

August 26, 2013



An Interview With:

COACH LES MILES

COACH MILES: Good afternoon. Always great to start a new season, great enthusiasm around our building, finally in game week. We've avoided -- our two-a-day schedule, avoided injury, yet improved and had in my opinion a very productive camp. A lot of young guys got a lot of necessary reps to allow them to perform well.

I also enjoy seeing Ted. Ted, it's nice to see that you're cracking and getting after it and ready to perform your normal task.

Now we're confronted with a very, very significant challenge in TCU, a team that our team recognized as a great challenge and voted to take just really just about a year ago. TCU is coached by Gary Patterson, does a great job on defense, offense and special teams, well prepared, a very talented team. They have two very, very quality quarterbacks. They return a bunch of starters from a successful team a year ago, have a big-legged punter and kicker. Return men are good, great speed on their team. So this will be a great challenge for us, and looking forward to it.

I can tell you that our team with Cam on offense are excited and looking forward to performing at a very high level. Chief is a veteran in really dealing with young guys, is really maybe called upon to be his best in this two-a-day camp, he was, and it looks like the kind of defense that we're used to having here at LSU. I can't imagine it playing any differently.

Our special teams have improved. Thomas McGaughey over time has had an effect, and it looks to me that we'll be very productive there. Our special teams guys, our punters and kickers, are much improved. I think Jamie Keehn is looking forward to playing in Dallas, playing in

that indoor facility, and seeing if he can perform like we have had punters perform there in the past.

Our return game, Odell Beckham will certainly be significant, but there are a number of guys that will take snaps back in there, and we think we'll have really good returners.

Colby Delahoussaye will be our field goal/extra point guy and seems to become more consistent as we get closer to the game, he becomes much better, more proficient kicker.

And James Hairston, again, will give us a long leg at kickoffs, and it appears that he'll have a great fall, as well.

A team that is talented, a team that's picked by many to be the best team in their league, and yet a team that we've accepted that challenge and prepared for and look forward to playing.

Again, playing in Dallas, very strong alumni base, and we recruit that Texas area very, very actively. Those Dallas Cowboys did a great job with Jerry Jones in the design and implementing that stadium, and we look forward to playing in it yet again.

Questions?

Q. You mentioned the great challenge of playing TCU. What are some of the other advantages of playing this quality of opponent to kick off the year in terms of preparation during the summer, as well?

COACH MILES: Well, you look at our season and you recognize that we have a very, very ambitious schedule in front of us, and for us not to really start fast would be a mistake. Really it's really an ideal style of opponent. We're going to have to play well to do the things that we want to do against TCU, and hopefully we catch a speed, if you will, in execution that will allow us to be prepared as we go into the meat of the SEC schedule.

Again, a quality opponent, should sharpen us pretty well.

Q. Eric Reid is getting rave reviews in the NFL. Ronald Martin is his replacement. What kind of dropoff do you expect early in the season at that position?

COACH MILES: Well, I think Ronald Martin certainly is talented enough to play that position, but I would think that he would really develop really along the lines of Eric Reid. Yeah, I think that he and Loston will give us very significant play in there, and there may be some other guys that step in there and play.

Yeah, we like Ronald Martin, but in the same vein, he's playing as a starter for the first time.

Q. I've got a question about three guys. What, if any, decision have you gotten to about Jeremy Hill? Josh Williford not on the depth chart; does it seem like he may not play this season? And are you able to update us on Rashard Robinson?

COACH MILES: Jeremy Hill is going to sustain discipline. We said earlier that we would be withholding, that he would be withheld from play. That's going to take place. Our discipline will be internal at this point, and I don't think we have much further to say.

Josh Williford, disappointment, certainly his personal disappointment, his teammates, that he cannot continue. But he's a guy that I saw today and will be in our meeting rooms and operate as a student coach and be involved, which we'll enjoy his participation greatly.

And Rashard Robinson, we anticipate that there will be positive news as we go forward here, really any day.

Q. The 4-2-5 defense that TCU runs, how is it different than what you may typically see in the SEC?

COACH MILES: What they do is at times they're a reading team and they play off the ball, and they're basically designed so that they don't let double teams onto their linebackers. Linebackers are close to the line of scrimmage. They have a call that says that they're not going to play coverage and they're going to play in there tight, and tell those linebackers to pass flow, and those safeties have cutbacks and really hang on the line of scrimmage, and then they have coverage calls that say, well, safeties back up, and those linebackers now have to sit back and play a dual responsibility.

