

Tom Bradley Press Conference

November 22, 2011

Q. Tom, what has the win over Ohio State done for the mindset of the players?

COACH BRADLEY: I think it gave them a little bit more confidence, a little bit more belief. They knew it was a rough road playing Nebraska, Ohio State and now coming up with Wisconsin. A lot of their hard work paid off last week. They're excited to be able to go out and play for the championship game here for this side of the division.

Q. What are you going to remember about Devon Still, and can you just speak to how far he's come in one year with the program?

COACH BRADLEY: He's been playing great. But I'm going to remember him and thank him for his great leadership off the field with the players, the way he's handled the team, the way he's been taking those guys under his wing and making sure that everybody does the right thing.

And what happens is nobody gets to see that side of it. They just see him on the field. He spends a lot of time in that locker room off the field communicating, making sure we're on the right page.

He comes to me when he has questions and things that he feels needs to be addressed and we talk them over. I don't give in all the time, but I'm going to meet him where I think it's fair.

Q. Tom, I know you've only recently started to work with the players on offense in depth. But what sort of relationship do you have with Matt McGloin, and how do you think he's handled all this the last two weeks?

COACH BRADLEY: Right now with Matt, we have -- I'm obviously not with him all the time. I've spent some time with him. I'll continue to spend some time with him to get to know him better, as I will all the players on offense.

That's the one thing I've got to really catch up on. Last week I had some meetings with different players that came in my office so we can get on the same page. And I will talk to Matt as much as I possibly can.

Q. How do you like so far being head coach? Are you having any fun with it? Has it been a positive experience so far?

COACH BRADLEY: I've been having some fun. I think the players have been having more fun with it than I have. They kind of give it to me a lot more than I give it to them. I know there's certain things that they have fun with, and they tease me. It's been a good relationship. I've enjoyed that part of it.

I told them I wouldn't change. So they're enjoying that. It's been positive. I'm doing okay. It's better when you win than lose.

Q. You have a big week coming up, Thanksgiving week, plus a huge game on the road. Can you give us insight as a new head coach: Is there something that you think that you're going to have to maybe do a little differently this week to get the guys ready in the midst of all that?

COACH BRADLEY: Part of it is that they have no classes this week. So the first thing I had to do was institute the mandatory study hall for the freshmen and the players that are at risk right now. We've got some things because it is Thanksgiving; we have a Thanksgiving dinner planned for them. I'm going to take them to a movie on Wednesday night.

We'll see how that goes. But we're able -- the NCAA said we're allowed to give them free popcorn and a Coke. So that's a good start. We did rent the whole theater. It will just be us.

We'll try to do a lot of team functions later in the week. Right now letting them rest up and study and do whatever they have to do. Tuesdays are a big practice for us, big day of practice. We'll back off as we go during the week. We'll keep to our same schedule, the time we're going to leave. I've tried to keep the schedule as close to possible of what we do during the season. So we're used to it. They understand it. And we're going to stick to that routine.

Q. What movie are you going to see?

COACH BRADLEY: I think it's "The Immortals." I believe that's the one we're going to see.

Q. Another question about your life as head coach. For a week to ten days you were really the only Penn State representative that anyone saw publicly. Describe how much pressure there was for you doing all that and how you felt you handled it.

COACH BRADLEY: I don't think there wasn't a whole lot of pressure. I just answered the questions honestly and openly. If you do that, you don't have much pressure. Most guys know me. I talk from my heart. I talked to the team that way. I'm not a piece of paper guy. Everybody knows that about me. I say what I have to say and it wasn't bad.

Q. Tom, if Joe was still coaching the team, how likely is it that you would have had the same offensive game plan last week?

COACH BRADLEY: I can't answer that question.

Q. It seems like there's just been one issue after another for this team to battle with this season, be it the last two weeks, the quarterback controversy, losing (Michael) Mauti and things like that. I'm wondering how impressed you are with this team and where it's at, all things considered, one win away from a big championship game?

COACH BRADLEY: All I've tried to do -- everything that's arisen, I've tried to be completely transparent, good and bad. We've talked about it as a squad. We've talked about it with individuals. And my door's open. They've come in, if they have questions, and that's the best I can do is just make sure that I answer the things that are on their mind.

Q. Luke Fickell said that he was surprised and maybe they weren't prepared for the Wildcat. Bret Bielema said yesterday that they've seen the Wildcat, know how to defend against it. They're working on it. Are there any more surprises in the trick bag that can be pulled up this late in the season, or is it just a case of you're executing better than they do out of base formations?

COACH BRADLEY: We'll have a couple of things maybe we haven't done in the past. We'll put them in. We'll take a look at in the next couple of days, and we'll have a game plan going into the game. How much we use certain things -- last week the Wildcat was in early. It was in our script early. I think it was in two or three times for the first 11 plays. So each week's different.

How much we use, what we have, will be debated over the next couple of days. And we probably won't decide exactly what we're going to end up doing until Thursday.

Q. It seems like a lot of -- the last couple of weeks you've talked about empowering the players, having them come together, make key decisions. Wonder if you can talk a little bit more about your philosophy how you've handled this team the last couple of weeks.

COACH BRADLEY: The first thing I've done, I've been myself. I've been totally honest with them. We have a good dialogue going. I don't always give in. But if I feel when they come to me, if there's a situation that they've got a good point... I'm not a dictator; they've got good suggestions, too. It's their team. I'm here to help them be the best they can be. So we work it out what's best for everybody. We talk it over.

