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Kliff Kingsbury
Patrick Mahomes
Justis Nelson

Q. How did you your guys handle the bye week overall?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Good, good. I think that we got a handle on Kansas, but we focused a lot on ourselves and what we need to do to get better. I thought we had a good attitude. Good energetic practices, it was encouraging.

Q. Have you looked at film on Kansas and can you talk to us about concerns on offense and defense?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I have. I think the last game was, the last game was not a true statement of who they are as a football team. They had six turnovers, it kind of got out of hand. But Coach Beatty, I know him very well, he does a good job motivating. I thought last year they were more excited to play than us, so they'll be excited for this game. And I think they're better than probably their record indicates and probably the scores indicate. They have just had some tough breaks. So we'll have to play really well to give ourselves a chance.

Q. Anything on defense concern you?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Well, last year I thought they got after us. It was probably the most disappointed I was in any of the games was their defense wanted it more than us. They got after us physically, schematically, Coach Bowen had a great plan and so we got out played and out coached. So we have been taking this personal and I think the players are ready to get out there and see what we can do.

Q. Do you feel like the players from last season take that game personal, too?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, if anybody was there, which they probably were and watched that, it was unenergetic, it was bad coaching, bad playing offensively. The defense played great. Offensively, it was a joke. So we have been working hard to try and correct that this year.

Q. From what you've seen on tape through the first three games and what you see on practice, how far do you feel like you are from a complete game and being able to put that all together?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Not far. We just have to do it more consistently and then handle adversity, those are the biggest things I see. At times we play great and get out to leads, but consistently hanging in there and doing it over and over and over, we're not there yet.

Q. Do you feel like looking at the non-conference slate throughout the Big-12 now entering conference play this is the most wide open you feel like you've seen the league since you've been here at tech?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I always feel like it's always wide open. You never know until you get to conference who is good and who is not good. A lot of teams develop as the year goes on. Those first three games aren't always an indication of how good you're going to be. I think OU was a great lesson last year. They played Texas early in that schedule and don't play very well, but go on and blow everybody else out the rest of the deal. We just got to keep getting better. It's going to be an exciting league this year, but I think all those teams are going to get better as it goes.

Q. What did the defense work on to try and get better at stopping the run?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, just, once again, consistency. I've said it over and over. When we have something bad happen we can't let it turn into four or five things in a row happen that are against us. So, we played well there at stretches that last week, but gave up two late touchdowns, gave up the touchdown in the end of the first half. We don't do that, we're feeling a lot better about ourselves and they know that. So the main focus over there is just handling adversity better.

Q. Can you share your thoughts on the virtual reality, we saw a piece come out in the last week, but when you were first approached with that, was that something they had to convince you very much on, I know you're very innovative in what you like to do offensively.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I had read an article on Carson Palmer Monday Morning Quarterback that went through his week of preparation and I've known him a long time and have a lot of respect for him and the type of player he is and I was just fascinated by some of the statements he made about it. Then when we were approached, wanted to do it, wanted to get around and once I put it on, I was sold. It puts you at the

quarterback position and it's like a flight simulator for a pilot. You're getting those reps mentally that there's no other way to simulate that.

Q. Where do you think you've seen the most progression from your players in getting that different perspective that they hasn't seen before?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: For quarterback, the operation, you see the play and then you signal it out. With the thing on you can see the leverage of the DB's, see the front, see the blitz, see the safeties. So I have just seen, at the line of scrimmage, much better command, much better pre-snap recognition and they continue to get better and better as they use it.

Q. How much do you feel like that's helped Pat checking the different plays, work the safeties? Have you seen that helping his development particularly as well.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: You can't point to that as being the sole thing, but obviously you are watching how he's playing and he's been doing that since this spring and I think it's had a pretty dramatic effect on him because he's got basically double the reps he ever has because every practice he puts that on and now you get those reps as well. And I really think that's helped him.

Q. Blitz without contact, right?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, he's not getting hit, he can do the signals, do his foot work, get his eyes reading the D and he don't get beat up.

