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An Interview With:

## KANSAS COACH MARK MANGINO

PETER IRWIN: Coach Mark Mangino from Kansas University has joined us. Coach, your thoughts about the summer and the upcoming season.

COACH MANGINO: Thank you. We've had a good off-season. Spring ball has gone very well for us. Able to get some work in some key spots that we need to develop.

You know, according to our strength coach, he's really excited about the way the summer has gone. Great enthusiasm. All of our scholarship players and most of our walk-ons have stayed in Lawrence and participate in the program. He's very excited about what's taking place.

Thursday is the last workout, and then the players will go home for a week. And we'll get back on August the 6th and begin training camp. We're looking forward to it. A lot of enthusiasm and great expectations that we have as coaches and as players for this year's team. We're looking forward to it.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, thank you. Questions?

**Q. Mark, the quick look on Kansas is great offense, suspect defense. Is that an accurate look? And if not, what are we missing?**

COACH MANGINO: Well, just like everything else, there's speculation that's what it will be. I think we'll have a chance to have a pretty good offense, no question about that. But I think our defense will be better than a lot of folks outside of our program think.

I like what we're doing. I think our defensive line has a chance to be pretty good. I think for the first time in a long time, I think we will have some natural pass rushers that can help put pressure on the quarterback, which is something

that we've lacked. We're going to have some new linebackers.

But three years ago we lost all of our linebackers, and things worked out. I think they're probably more athletic maybe than the kids that were working at linebacker, maybe in the past, when you talk top to bottom.

The secondary for us will return a great player in Darrell Stuckey. We have a veteran guy that can play two positions in Justin Thornton, can play corner or safety for you. Daymond Patterson returns, after playing as a true freshman at corner. We have Phillip Strozier, who's been a nickelback for us for a long time. Chris Harris.

So I think the only area that's going to be a little bit inexperienced is the linebackers. But we've been down this road before, and I feel really good about the approach those kids have taken, and I feel really comfortable with Bill Miller coaching them as well.

**Q. Obviously, when you recruited Todd back in high school, there weren't a lot of people that were looking at him. I just wonder if you could talk about how far he's come and the development he's made since he's been in your program over the course of his career there.**

COACH MANGINO: Sure. Todd -- you know, Todd was overlooked by most programs. There's no question. But he's a case in point where some kids would pout about that and feel bad for themselves and say, you know, they got a bad break in life.

He and his dad jumped in a car and went and visited schools that had an interest in him, and he was selling himself. He did a good job of selling himself to me because, when he showed up and I met him for the first time in our office in the summer of 2003, '4 -- I can't even remember. Anyhow, he was still a senior in high school.

He really had this swagger about him. When he shook my hand, he looked me right in the eye. He is full of energy. He was intelligent. He could speak on subjects other than just football.

And he had a bounce in his step.

I've told this story before. He went on a campus tour with one of our administrative staffers. So the coaches came down to my office to ask me what I thought of him because I'd already watched the tape. And I can almost quote, I said, he's small. He's really small. But I like him. And if we can get him, let's get him. Let's squeeze him a little bit.

I just liked him. There was just something about him that he had -- he exuded confidence, and he just -- he was just like a stick of dynamite.

As Paul Harvey says, you know the rest of the story.

**Q. Following up on that, can you talk specifically about how much he has meant, the kinds of things he's done over the last few years, and how important he is this year.**

COACH MANGINO: Well, when we started out at KU, when I first arrived, we had a good college quarterback by the name of Bill Whittemore, who did some really good things for us. He was a little bigger than Todd but not much.

But he was able to give us a little bit of a jumpstart when we were really bad. But then he had some injuries and wasn't able to finish one of the seasons. And after that, we kind of just went on a merry-go-round, injury after injury.

I can't even tell you. I asked Mike Strauss one time to see how many quarterbacks started for us during that period, and we still can't nail down how many different guys.

I do remember this: We played a wide receiver that never played a down of college football in his life at quarterback and played him in Lincoln, Nebraska, against Nebraska. It was the closest thing to coaching suicide that you can imagine. But we didn't have anybody left. It was just one of those things. We didn't have stability at the quarterback position.

