

July 28, 2010



An Interview With:

## KANSAS COACH TURNER GILL

PETER IRWIN: We're ready to start with Turner Gill from Kansas.

Welcome, Coach. Glad to have you here. If you'd like to make an opening statement or any comments about the summer, we'd be glad to hear it.

COACH GILL: Good morning. Everybody got smiles on or not? I don't know. I got a good smile on. It's great to be here. I got a smile because I just got my family moved from Buffalo, New York, to Lawrence, Kansas. So it's been a great summer for me as far as getting my family situated there.

Obviously, our players have been busy doing our things with our strength coaches and all that. Again, University of Kansas, we're excited to be ready to go this 2010 season. I know that our staff, that I have definitely been blessed to put together. We're very excited about all that.

Again, it's going to be an exciting 2010 for the University of Kansas and very exciting for the Big 12 Conference. We'll go ahead and open up to some questions.

**Q. Turner, what was going through your mind, what were your thoughts as the conference realignment, expansion chatter, speculation was going on?**

COACH GILL: I was focused on preparing our football program. So I didn't get all caught up into that. Again, we'll focus on the 2010 season, focus on the University of Kansas.

Again, we're just excited about getting this season started. Whatever was going through that was making sure we had some games to play in 2010, and we'll go from there.

**Q. Coach Tuberville yesterday talked about starting a program that's been through something that has been a little difficult and getting them on the right footing. Can you just talk about your approach with the team and what you did in those early days and now as you've continued towards the season.**

COACH GILL: Well, I'm a firm believer, which I think probably most coaches are, in building relationships. That was the first thing I wanted our football program, our football team to do. Building relationships from players to coaches, coaches to players, coaches to coaches, and players to players.

So we put out a little bit of a survey deal that I gave to every single player, every single coach, and it had about eight to ten questions that were really detailed about who they are, where they came from, and how they came to where they are at today.

I had the players stand up in front of our football team and talk about certain questions. For example, one question I had everybody to answer was who was the most influential person in your life and why. Had all of our players and all of our coaches stand in front of our team and talk about that. I wanted to make sure that we got a chance to know that there's a lot more in common that we have with each other than we have differences.

When we look from the outside, that's the initial thing is we try to figure out who the people that maybe doesn't look like us or maybe doesn't think that they were going to fit together, all those kinds of things.

So I was really big in building relationships. We spent a lot of time. So every team meeting that we had in the spring practice had a player stand up and had a coach stand up and talk about those things. So that's the biggest thing that I believe in in building a program, in building a really -- we start talking about team, we all talk about team. We all talk about teamwork. We all talk about hard work and all those things. But the biggest thing is we got to get to know each other.

And I really believe that, as men

particularly, and particularly young men, we got to know how to communicate. We've got to know how to talk. I believe in getting our players and our coaches to talk to each other in deeper details more than just the Xs and Os of football. Obviously, we get into the football stuff, but we've really gotten into building relationships.

**Q. Whose answer to that question affected you the most about who was the most influential person in their life?**

COACH GILL: For me personally? As far as from a football standpoint, there's no doubt that Tom Osborne was definitely a tremendous influence. John Wooden, reading his books and those types of that nature were very, very influential. Putting the way that I want to be a head football coach and what were the important things to build a football program.

So, again, Tom Osborne, John Wooden, both, they all talked about teamwork. They all talked about how to be disciplined. And so we're making sure that I gave out information to our student-athletes that if these things occurred, what the consequences would be.

So, therefore, right off the bat, they knew that I wanted to keep everything on a consistent basis, that no matter who you are, if you did these certain things, here are the consequences. So those are the people that really I have directed some things and model the program after.

Obviously, I've got to be who I am in my own way, but those are some of the people that I took some certain things out of. I think Tom Osborne was great in relating with people, a lot of ideals and things that he did with the football program that I really believed in.

**Q. Coach, what were your impressions of Trevor Marrongelli this spring, and how do you see him factoring in this fall?**

COACH GILL: Well, Trevor is a person that's going well. Right now, if he had to play today, he'd probably be our starting guard. There's going to be some good competition there from that standpoint. He will definitely -- I would consider and say he's probably one of our top five to six linemen that we have at this point in time.

I think Trevor is going to be instrumental in making sure our offensive line will be in store and be some great football for us and leading our football team, particularly our offense.

I see a guy in the future that's going to be a good leader for us. I like the way of his

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approach, I like his work ethic. And I like his smarts and intelligence in football. And also his intelligence outside of football.

**Q. Coach, can you talk a little bit about Chuck Long and his addition to your staff and just your decision to hire him on your staff.**

COACH GILL: A great opportunity for me to have a chance to hire Chuck Long. We had talked probably, oh, in the last two years just periodically. He was at San Diego State. We kind of new each other in the past. But I know the last two years before I had the opportunity to go here and we were talking that if some opportunities would present itself would he ever want to coach with me. And he definitely said, Yes, I would be interested, Turner.

Obviously, the opportunity presented itself. Gave him a call, and he definitely said that I would love to be part of your staff.

