

Texas Tech University Football Media Conference

Friday, September 30, 2016

Kliff Kingsbury



Q. Can we start with the defense. Is that the consistency that you've been looking for and hoping for and harping for all week long?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I thought they did a great job. Best performance by them so far. Lots of energy, created a couple turnovers. So very proud of that group.

Q. Any update on Pat?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No.

Q. Did you talk to the trainers or get an inkling of what they were thinking?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: No.

Q. You said in the post-game radio, you said it sounds like he could be okay.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, that's basically where I'm at. We got to get him looked at more extensively.

Q. How about Nic's performance tonight. He comes off the bench and throws for four touchdowns and really directed the offense well it looked like?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, that was awesome. There's not a harder worker on the team. I had seen him do that in practice. I know how good he is but it was good for his teammates, the other coaches, fans to see what he can do. He threw some incredible passes. I don't know what his quarterback rating is, but it has to be incredible. Made all the right reads, had some great checks, so. Working with him every day, you see the work ethic he puts in, so for me, that was awesome, and I couldn't be more proud of him.

Q. That the best second half y'all played all year?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I didn't like how the offense came out. Defense gets that stop, we muff a punt. Special teams weren't very good. Muff a punt, miss an extra point, give up the safety, kick the ball out of bounds twice, it was brutal. But to still be able to win with that type of margin and play that bad, we have a chance.

Q. Why do you think the special teams played so bad?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Our kickers aren't doing it. They're really bad right now. It's just brutal honesty.

So, they're in a funk and they got to step up or we'll

have to start going for it every time or going for two or something. But it's -- Coach Rob is a very good special teams coach and those guys got to step up and perform.

Q. Barden didn't start because he wasn't getting it done?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, he's been very inconsistent and put the other kid in, and he drops a snap. And then Barden comes back, kicks it out of bounds. I mean it's brutal. It's bad news bears with those guys. So we'll see what type of mental makeup they have going forward.

Q. Did you think that the team let the Kansas group back into it like the previous game?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Not really. The previous game it was 30-20 and we kind of hung on at the end to win it on the road. And traditionally that team's given Texas Tech fits even when I was here. So I was really proud of the way we finished with our backup quarterback and nobody hesitated. We just finished the game.

Q. If you had to go without Pat for any length of time, where is Nic and his development relative to --

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He's way ahead. He's just got a bunch of reps. And we made sure he had a ton of reps and got reps with the ones. And like I said, nobody works harder on our team in the weight room and film studies and he knows where to go with the football and you saw that tonight.

Q. (Question about playing in practice.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, he was with the good players. Not the backups, so he operated really well. Sometimes you know, with that backup crew of freshmen and guys that aren't really that ready to play, it looks a little rough. But he was in with some of those veteran guys and he executed at a high level.

Q. (Question about Giles.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, he continues to be kind of the go-to guy. They tried to double him at times, but he found a way to get open and once he gets it, he can do stuff with it.

Q. What was -- after y'all got up 14-0, your offense drove. Was there anything schematically or what

was happening?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We struggled there for about three or four drives. Just, I think we got up and kind of, our focus got lost and that was it. And they do a good job, they see this offense a bunch, gone against Coach Bone a bunch, he has a good feel for it.

But the way we got it going in the second half, that was kind of the expectation and scored 55, should have scored a lot more, but you got to give them credit because they created a turnover and we muffed the punt and at times they got after the quarterback. I didn't think our O line played very well and that's something we have to address.

Q. What makes Luke Stice a great leader?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: His character, his intensity. Every single day he shows up intense with a smile. In the weight room he is always writing everything you say down, he's watching film he's, bringing guys with him into the meeting rooms to watch film. He's just, if I was a company, he would be my number one draft pick to hire, period, in anything. He's that type of human being.

Q. On the offensive line, are you better with Stawarz at right guard and Murphy at right tackle?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: It appears that way. I was very disappointed in Madison's play. He's a guy who we keep trying to prod to come on and he hasn't. And so we'll see how he responds. But those other guys stepped up when we made that change and had some good drives.

Q. Any thoughts about fans leaving at halftime, is that something that's been going on?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, that's going on around the country, I think. If you turn on any of those games, that's what people are doing. They're going to watch it and go out at halftime and tailgate or whatever.

But it's not just Texas Tech. You can turn on any of those games and at halftime people seem to be leaving, so I'm not really sure what to do about that.

Q. When do you hope to have the status of Patrick back?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm sure we'll know more tomorrow.

Q. Was it his shoulder?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm not confirming anything at this point. I've got to see exactly what's going on.

Q. (Question about extent of Patrick's injury)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Because I didn't see the trainer jump off the side of the stadium, so. That's about

where we're at.

Q. Defensively, six of 18 on third down. That was huge tonight for your team.

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Much better. We have struggled in that department and I thought our pass rush was better and getting them in those third and long situations is key and I was very proud of the defensive effort.

Q. Some of the penalties that were called?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Offensively, yeah, we're terrible and it's on me as the offensive coordinator who calls the plays. That's two games in a row, I think, last week we had eight or nine on offense and this week we had 10, 11, maybe 12. It's embarrassing. So we'll get that straight.

I thought we overcame some of them, had some big plays called back. As we get going in the conference we can't have that happen.

Q. How do you fix that?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: That's a great question. We're going to address it with some different type of things and see if we can get it fixed. But you can't have all these huge plays called back game after game on dumb penalties. Offensively, we're terrible at them right now.

