever they need me to go I will be prepared.

Q. A lot of things you guys talked about this year on defense, you go out and aren't able to succeed, come back and let the previous drive go. What was it like second overtime you just gave up the touchdown to send it to double overtime where you guys were able to kick out and force them into a field goal?

JUSTIS NELSON: It was good coverage. The receiver made a great catch. So if you make guys earn it like that, there is not much more you can do. But leaving that in the past, you know, came back, made some great plays and like you said, just being consistent, trying not to ride that emotional roller coaster.

Q. How much did that help that you guys did your job and have that play work out? Did this help you guys out?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, definitely you try to practice as much as you can, being mentally tough, doing your job and of course it helps just being able to think clear, weather the storm and be able to do your job.

Q. Do you think this could be Patrick Mahomes' last game?

JUSTIS NELSON: I have no idea. That's his decision. I don't know if he's thought about it, but, yeah, I guess that's his decision.

Q. What did David Gibbs tell you guys after the game?

JUSTIS NELSON: Not much. Didn't really talk to us much. Sure he was pretty excited, do, but he always preaches consistency. Sometimes guys like to let up whenever you feel good, after you get a win, but like I said, trying not to ride that emotional roller coaster.

This is a whole new week. The 24-hour rule you have fun, enjoy your win. But when we get back on the field, it's back to work.

Q. Talk about this final home game and how the fans can help it versus your arch nemesis?

JUSTIS NELSON: It's an early morning game so fans need to come with energy. It's the last home game for all of us seniors. It's surreal, but it's against Texas. You can't ask for a better atmosphere, better team to play against on your last game at home.

We're hoping the fans come out, are as loud as they are for the night games like they were for OU and just bring excitement.

Q. New team, new year, but how much did that win over the Longhorns mean to you guys last season?

JUSTIS NELSON: Meant a lot. Getting that win, breaking that spell felt good and this year it will be even better if we won at home.

Q. What does Senior Day mean to you?

JUSTIS NELSON: Last opportunity to go out there and perform in front of Lubbock. This has been my home for the past four years and I enjoyed every bit of it.

It's going to be tough stepping off that field for the last time, but I'm going to give it everything I got and hopefully it will take care of itself.

Q. Is it surreal having it this early in the year. You have four games left maybe five and this could be your last home game?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, I've been with my teammates for a long time. Last season. I'm trying to cherish every bit of it. Trying to make the most of it, trying want to take any rep for granted whether it's out in the game or on the practice field, just trying to enjoy it, trying to give every bit that I have into it. I mean, that's all you can do. As long as you walk off the field knowing that you gave everything you had you can't do much more.

Q. Texas and Texas Tech coming off big wins this past weekend, Texas beating a top-10 ranked team. Do you think that their energy and their enthusiasm after being a top-10 team is comparable to what y'all are feeling after the TCU win?

JUSTIS NELSON: I'm sure it is. I think we're going to get the best out of both teams. Both teams are going in confident. It's going to be a physical game, a fun game, ball is going to fly around. Like I said, I think we're going to get the most out of both teams.

THE MODERATOR: Anything else? Thanks, Justis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Cameron Batson?

Q. (No microphone.)

CAMERON BATSON: Yes, definitely. You know, they definitely played a lot of help with their nickel and backers with safety help over top, dropped a lot of eight. So we had to go out there and try to establish a run game.

Q. What was it like for you as a receiver?

CAMERON BATSON: It was no different. Of course you expect the ball a lot, but each and every play whether or not you're getting the ball you have to block for your teammates. So it really wasn't nothing different.

Q. What do you think about Da'Leon Ward? Seems like last few games he's picked up tough yards, little chunks. But averaging a good amount, seems like every third down he's there falling forward, pick it go up?

CAMERON BATSON: Da'Leon has done a great job. He came in, thought he was going to redshirt. He got some time on special team, worked his way up to eventually be the starting running back for this Texas Tech team. He's done a great job, handled the low well. He definitely is shifty, break it outside, so I feel like he's done a great job.

Q. Talk about Mahomes and how tough he is. Seems like you can't get that guy out of a game no matter what?

CAMERON BATSON: He's definitely a tough player. He will lay it on the line regardless of the situation and you definitely like that in a player.

Q. Do you guys feed off that?

CAMERON BATSON: Of course, but we feed off each other. As far as receivers, we have to go out and start the game off right. He's a tough guy, so we really just feed off one another. It's not specifically one guy that we feed off of.

Q. What do you expect to see from Texas this week?

CAMERON BATSON: We know defensively they will play man-to-man, play some zone, trick patterns, switching in the plays that you wouldn't want to switch into in those type of coverages. So we just have to make the right checks and be on our best game.

Q. What's the rivalry mean to you with Texas?

CAMERON BATSON: Means a lot being an Oklahoma kid we definitely didn't like Texas at all. You come here. They don't like Texas, so it's a win-win situation. So we will definitely have some fun out there Saturday night.

Q. Senior Day for a bunch of your teammates.

What does that mean for you having to say goodbye to these guys?

CAMERON BATSON: It's a tough pill to swallow. You grow up with these guys the past three or four years, definitely built a lot of relationships and to see those guys, their last home game. I know they will be emotional, so the only thing we can do as a team is help them celebrate it with a win.

Q. What was y'all's mind-set offensively when you're trailing TCU 17-10 and you have what seems like a final drive to be able to tie the ball game up and it hadn't been working offensively. What was going on in that huddle before that dive?

CAMERON BATSON: Before the huddle a lot of guys were fired up on the sideline because you can't hold your head down in those situations. The defense, they did a great job. So in that huddle, you know, Kingsbury said this is the one. We definitely have to get a touchdown in this situation if we want to win this game. We definitely got it done!

Q. The game-winning field goal, (No microphone.)

CAMERON BATSON: I've been back holding so Heffron, you know, he snapped the ball. I held it down. Hatfield kicked it, and I think I knew it was good before he knew it was good. I picked him up before it went through the goalpost.

Q. (No microphone.)

CAMERON BATSON: I tried to get out of the way. All the guys were -- they were coming on the field. I know what it's like to be on the bottom of a pile and I did not want to be on the bottom of a pile again.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks Cameron.