Obviously, he brings a lot of knowledge, a lot of experience. He's coached a lot of great players. He's coached Heisman Trophy winners and Davey O'Brien winners and so on and so forth. You can go on and on about the accolades he's done as a coach. That speaks for itself.

But more importantly, I really love what he's all about as a man. A lot of guys that I hire on the staff, I really try to hire people who really have a passion to develop young people. They had to have that quality. If they didn't have that quality, I was not interested in hiring those guys.

So not only Chuck Long but really the whole staff, they have that common bond of being able to develop young man.

**Q. Todd Reesing was an exciting -- one of your team leaders that has left. How is your quarterback development, and who's filling that void in your leadership right now?**

COACH GILL: The quarterback spot is definitely wide open at this point in time for us, and we'll see how that all shakes out.

I think the leadership is probably going to be probably coming from a little bit more other positions at this point in time, probably more from the offensive line. We've got a couple of receivers there too, John Wilson, one of our receivers there, will be a good leader. Obviously, Brad Thorson, offensive lineman that's been around for a while, and those types of things.

I think it's probably not necessarily totally

going to come from a quarterback. And we talked about everybody being a leader, and everybody has an opportunity to be a leader on the football team.

Obviously, the quarterback position is a position where people have to lead. But at this point in time, I feel good about the competition. We'll see how it all shakes out. I think we've got good people, and we've got some good players. Obviously, we have an outstanding staff to put things together too.

**Q. Coach, I was curious about your thoughts on Kansas and Kansas State playing on Thursday night on national TV. Can you talk about that a little bit.**

COACH GILL: Yeah, Kansas and Kansas State are a nationally televised game on Thursday night. It's an exciting time for the state of Kansas to have the exposure there for two great institutions. They respect each other and have two good football programs, pretty good football teams. To have the State of Kansas on national TV, I think, is outstanding for the two teams and the two universities and also for the Big 12 Conference.

Again, when you have an opportunity to be on national television, that's outstanding not only for the university but also for the whole conference. So I think it's a great opportunity for us. We're looking forward to it. Any time you can play on national TV, it's a great exposure for each university.

**Q. Turner, twofold question. Have you thought about what it's going to be like for you personally to go against Nebraska this year? And the second part, they're going to be out of the conference next season. Have you thought about what it's going to be like to not have them in the conference that Kansas plays in?**

COACH GILL: I spend a whole lot of time on it. Obviously, my wife is from Nebraska. People talk about those types of things from that standpoint. Again, obviously respect University of Nebraska. I think it's going to be really probably the day before the game, as I go on the football field, maybe from that standpoint, will probably be the only time that you may have a little reflection I was here and played here and so on and so forth.

But once the game and the day of the game happens, it's going to be so focused on what is trying to get accomplished to win the football game. It's not going to be about me. It's going to be about two teams playing on that particular time

at that day playing the best game they can play from that standpoint.

As far as down the road, not playing Nebraska, you know, it is what it is from that standpoint. Again, I'm a person that always moved forward and not look too much in the past and move on. Because, again, they got to do what they got to do. University of Kansas has to do what they have to do, and, again, we respect that university, University of Nebraska.

**Q. Turner, was it disconcerting at all that the athletic director that hired you has announced his retirement and you'll have a new boss before too long?**

COACH GILL: You know, obviously, I definitely was surprised when the situation occurred. I knew that Lew was maybe not going to be there a long time as he hired me. We talked about some of those situations, how long he may continue to be an athletic director. So, again, didn't expect it to be as short.

Again, I have a job to do no matter who is the athletic director. My job is to go out and develop and prepare young men for life with football and prepare young men for life without football.

I'm excited about the opportunity at University of Kansas. Again, he's giving me this opportunity at the University of Kansas, and whoever the next person will be, I know we'll be able to work well together.

**Q. Turner, it's been sort of a wild ride for you in six months without even playing a game. You've gone through all the conference stress, all the ticket scandal that led to Lew's resignation. You come across as a very positive, forward-looking person, but at some point you had to think "what have I gotten myself into." How did you overcome those thoughts and feelings in the last six months?**

COACH GILL: I focus on the things that I can control. Again, I'm passionate about trying to develop young men. That's what my purpose here on this earth to do, is to work with young men between 18 and 22 years old. That's what I love to do. I got a passion about it.

Again, not just trying to get them to play well on the football field, but get them to play well in our society. Again, I knew things were going to fall into place. Didn't know necessarily when. But

as long as I was going to be able to be coaching and teaching young men, that's all that mattered to me.

So, again, it's no different than in a football game when things happen in a game, when unfortunate things may happen: fumble, turnover. Whatever may go on, you've got to continue to prepare. You've got to continue to make adjustments. You've got to continue to move forward. That's how my approach was. Again, I didn't lose faith in the people we're going to have in a leader in the University of Kansas.

Yes, there might be a change of name or a change of person there. Again, mostly, though, my job is to go out and teach young men between 18 and 22 years old, to get their degree, and then be instrumental in our society and then play a great game of football for the University of Kansas.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, thank you very much.

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