What Todd has brought to us is stability at that position, and not only stability but excellence. He has gotten better every year because he works at it. He studies tape. He takes his time away from the game field seriously when he's in meeting rooms and when he's on the practice field.

He's been able to spark our offense. He's been able to ad lib at times, which is good once in a while. Sometimes he likes to ad lib a lot, and we have to pull him back in. We have to reel him back in a little bit.

But that's what makes him unique, you know, the idea that he believes in himself and that

he can make plays when there's not one. Kind of really reflects his personality; that he always thinks he can overcome. He always wants to prove the opposition wrong. Those traits have served him well.

But he is an important part of our team. He's brought stability and excellence to a position that must be good.

As I said earlier today, the quarterback is the chauffeur. If you don't have a chauffeur, the car doesn't move. He's the guy that makes it roll.

**Q. Been talking to some former players, Coach. They said that toughness is something that you pride your teams on having. How much emphasis do you place on having a tough team, and why is that such an important part of the program?**

COACH MANGINO: Well, I can't say that I set out every day to do things to make them tougher. I think it's a mindset and it's a mentality.

The second part of your question, why is it important? Football is a tough game. If you're not tough mentally and physically, you can't play this game. It's for tough, competitive people.

And also, having coached other schools in the conference before I went to Kansas, the label on Kansas was they weren't very tough. So if I was going to be the coach at Kansas, I was used to being around tough football teams, we were going to have to be tougher.

You don't ask the kids to be tougher. It's not that you shout and holler and tell them they've got to be tougher and get after them. No, you hold them to a high standard. You finish every drill. You finish every play. When you think you don't have anything else, you're able to give a little bit more.

When things are tough in a tight game, the guy that's mentally tough will stand up and make plays. The guys that pull themselves out of drills because they're tired, you don't want them on the field at the end of the game when it's third and one, fourth and one. You can't win with it.

And our kids, they meet those high standards, and it helps develop toughness. Plus we like to recruit tough kids. Sometimes we fail in that area, but we like kids that love to play this game.

I think if you love to play football, the toughness is there. That's why we get kids that love to play the game.

**Q. Just talk about the significance of consecutive bowl seasons, and what does that say about the direction of the program and the future of the program?**

COACH MANGINO: Well, it certainly -- it means we're going in the right direction. That's the key thing. We're moving in the positive direction. We're getting better all the time. That's what we've set out to do.

Now, to be very honest, we're not where we want to be. We want to be a team that competes for championships and be among the best teams in the Big 12. And we're not there yet. We're headed that way, but we're not there.

And the only way you do that is you have to consistently win and you have to be able to beat what are the best teams in your league. You have to start doing that.

For us to really -- there's other steps to take, but for us to really get where we want this program to be, we have to start winning against teams that are considered the elite teams in the league and beat them, you know, from time to time.

**Q. Mark, can you talk a little about the transition for Angus Quigley, the linebacker, and how he's adjusted to that. Do you feel like he's comfortable and found a home?**

COACH MANGINO: Randy, Angus is a very talented young man. But it's my job as a coach to put talented kids in positions on the field that they have the greatest chance of having success.

We've used Angus at running back quite a bit, and, you know, if Angus was playing Division II or Division III, he would be a really good running back because he's big and strong and can probably just muscle people. But at this level he really doesn't fit the mold we're looking for a running back. But he's talented.

You know, we're talking a guy that's 6'3", 230, runs very well, and we just felt like, hey, maybe a linebacker position might suit him. Now, we threw him in there. We threw him to the wolves, so to speak, because we only have so much time to get ready. But it seemed in spring ball that every day he got a little better, he learned more and more, he gained confidence, and I think he will help us at that position, I do.

He wanted to do it. I think he saw the running back situation, and he hadn't had much success at it, so he was anxious to tackle a new

challenge too. And he's taken it on with a very good attitude and wanting to be a good linebacker for us.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, they're going to let you off. Best of luck for the season.

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