But it's a very quality scheme. Bill Clay 100 years ago at Oklahoma State when I was the head coach there employed that, and we had great success with it. We recognize the strengths and the abilities that they have to make adjustments.

Q. Is there any anxiety for you knowing that -- you've seen a lot of the younger defensive players play but you haven't really seen them play in a game situation yet. Is there any anxiety for you just kind of not knowing what these guys have yet?

COACH MILES: Any time that you take the field in an opener, I just want you to know, as a coach, there is -- I don't know that you'd call it anxiety. I don't know exactly the word there. But there's that -- every team has a personality, and it's a developing one. Certainly the youth of a team allows, in my opinion, for the continued improvement. It allows a veteran that really can enjoy the enthusiasm of the young. And I think it's a great team that has the potential to step forward and improve.

But any time you start a season, in your first game I think that there's always that enjoyment of seeing, let's see how good they are. Let's just see.

Q. Will Jeremy travel to Dallas with the team, or is that part of the suspension, that he'll stay at home?

COACH MILES: We're not going to comment on that at this point. But I wouldn't be surprised that he would be on our trip.

Q. You've talked about working four-minute specifically over this off-season, I guess. How much of that was bred out of some of the late game failures of last season, and how much have you been able to accomplish with that period?

COACH MILES: Well, we really think we've answered some of the questions philosophically, but we'll have to see certainly. The better your teams that you play, the more competitive those situations are, and we're going to have to be good there as we go forward, including this coming Saturday in Dallas.

I can tell you that there was work done on it, and certainly we're ready to make the calls. Now you've got to execute and win in that situation.

Q. Can you kind of talk about the differences between Boykin and Pachall, and is it passing? Is it running? They both kind of run, and I feel like both of them pass pretty well, too. Can you kind of quantify that for me?

COACH MILES: I think both of them throw the ball pretty well. I'm like you; both are quarterbacks. They're not guys that come in there and cannot throw. I think one of them throws maybe a little different ball and executes the passing game down the field maybe a little bit better, and I think the other one may well run a little faster, but again, I think both are athletic and I think both can throw. It's the same offense, it just might be a different skill set. They can both pass, but maybe just a little bit different view of some of the things that they do, that's all.

Q. Can you speak to Anthony Jennings and his intangibles? Kind of seems like a very likable kid, a lot of leadership qualities as a true freshman.

COACH MILES: Well, you know what's interesting, what's always been a significant piece for me has been the grades. If you've got a young guy that comes in and handles his academics in a strong fashion, he then expects a lot of himself when he goes into the classroom as a learner. You know, I think he's got the kind of personality that a team would love to follow.

But he's sincere and works hard at it, and I think that's his greatest characteristic to be honest. He just is a good person, very quality student, bright mind, and enjoys the effort and energy of work.

Q. Since you've hired Cam Cameron, what do you think is the biggest improvement in his work with Zach? What has Zach improved on the most?

COACH MILES: Well, I think it's twofold. I think, one, Zach expects more out of himself going into his final campaign and is really accepting of coaching, and I think Cam is a very demanding coach and one that's knowledgeable, and it helps a guy that wants to compete at a very high level or execute at a very high level. He helps them do that. So it's really a great time in Mettenberger's career that Cam Cameron is on board.

Q. With the way TCU's defense is schemed, how do you feel like your inside run game can be successful against them going

into this week? What do you think allows you to have some success in that element of the offense?

COACH MILES: Yeah, it's an interesting piece. They have a -- it's a quality front, and it's like anything; if you're just going to attack them inside, it's an issue, so we're going to attack the flanks, we're going to put the ball on the perimeter, as well, and we're going to attack them across the front, not just inside.

I think that they have quality defensive linemen, and I think there's no specific weakness in any way. I know that's the attack that we have to have. We're stepping into an opener where you can't just line up and say, this is what we're going to do and let's do it. We have to show them the reasons why they need to cover down.

Q. A couple of questions on the front seven on defense. The linebacker rotation you alluded to, Lamin may be working some in the middle, DJ shows up as a starter here. How might that work? And also address the defensive end spot where Hunter and Allen are listed as either/or, how that's going going into the week?