Q. Rob had a couple tonight down field on passes, and had one earlier in the season. What's been the struggle with him there?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: That's not always his fault. Our quarterback held the ball on a couple of things where it should have come out quick, so I can't really put that on him. Just kind of timing was off, the quarterback's got to get it out of his hand.

Q. How comfortable are you if you have to go with Nic for an extended period of time?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Very comfortable. I think you saw tonight he's a great thrower of the football, knows where to go with it, got it out of his hand quick. That's not easy to come in, momentum is kind of against him, and he steps in and plays his tail off. So, I've always said he's a good player and I know his teammates have confidence in him.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: We didn't run the ball very well. A lot of times they were keeping six in the box and pressing outside and kind of daring us to throw it. And so I don't know how many yards we threw for, but they threw for a bunch of yards. But we got to be able to force some runs in there and he continues to get those hard yards.

Q. Do you remember when Nic went on scholarship? Didn't he come here as a walk-on?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: He did. He walked on after transferring from Iowa maybe last, not this past spring, but the one before.

Q. (No microphone.)

KLIFF KINGSBURY: I'm not sure about the year. We'll see. Hopefully last part of the year we can get him back.

Q. With the foot?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: With the foot, yes.

Q. I couldn't hear if you were already asked this, but who would be Nic's back up? Would it be Sullins or Duffey or is that?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Yeah, we haven't determined that yet. So we'll see where that goes.

Q. Are you leaning in a way?

KLIFF KINGSBURY: Not at this point. We'll see Pat's status and see how it goes in practice and kind of take it from there.

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Jonathan Giles

Q. Jonathan, Justis said that he kind of felt like offensively, things came together on both ends of the ball. How do you feel like you guys were coming together?

JONATHAN GILES: I feel like we did a good job overall. The defense had some really big key stops in the second half. And then the offense, even though we had a couple penalties here and there, we were able to get down, move the ball down and score.

Q. You really thrived when Nic came into the game. Is that something that you spent a lot of time with him on the summer, or maybe even in fall, working with him and getting the ball that he throws?

JONATHAN GILES: Yes, we have a complete faith in Nic. He's a hard worker, and it's the next man up. So when Pat went down, unfortunately, Nic came in and did his job.

Q. How reassuring is it for you guys to be able to move the ball as well as you did in the game tonight?

JONATHAN GILES: It was awesome. We knew that once Pat went down, Nic was going to come in and make some plays because he's a hard worker. He's competing in the weight room, he's competing in practice, and we just knew that we had a good quarterback coming in.

Q. Did Nic say anything when he came to the huddle?

JONATHAN GILES: He was just hyped. He's like, let's go, let's keep moving. Next man up.

Q. How much different is his ball to catch than Patrick's?

JONATHAN GILES: It's the same. They both like throw it hard, they like to throw it deep, so it's the same, it's no different.

Q. Coach talked about you being kind of the go-to receiver, what do you think about that?

JONATHAN GILES: That's awesome. I don't look at me as a go-to receiver. I look at me as just another great receiver along with other, the other four receivers next to me. So I feel like we have talent on the outside and inside, so. Each game somebody can have a break out game. So, fortunately, it was me.

Q. Has there been extra attention paid to you over the past couple weeks?

JONATHAN GILES: I try not to pay too much attention to it. I'm always focused in practice. Coach Morris helped me out with that, so I just try to stay focused.

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Justis Nelson



Q. Justis, do you feel like this was your best game of the season so far?

JUSTIS NELSON: Collectively, I do, as offense and defense. Defense stepped up when the offense wasn't, offense did when defense was slacking a little bit. But as a whole, we're proud of what we put on film.

Q. (Question about adversity.)

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, that was main thing we focused on this week handling adversity, just having a tough mindset and despite the circumstances, but that's what we did tonight.

Q. How much of a relief was it to get those two turnovers right at the end of the game when the ball was, just to kind of get that streak off the table?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, that was definitely a big point. We haven't had any the past two games. So we kind of got to breathe a little bit. And once you get one turnover more start coming. So, hopefully we can carry that over into the next weeks.

Q. What's the feeling on the sideline when you see Pat go down?

JUSTIS NELSON: Next man up. People go down all the time. Kansas had a lot of people go down. But you can't dwell on it, you have to move on and Nic came in and did a great job. And we couldn't be more proud of what he did.

Q. What do you think impressed you the most from what you've seen of him just in game tape and what you've seen in practice every day?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, he never complains. I never hear a bad word coming out his mouth. He knows all the plays, we don't lose a beat whenever he comes in. So, we're really proud of him, he got the game ball and hopefully, he can just keep doing what's been doing.

Q. Who stood up tonight defensively?

JUSTIS NELSON: I would have to say the whole D line. They got some pressure on the quarterback, made him hold the ball for a long time, and that's what we like as DB's. If they can get pressure on the quarterback it makes our job a lot easier.

Q. It seems like you're having, perhaps, your best individual season so far. Is that due to the position

playing nickle back or being a senior or all of the above?

JUSTIS NELSON: Yeah, I would say all of the above. Coach Gibbs puts us in great positions, positions where we can thrive and make plays. And just like, it is my senior year, so you have to leave it all out on the field because this opportunity might not come again. So just thank the whole coaching staff and everybody for putting us in positions.