Q. Do you feel like you're team's excited about playing a little bit different on Thursday night, how that changes things?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Very. Sounds like it will be a great atmosphere. The ones over here the last Thursday night it was rocking and they expect the same thing. So it's a good change up, a couple games on TV, they know it's a good showcase to show who they are and so I have felt a good energy this week.

Q. How do you feel like the special teams have performed so far this year?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Great. Great. I don't think we punted the ball great, missed a couple kicks that you would like to have, but as far as coverage units, phenomenal. We like to get a little bit better on returns. Haven't had a lot of return opportunities, but the coverage units have been as good as we have had around here.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We'll get him out there and see. But I expect him to play.

Q. Did he practice?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He did.

Q. Zach Barnes, what's his status?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: If he can go, he'll go. He's been practicing, but we want to make sure he's full speed. I would expect him to play as well.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Connor is rehabbing and I wouldn't expect him to play this season.

Q. Did he have another surgery or not?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He did.

Q. Obviously it's still very young in David Beatty's career it's going to be a heck of a turnaround for him at Kansas, but from what you've seen in his development as wide receivers coach at A & M when you guys were together to now as the head coach at Kansas, where have you seen him taking this Kansas program and the way that he's tried to change the culture there?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, you watch the way they play, they're playing hard, whether it's first quarter, fourth quarter, doesn't matter the score. Great energy on the sidelines. You'll see that tomorrow. He's a great recruiter. So, he has to build it, it takes time with these things, but he is doing it the right way.

Q. From being around him, what quality did he have that just sold guys to be able to come where he was, because there's, when you hear people talk about him there's that energy that people thrive off of it seems like.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I think that's it. He's very positive energetic, what you see is what you get. I think the players feel that. He's going to push them hard on the field, he's going to give them everything they got every practice, every meeting, and he's always got a smile on his face.

Q. Off season you guys made progress for Pat, cut down his interceptions and improved his completion percentages. Now he's got a better interception to completion rate. Does it appear the message has gotten through about balancing and knowing when to take a chance versus when to be safe?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I hope so. The times I've really seen him self get into trouble was like the Arizona State game where he feels like he has to do it all, feels like it's slippage way, we're not stopping them, we're down 10. Still got to stay within yourself. So we haven't had too many of those situations thus far, so we'll find out when we're in that type of situation. But he has protected the ball well, he's been very accurate, and I think it's a credit to him, because he made it a

priority.

Q. Kansas turned the ball over nine times in the last two games. Is that even more of a point of emphasis in all the meetings with all the positions that that's been a vulnerable spot for them and maybe an opportunity for you?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I hope so. We haven't got any in the last two games, so we definitely need to try and create some. But more than anything I talked to our team about that's because of those turnovers, don't look at these scores or look at the wins and losses, because if you turn the ball over that many times you're not going to win the game. So I don't think it's a true indication of who they are. But, yeah, we would like to get our turnovers since we haven't had any in a couple games.

Q. Same notion, have you talked to your team about even though it's a 16-1 spread over the history of time it just seems like it's been slow or lethargic or something along those lines, for whatever the reason and maybe this is the year to change that?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I haven't looked much past last year. Defensively we played great last year, really won the game for us. But offensively those guys which were on that field, there were a bunch of them, they know how poorly we played and got out coached, got out played, they were tougher they were more physical and so they don't forget that.

Q. In regards to your team being able to force turnovers, do you feel like defense is doing some things with some good habits and it's just hasn't gone that way the past couple games or do you feel like there's areas you guys can get better?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We can definitely improved. But we played two offenses that protected the ball really well, just didn't turn it over. Both quarterbacks had career nights versus us and that's a credit to them and we have to do a better job of being disruptive and making plays.

Q. Your thoughts on Les Miles being fired really I guess just the monster that college football has become where if you're not winning at the highest level it seems like no matter the success that you have, at some of these different spots, it just might not be enough and what that's like from a coach's perspective.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, I always liked Coach Miles. I think he's a phenomenal coach. I'm sure he'll land on his feet very soon. I thought he did a great job there. But you know what you're getting yourself into and nobody is going to feel sorry for somebody making five million dollars a year and it's part of the profession. So

you do the best you can, you put everything you have into it each and every day, you treat the players and coaches the right way, if it works, it works. If it doesn't, then you can walk away, in his case, with a lot of money and a smile on his face.