COACH MILES: Jermauria Rasco and Hunter and Jordan Allen are -- those three guys are really, really just interchangeable. All three play, and they're very, very talented. They're different guys, but they're all three going to see time on Saturday.

I wouldn't be surprised if Tashawn Bower also did and would not be surprised if a Lewis Neal or somebody else didn't get some reps in there.

I like those first three, those three guys are -- they've been around. They understand what to do, and they can play. You had the linebacking corps -- well, I think D.J. Welter certainly is a guy that can step in and make plays and do the things that he needs to do to help at defense, and then that frees up Lamin to be an outside guy. With that being said, the outside could be handled by Kwon Alexander, could be handled by certainly Tahj Jones, a number of guys. So I think the rotation there is a quality one and one that benefits the speed that we have at linebacker.

Q. You mentioned Bower and Neal. Now that you've kind of laid out a game plan and released a depth chart, do you have a feel for how many of these 2013 guys might be out

on the field, whether it's special teams play or getting reps like those guys?

COACH MILES: Well, it's interesting, the guys that will play special teams in the first game will end up playing very significantly at mid-season, and some of those guys might even challenge to start late in the year, and that's kind of how it always goes. And then some of those guys are not necessarily ready to do that emotionally. They're not ready to learn at a very high rate, and they're not quite suited to step on the field that early, and so it needs to play out. It's not one of those things where by numbers you'd say, well, we'll definitely have 15, but I think we'll have a very significant number.

I think there's guys in this freshman class who are, one, talented enough to play, and two, really kind of wired such that they're going to go to the field. How many? It's tough to tell right now.

Q. With a couple of guys starting at new positions on the offensive line, a couple of guys stepping into starting roles for the first time, what kind of growing pains have there been the first couple weeks, if at all?

COACH MILES: Well, if you look at Hawkins at right tackle, he's a guy that was one of the first off the bench anyway and really played a lot, and in my opinion is very ready to play. Besides Trai Turner, who was one of the brighter guys that we have on the offensive line, so it really helps our right tackle, and I don't think there's been any dropoff because he was our starter really a year ago.

And then at center, we have Elliott Porter, who really is in his first starting time, but he's really been here for that time and just been through a number of reps at center, so we'll really getting good center play along with Ethan Pocic, who's a true freshman that came here in the spring.

Then the left side, there's Vadal Alexander and Lyle Collins, who were both here a year ago at some different positions. You're right, there's some new guys there, but they've really been playing well, and I like our offensive line.

Q. A lot has been made about all the new players on the defensive line. As a coach when you come into a game like this against a really good team to start it off and you have that kind of inexperience, how much of an issue is that for you? Does it affect how much you give them? Does it affect in any way what you do with your game plan because of that?



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COACH MILES: Well, the game plan, obviously we ask what we think our players can do. We have been fortunate to have a very good recruiting class, really annually, and so that the guys that we would expect to go to the field certainly we think can play. But certain guys come on at different times and at different speeds, and yeah, it takes some development, and it's not a -- it's not something that you necessarily have full grasp of until you get to the game.

But again, I think these guys are -- they were recruited specifically to take the spot. They've assumed that responsibility, and I think they'll play well. You know, they're in a program where they would anticipate playing well.

Q. In 2008 you had a freshman quarterback playing that season, wasn't always smooth sailing. Now that you have a guy like Anthony Jennings who could factor in, do you feel like you carry that with you, and how do you treat him if he comes to the field?

COACH MILES: I think Anthony Jennings, who really was with us in the spring, is probably further along than some of those true freshmen that had a chance to play, although Lee got some backup time, was really a red shirt before he played. I think you would find that Anthony Jennings would be suited to understand the offense pretty well, and we'd expect that if he goes into the game that he could execute anything that we asked him to do.

Q. I need a little help here because I may not have comprehended your first answer on Jeremy Hill. You said that there would be discipline but you didn't say what it was, right?

COACH MILES: Nor will I, and that's part of the same thing that I said.

Q. And then the second one, you said you would not be surprised if he made the trip or you would be surprised?

COACH MILES: I would not be surprised that he make the trip.

Q. Is he going to play Saturday?

COACH MILES: Again, the discipline will be internal, will be something that we will deal with as a team. No further comment.

