

July 27, 2010



An Interview With:

OKLAHOMA STATE COACH MIKE GUNDY

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined at the podium by Coach Mike Gundy from Oklahoma State.

Coach, welcome, and your opening thoughts.

COACH GUNDY: Obviously, we're very excited about the season, looking forward to getting back to work coming off break. It's an exciting time of the year for us. A number of new faces on both sides of the ball for Oklahoma State. New quarterback and healthy Kendall Hunter and several new offensive linemen.

We've been fortunate over the last few years that we had a number of returning starters that have provided great leadership and great continuity over the last couple years and allowed us to have a tremendous amount of success. But I think this upcoming season provides us with an opportunity for us to develop some new faces, let some of these young guys get in the fold quick, gain a lot of experience.

And our coaching staff and our football team expects to play better than what other people may anticipate us playing.

So we're excited about it. I think it's always fun as a coach to see young players develop and looking forward to the first game.

Q. The new offensive scheme you guys implemented, how is it running so far in your spring practices?

COACH GUNDY: The system is different than what we've had in the past, but I was pleasantly surprised that the organization was intact in the third or fourth practice of spring. I had prepared myself for -- for it to be a little chaotic.

But the players bought in. The coaching staff did a good job with the team. And they picked the system up. There's been a lot of reps, but obviously we've got a long ways to go.

I guess the best answer for your question is it's gone much smoother than what I would have thought it would have gone early in spring, and obviously they prepared well throughout the summer from what I've been told. So I'm looking forward to starting practice and see how it goes in the first week.

Q. With all that being said about Dana Holgorsen's offense, can you talk a little bit about new guys on the offensive line. What's that progress like as far as being able to make way to get more yards and protect the quarterback?

COACH GUNDY: We have new offensive linemen, as you mentioned. We have four guys that don't have a lot of experience, but they've been in our system. They understand what it takes to win.

Coach Wickline has been with us going on six years now as our offensive line coach. So they have a good feel for him. And there's times in preseason camp that we'll play some musical chairs to find out where those guys fit.

But we believe in them. We understand they're going to make some mistakes, but we also have confidence that they'll make more plays than what people expect.

So it's our responsibility as coaches to put him in a position to have success.

Q. Just wondering what was it about the offense that you like that made you want to switch to that?

COACH GUNDY: I felt like the number of players that we could recruit to fit this system was greater than the system that we had competed with in the years before. If you look at the areas that we recruit in Kansas and Oklahoma and Texas, Louisiana, most of the offenses have a number of wide receivers who can make plays and running

backs. There's not as many tight ends. There's not as many fullbacks to recruit.

So we believe that the success in college football is all about the players you bring in, and there's a greater pool to choose from in this type of offense than what we have played with in the past.

Q. Who was the spring offensive overhaul -- who was that toughest on excluding the group of quarterbacks? Who was the offensive overhaul this spring toughest on?

COACH GUNDY: One thing that worked to our advantage was the offensive line. In most cases that's where you have the biggest change. They're all new starters. So part of the reason that we changed systems at this time was because we lost a number of offensive linemen, and we're changing the quarterback.

So I would say the returning receivers, Justin Blackmon, Hubert Anyiam, those guys went through an adjustment. But for your quarterback and your offensive linemen, they didn't play last year. So they didn't have to make as much of an adjustment. They just had to learn the scheme.

Q. Mike, talk about your new quarterback, what you expect from him, and how does his level of maturity give you a little bit of confidence, enable you to sleep a little bit better at night?

COACH GUNDY: I think there's an advantage in being older. We all know that we're different at 26 than we are at 18. And in order to handle the pressures of being a quarterback and playing at this level, maturity is an advantage.

Brandon obviously signed to play professional baseball out of high school, so he's had a taste of what it's like to be out there and to deal with the media and the public and have success. There's obviously tough days. And I think that will help.

I was very impressed with him in the spring and the way he has adjusted in his leadership skills. He's done a nice job in the summer, see him in the office all the time, spending time in there studying tape.

So when you have a new quarterback, if there's a strong commitment there to do the right thing, then that gives him a chance. So I'm very excited about watching him develop and seeing what direction he can take our football team.

Q. Mike, Weeden had his coming-out party against Colorado. What did you see in



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that game that made you think this guy could be a quality player?

COACH GUNDY: Obviously, he had some success in the second half, our football team did, and he was in the second half. I think the one area that I was pleased with more than any is his ability to move around and make a play. Most quarterbacks don't have the luxury of sitting in the pocket, throwing the ball down the field. Defensive linemen have become so skilled that quarterbacks have to move around in order to make a play.

And ad lib. And he was able to do that in that game. And I said this to people who are close to the program. You can't put too much into that half because it was only one half. Being a quarterback is about handling pressure, being a great leader week in and week out, being durable, showing signs of confidence and the ability to lead your team, which he did some of that the second half.

But he's got a lot of work ahead of him. What we're pleased with is his ability to pay the price, which he's done up to this point.

Q. Mike, can you talk about the pluses and minuses of playing the Aggies on a national game on Thursday night.

COACH GUNDY: It's a great question. I don't know what the pros and cons are other than you're on national TV, which I think is great for your football team and tremendous for the university. Any time that you change your schedule during the week, it is going to be kind of a distraction if you're not careful, but we have done it before. So we have a plan in place for that.

I think it should be a great game, and obviously the chance to play on TV is good for everybody involved. Other than that, I don't really know a lot of difference from Thursday to Saturday.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, thank you very much.

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