Q. (Question regarding the national anthem.)

PATRICK MAHOMES: No one has talked to me about it. I haven't really thought about it. It's not something that I would really want to get into.

Q. What do you feel like offensively you guys worked on most with this extra time to be able to prepare for Kansas and Big-12 play starting out?

PATRICK MAHOMES: It definitely helps out a lot. Kansas got on us last year, they were way more physical. They sacked me five or six times. They really brought it to us. So we're not taking them lightly. We're going to go out there, they have a really good defense, that really, you got the same patch of games because of turnovers and stuff like that, but they have defense that can make plays, so offensively it's always great to have an extra week to work on what you do.

Q. Do you feel like you guys took that game personal, still take that game personal last year, leaving a bad taste in your mouth, even though it was a game that you won, but you obviously didn't play the way you felt like you were capable of.

PATRICK MAHOMES: Yeah, definitely. They really brought it to us, they were way more physical and it showed on tape and on the field. It's something that we really looked at and are going to go out there and hopefully we can bring the physicality to them here at home.

Q. Do you feel like that was a situation where you fell into playing down to the level of your opponent in that situation?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Not necessarily. It was really just them bringing it. They really wanted to beat us. They really wanted to win that game. They brought it that day. They will be the same attitude coming in. They're going to be expecting to win, they're going to come in here expecting to beat us, and that's something where we really just got to play our best game every single week.

Q. Last game it was 43-37 running plays versus passing plays. Is that something that we should anticipate seeing as the season goes on that you're really going to, I know it opens up the pass, but to have more running plays than passing plays is just not typical here?

PATRICK MAHOMES: The balance is awesome. Really just having a running -- Stockton played had some big plays. Having running backs that can make

plays happen is something that we didn't get to in the first two weeks, but we got that in the next week against La Tech, but expect to see more of it. At the same time we're going to pass the ball and take what they give us.

Q. Do you feel like when you enter conference play when you look around the Big-12 it seems pretty wide open. Whoever shows up in conference play has a chance to take over the championship.

PATRICK MAHOMES: Yeah, definitely. I mean, I feel like everybody got off to a shaky start, but I expect everybody to pick it up as the Big-12 goes on. There's going to be a lot of big games and I expect everybody to really bring it in those games and bring it the rest of conference.

Q. What did the offense work on in the bye week that was maybe a point of emphasis for you guys?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Definitely cutting down penalties. Playing hard, but at the same time not getting those holds and not getting those just silly penalties that move us backwards. Because other than the penalties we really, against La Tech moved it forward the entire time and it's something where we have to cut those down if we want to be a contender in the Big-12.

Q. What do you think is the cause of that?

PATRICK MAHOMES: This last week I feel like or the La Tech week I feel like it was just more people just playing hard and you saw a lot of those penalties were kind of down the field or later on in the play, it wasn't like we were really false starting or holding at the beginning of plays, it was people, receivers blocking down field and you just got to kind of teach that once that guy gets by you to let those corners and let those DB's go.

Q. Is it a case you just wanted to do too much, do you think?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Yeah, I think Coach Kingsbury really challenged them after the Arizona State game to be physical and really try to take it to those guys in the secondary and those linebackers and they were, they did. But at the same time you have to be a little bit more disciplined and not getting those holds.

Q. Do you feel protected back there or do you worry at all about somebody missing their assignment and that?

PATRICK MAHOMES: No, really the offensive line especially has gotten better week-to-week and the physicality and they're really taking it upon themselves to be a great offensive line, one that Texas Tech has had for many years now and those young guys are getting more experience. So as we go further along

into the season I'm really getting more and more confident in them.

Q. As you enter conference play and you look at the wide receivers that are all around you, how it seems like Willies is kind of finding -- the light bulb has come on this past week and it just seems like every game he's a different guy. What do you think about the talent that you have around yourself that you're able to work with every week?

PATRICK MAHOMES: It's awesome. The depth that we have, you can really trust in one two three deep at each receiver position. The running back, the same way. They can go out of the back field and catch the ball. So having those guys around me really allows me to throw the ball all around the field and really open up the defense that they can't really zero in on one guy.