Q. You talked about playing these

games and getting up to game speed, I guess, and the challenge that it offers. Just talk about your history in these games; does that help with this team going into this one specifically, that they have something to look at, maybe they're a part of a challenging game in the opener? Is that an advantage for y'all?

COACH MILES: Yeah, I think as a program we're used to taking these challenges on; North Carolina, Oregon. I think there's some excitement that builds. I think we enjoy playing in an environment that will be kind of charged and ready, and even though there will be some young guys and a first-time experience, the people that have worn those uniforms, they know how to operate in that, and if they look around they'll see some very calm heads looking forward to playing.

I think that that -- I think there's reasons to believe that this team will respond as LSU teams in the past have.

Q. Back to Jennings for a second, to clarify, are you looking at him just as a backup quarterback or as a guy that might come in and be part of the offense as a change of pace?

COACH MILES: Well, I --

Q. With the game on the line.

COACH MILES: I see him more so as a guy that would come in maybe if needed to. But we like Zach, and we kind of see Zach taking the majority of the snaps, and certainly I don't know that there's any quotient that Anthony Jennings is going in the game, but it's always nice to have a very quality quarterback in a position to go in and take snaps.

Q. Odell Beckham, Jr., now in his third year in the program. What are some of your expectations for him both as a receiver and then in the return game, as well?

COACH MILES: Yeah, I think he'll have a great year. I think he'll look forward to making bigger plays. He's a guy that returned two punts for touchdowns a year ago. I think he's a guy that really had a very good year a year ago but really could ask more of him, that he would ask more of himself. I think this is that kind of year. I think he's going to the field with a want to play big and play big in every game.

Q. I know we've asked a lot about Cam and the offense and everything. Is the dynamic between you and Cam different in the offensive

meeting room than it has been for you with other offensive coordinators that you've had, and do you anticipate that it'll be different during the game?

COACH MILES: Yeah, I think the differences would be the fact that I'm much more attuned to who he is as a person. I've been with him. I spent decades with him trailing him and as close friends. His family and our family are, again, closely associated.

I think there's a professional relationship, one that speaks to a level of responsibility, but there's a personal piece that just kind of allows you to know that the things that you would expect of him over years certainly will happen, and the things that he would expect of me over years certainly would happen. I think there's a trust factor maybe that's a very, very quality one for both.

Q. Along the lines of the offense, the trend in college football for the fast-paced offense, will your fans see a difference in LSU's offense in terms of its pace? And how many receivers do you need or want to play in this first game? How deep into the depth chart will guys will play receiver?

COACH MILES: I think there's a point where we're -- our pace would be standard. I think there's other times where we pick up the pace and hit it pretty fast. I think we have the ability to be a huddle team for the great majority of the game, and I think we have also that opportunity to be a no-huddle team. There will be some variance there.

The receiving corps, I like them. I think we would put a number of guys in the game. I like obviously Odell Beckham and Jarvis Landry, two guys who'd step in and put in the game immediately. But Travin Dural, Kadron Boone, John Diarse, really a couple other guys, really we would expect that we would play a number of receivers in this game.

Q. Do you and Coach McGaughey have a strategy on how you're handling Hairston and Delahoussaye?

COACH MILES: Well, we just know that Hairston has got a big leg, and if we need to take one of real length, he can go in. I've got to be honest with you: Trent Domingue, another kicker, is also kind of a guy that factors in. I wouldn't be surprised if Trent went in the game. There's a

hash or two, a spot where he's very exceptional. Again, I wouldn't be surprised. I think Delahoussaye will get the majority. I think Trent will probably be the next one in, and I wouldn't be surprised if he certainly got kicks in the first game. And then if we were taking a 50-plus, we'll probably take it with Hairston.

Q. (Inaudible.)

COACH MILES: Yeah, yeah, I really am. It's interesting, Trent is really not only a backup punter but is really vying for the extra point/field goal spot, as well, so we're fortunate.

Q. This being the season opener, are you a guy that wants to do and show just enough to win, or are you a guy that likes to get something out there for your own tape but also for other coaches? How do you approach this, and is this a conversation you have as a staff?

COACH MILES: In an opener, it's about winning the game, period. When you play TCU, you look at that film, you have great respect for what they've accomplished. You recognize that it's going to take your best effort, and you're not worried about what's seen by an opponent. When we get to the end of the game, ahead is the only position that we're worried about at this point.

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