

July 27, 2010



An Interview With:

## MISSOURI GARY PINKEL

PETER IRWIN: We're ready to begin.  
Coach Pinkel has joined us from Missouri.

Coach, welcome, and your opening comments.

COACH PINKEL: I'm excited about being here. I think it's the time of year that we're going to get going here next week. Our players report next Wednesday, a week from tomorrow, and then we get going on our first practice Thursday morning. We're excited about that.

Our players have worked hard, and I think that's -- we're all about process, doing all the right things in our program. Our players have worked tremendously hard all summer. They've done well in school, advanced their degrees also. So a combination of both those things.

We're where we want to be, and we're excited about getting going here in a few days.

**Q. Gary, last year after saying that you really didn't want to put too much pressure on Gabbert in his first year as a starter, circumstances seemed like you had to with kind of a lack of depth behind him. How much more confident are you that he can handle that pressure this year even better than he did a year ago? And how much do you hand him?**

COACH PINKEL: Well, I think he did a tremendous job last year. We all know he had an injury. With the decision and the input of our medical staff, he said he could play, and he played, and he battled through that. That said an awful lot about him. I thought he did a lot of good things.

I expect him to up his game with the experience factor. I don't think you -- you know, the position requires -- you have to deal with pressure. That's just the way the position is. We

know that. But I think your focus is not on the pressure. Your focus is on playing the best. And I think that I expect him to have a really good year. He has a chance to be a great player, and we're excited about him getting going this year.

**Q. Gary, what can you expect out of a slimmed-down Derrick Washington? Did you see some new quickness perhaps in the spring that was missing during the season?**

COACH PINKEL: Well, I think what kind of happened to us a little bit was that a lot of players going to the NFL the last few years were coming back leaner than what we had them. We had all the statistics, and we had all the body fat and all the body composition evaluations. They just kind of felt -- they lean them up a little bit more than what we did.

We decided to look at our players and learn from that. We applied that not only to Derrick but a few other players. He's much quicker. It's all about quickness and movement. He's a lot quicker guy than he was this past year, and expect that to help him play at a higher level.

**Q. Along those lines, how did you go about making him leaner and quicker? How did it go with the team?**

COACH PINKEL: I think it went over really well. We have a lady that works in our player development area that just deals with nutrition. That's one of her areas. Our players have really gotten into nutrition and eating properly.

So I think that has a lot to do with it. It has a lot to do also with obviously cardio and working out. A combination of both. Obviously, it's been a real plus for us.

**Q. Gary, what's the plan of James Franklin to get him time or maybe redshirt him? You've done a pretty good job of getting the next quarterback into the mix.**

COACH PINKEL: We'll have to see. First of all, he's got to keep that job. He's moved up to second team. He had a very good spring for a

young player. But we also like competition out there. We'll see how that all -- we're going to have 27 or so practices prior to our first game. The competition's good, and we'll see how it works out, and then we'll make that decision, whoever the backup quarterback is, kind of how we use them throughout the season.

**Q. Looks like the conference in the future is headed for ten teams and probably a round-robin schedule with no title game. Are you pleased with that? Would you like to see expansion considered and/or petitioning for a championship game?**

COACH PINKEL: Those decisions -- they don't ask me. If I gave my opinion, it wouldn't matter. Those are conference decisions they have to make and institutional decisions within the conference. I leave that for those folks. I'm just trying to have a good football team.

**Q. Gary, you all have had the most sustained success at Missouri in quite a while. How do you assess where the program has been over the last five years and where it's going?**

COACH PINKEL: You know, when you look at our program, and I constantly evaluate everything we're doing, I think we've made a lot of progress. There's a consistency of winning that we have. I certainly -- there's a lot of things we have to accomplish, and I want to win at a higher level on a more consistent basis.

So I think we look back to evaluate, and then you look forward. You know, I just want to continue to build our program and raise the standards of the winning. That's our goal to get that done.

**Q. What's the attitude of your secondary coming into this season? Four starters returning.**

COACH PINKEL: The secondary? I think we're excited about it. We got a lot of players back. I think we have to obviously play a little better than we did a year ago, but I think we have a lot of good athletes, and we have more experience than we've had. I think a combination of both those things will give us a chance to play well. Obviously, that's our goal.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, thank you.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**



*visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)*