Q. Your thoughts on this virtual reality and how it's changed your perspective and in watching film and what advantages it's given you on a week to week basis through this season?

PATRICK MAHOMES: It really let's me get into the film. When you watch it on the screen you can really look at certain things, but you can't see the whole aspect of it. The virtual reality, I'm right there seeing exactly what I see when I'm taking my drops and making my throws. So just being able to see their defenses from my perspective before I even play them it really does help out.

Q. What's the breakdown of how much you watch that virtual reality in regards to in comparison to just kind of that side angle that you watch on television that's the only two dimensional?

PATRICK MAHOMES: I would say it's probably around 50/50, 60/40. More virtual reality. It's something where I watch more the require the virtual reality up here since we have it here. And when I get in my extra time or with coach, I watch kind of just a side view or if I watch it at home it's the side-view.

Q. That virtual reality, do you, I guess can you, is it just basically you're watching it or can you actually interact with it, kind of almost like play with it?

PATRICK MAHOMES: We have a little room that has turf in there and so I can basically take my drops and go through my reads and my progressions, so it does make it a little built more interactive than just watching the standard film.

Q. Coach talked about TJ, talked about him needing to mature a little bit more off the field. Is that something that you're helping him with or others that are doing that to try to allow him to grow?

PATRICK MAHOMES: As a team, as brothers, we

really try to help each other out as best way we can. I definitely try to help TJ out because he has all the talent to be a great receiver and an All-American here. When you first come in, you don't know how to work, you don't know how to really excel on the field. And he got a lot thrown on him early and he's taken it in and I feel like you'll see more and more of him as the season goes on.

Q. What's your message to the guys in the locker room as you hit Big-12 play? What do you tell them? This is obviously where you make your money. I mean, do you tell them let's put the non-conference behind us, what happened, and what's your message moving forward?

PATRICK MAHOMES: Really it's, we want to win a Big-12 championship is what our goal is for this season and nothing less. So, I tell them that non-conference is over, really you just got to put it behind you and we got to do everything we want to do from the beginning of this year right now.

Q. Do you want to make a statement for the National Anthem or does that not even enter the conversation?

JUSTIS NELSON: No, it's nothing we talked about. We haven't even slightly talked about it, so just not really an opinion on that. Just something going on in the NFL, we see on TV, but no discussion about it.

Q. Where do you feel like you guys are right now as a defense after the bye week going into this week?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, we're definitely attacking the ball or attacked the bye week. Felt like we had good practices. We're just trying to focus on us and what we can do to get better. Guys giving more effort, guys trying to make plays and not just going through the motions, so that was the main emphasis of a bye week, just having all that effort.

Q. Kansas has turned the ball over nine times in the last two games. Is that something that kind of makes you salivate a little bit and know there's potentially an opportunity for you and your teammates?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, definitely. The past two games we haven't had a turnover, which is a characteristic of what Coach Gibbs wants from this defense. So we started back doing turnover circuits and stuff like that. So any time we can get our hands on that ball, that's what we're going to try to do.

Q. Coach said that, credit them for protecting the ball the past couple weeks, but you guys can improve in some areas in that regard. What areas do you think those are?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, every area. Any time the

ball's in the air we have to go up like it's our ball. Any time a guy's holding a guy up on a tackle, we have to go in there and put our hat on the ball, punch and rip at it. And some of the circuit drills we have been doing, just basic stuff, just punching the ball out, tackling, and ripping the ball out. I mean just stuff that we have done all through camp that we're reemphasizing.

Q. Coach talked about taking last years's, it was a win over Kansas, but last year's win personal, it left a bad taste in your mouth. Would you say that that game was the one that you took personally and you felt like you didn't play to the standard that you guys thought you were capable of and it left a bad taste in your mouth going forward?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, it was definitely a let down on our part. They did some great things that put us in situations, but we definitely had higher expectations for ourselves, so, going into this year, not really focusing on the past, but just trying to get better every week, just trying to improve every week, regardless who the opponent is.

Q. When did y'all start including the turnover circuits again?

JUSTIS NELSON: Beginning of the bye week.

Q. So you hadn't done them since camp then, the first couple weeks of the season?

JUSTIS NELSON: We do it, I mean, not necessarily, not a specific circuit like we did this past bye week, but that's something that we always emphasize during team or during one-on-ones, just finishing plays and always punching and ripping at the ball. But, yeah, we did start back doing circuits.

Q. Coach Kingsbury said before the bye week that he wanted to see more consistency out of the defense in practice every snap being more up instead of the roller coaster. Did you see some examples of that taking place where you were more consistent this past week in defensive work?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, definitely. I mean, after the bye week we had a lot of guys getting their hands on balls, a lot of turnovers being created, which some, like I said, we have been slacking on. So it was good to see guys trying to get the ball, trying to make plays. And just specific examples, I mean, a few interceptions by a couple DB's, linebackers, punching, ripping the ball out. And then maybe some D line getting their hands up on tipped passes, so just reemphasizing stuff like that and that's what we have to carry over into the game.

Q. People, some people always say that when they turn on a film it's never as good as thought or as bad as you thought. Have you had any instances

during a bye week where you turn on the film and find that you were doing some things a little bit better than you might have thought or noticed things that you might not have noticed during the game that you needed to work on?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, specifically effort and even people's eyes, just where they're looking. Sometimes you turn on the film and you'll see guys not hustling to the ball whenever it's clear that he broke for a few yards and guys are just waiting for somebody else to make the tackle. And then there's plays where guys make an awesome play, in the back field, tackled for a loss or attempting to punch and rip at the ball. But like you said, it's never as good, never as bad. And we're just focusing on getting better every week despite who the opponent is.

Q. I know you guys really don't want to get to that 85, 90 play limit, but are there times when you're watching film or just talking defensively where when you're watching film you say, man, if we just have guys in position here, if we just make the tackle and he doesn't have five or 10 more yards after contact, that's not a fresh set of downs, that can keep us off the field and it just almost seems like that's when it seems to snowball where you have guys there that are in position but not make the play and that just seems to lead to an effect where it just steams to get harder, hard to get off the field, obviously, because that, how much of a point of emphasis is that with you guys?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, that all goes back to effort. When you see one guy hit somebody, you don't necessarily expect him to make the play, everybody should be running to the ball, everybody should be trying to get in on that. And for the past couple weeks, we have had that in some instances and some instances we haven't. So just trying to reemphasize that every down, whether something good happens or whether something bad happens, just bouncing back and being able to respond and just keep doing your job throughout the whole course of the game.

Q. Do you hear people looking ahead on the schedule at all? Because you got Oklahoma and TCU, Texas, three weeks in a row. Is there any conversations about how the games now are going to help you get ready for that or are people talking about those three games?

JUSTIS NELSON: Not at all. We're focused about what we can do better. Because we know we haven't played our best football yet. So, we have only been focusing on us, one of the key phrases that we used last week was it's about us. And that's focusing on everything we can do better throughout the week. Practice, and hopefully that carries over into the game. So we haven't looked ahead on anybody. Big-12

conference is wide open. There's teams that can play, there's plenty of athletes on the field, so just focusing on what we can do better.

Q. How do you feel like the virtual reality has helped you? Talking to Kliff he said he was sold when he put it on the first time. Patrick mentioned he also even preferred it a little bit over just watching regular film. Where do you feel like it's helped you the most in your perspective watching the defensive side?

JUSTIS NELSON: I haven't actually used the virtual reality. I know some of the linebackers have used it to see the whole formation and stuff like that, but I've definitely wanted to, but I just haven't made my way in there. So, I might go check that out after we get done.

Q. Is that more just for the offensive side or is that not as much for the defensive side?

JUSTIS NELSON: No, plenty of defensive guys use it. I think I Stice and Malik in there using it a couple times, but I just haven't got to it. As a DB you always see the whole formation, so I haven't really just got to it yet.

Q. Just more old school?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, I'm old school. Pen and paper rather than high tech stuff.

Q. Where is it that y'all use that?

JUSTIS NELSON: It's back in the coaches offices.