There's a good dialogue going, explaining to each other why we're doing what we're doing, the reasoning behind it. They have good suggestions too. As I said, we're all in this together. So we're going to work it out that way and continue to work it out that way. And I feel if I just keep making sure that everybody understands, whether good or bad. And I've done some things -- I try to go to the locker room -- maybe this is a long answer.

I try to go to the locker room. I spend time in the academic room. I spend time in the weight room. I try to get around them. I want to hear what their complaints are. (When) you don't coach a position, you're not scrambling to get there by 2:45 (p.m.) with all your notes and making sure you're getting everything put in.

I have time to go down, anything that's discipline related, whether it's from a guy that didn't pay a parking ticket, I handle it myself. I just don't post it.

Last week we had an incident where some of the players were concerned about why we were traveling certain players.

So I had a meeting, the scout team people. And I said: "Here's why we're doing what we're doing." They understood it. I just try to be as transparent as possible. My door's open. I've had instances now where I've given them my number and they've called my number.

A couple of guys got stranded, said they were going to be a little late. They felt comfortable, just called me. I understood what had happened. They're catching on to that, too. Guys understand, if they're going to be late, they call in.

One guy had his session with his practicum that was running late. He called in. I get the message. They all know my number. My phone's on 24 hours a day. And I'm pretty sure they'll start crank calling, but right now they haven't.

Q. I know you answered this postgame, but can you talk about how you came about the decision to go with the Wildcat on Saturday?

COACH BRADLEY: Basically, I knew they (offensive coaches) had talked about it earlier in the summertime. I think around Game 6 they even toyed with maybe putting it in. One of the things that led to that decision was the fact that I had just watched Bill Belton on our side of the ball run that for 10 days (during preparations for Nebraska).

He was for Nebraska, (Taylor) Martinez, the quarterback. And when I watched him run it the way, the smoothness, you could just see he had done it in high school. He had a real command for it. Plus, he had practiced it 10

days. I knew Curtis Drake had done it in high school. I watched Curtis play. Curtis can obviously throw the ball and do some things. So can Billy.

So we decided to take a look at it. We just put in certain things off of it and we can expand that a little bit each week if we want to. And that's what really led to the decision. I thought we needed to change up, something to change the tempo of the game that would maybe -- they'd now have to take a look and say, "gee, that looks good, but what if they come up with the option?" It changes everybody's defense.

They've now got to account -- all your zone blitzes change. A lot of your stunts change. All the things you're doing change based on the fact: "What do they have off of it?" The same way we would be on defense, too. So that's how we came to the decision.

Q. As a follow-up to that, without giving away specifics, how broad is your package with the Wildcat? Without -- don't have to give away anything.

COACH BRADLEY: Depends. What's the definition of "broad"? I mean, I'm obviously not going to get into the whole depth of that thing and be dishonest, but we have other things that we can do off of it. Whether we elect to use them...I think there's a time and a place for everything in the game.

And it does give us a chance to -- people now have to prepare for that. They've got to take time away and prepare. Just like coaching defense, we see one play of one thing. We've got to practice it. We've got to take time and practice it. Because we know there's other options off of that play. So what are they? So now we have to practice those other options. It's just things forcing you to practice.

Q. Have you decided yet if you will be seeking the permanent full-time job here? And the second part of that, with so many people around the country thinking Penn State should clean house, have you given any thought about whether that would work against you as a potential candidate?

COACH BRADLEY: I certainly would want the permanent job here. Secondly, I'm not concerned about what other people think. I'm worried about what our administration thinks and what the people that are going to make that decision think.

Right now I'm only worried about -- I really don't have time to -- I've learned that through the course of my lifetime. I only worry about the things I can control. And right now I'm worried about making sure I do the best job for these players.

So if I don't -- if I end up not getting the job, I can look back and say I gave everything I had to help those guys win a championship. And some day down the road, no matter how many years down the road they'll say, "hey, Coach worked for us until the end."

Sometimes I would much rather maybe have their respect knowing that not only myself, but all the coaches down there, trainers, doctors, strength coaches, did everything they could to help them reach one of their dreams, which is to be on the championship team.

Q. Two guys were on the outs of this team at the beginning of the game: Stephfon Green and Anthony Fera. They've both been key to your success. I wonder if you can talk about how far they've come?

COACH BRADLEY: I sure can. Glad you asked the question. Proud of Anthony Fera...46, 43-yarder, big kicks, right down the barrel (vs. Ohio State). His punts, as good as you can do. I think they started on the 1, the 7, 11, long fields. Anthony had a lot to do with it. Got the last one away.

All of our phases have to be in unison. I think people forget; they look at them individually. They all play together. I thought our offense, by getting just a couple first downs, was a successful drive. We now move the ball. We punted. Kept them in long field. And we got some turnovers on defense and we all work together.

Stephfon Green, he was in the doghouse early. He's not in my doghouse. Everybody got a clean slate. But I've told them: There is no strike one, strike two, strike three with me. There's only one strike. And he's done everything I've asked him to do. He's worked hard. He's been great with the team. He's been a leader. So he's done everything I've asked him to do.

Q. With everything, all the things that these kids have been through, Thanksgiving here, how much have you encouraged them to lean on their families in terms of talking out their feelings or with you, has there been a lot more communication among the players about the adversity that they've been through?

COACH BRADLEY: It's interesting, the players at times...I was in the equipment room the other day and some of the players are coming up to the equipment managers and asking how they're doing. They've been more concerned with how we're doing. I think they're a resilient group. They have stuck together. They've unified from this.

They like coming to practice even more now maybe because there's no distractions. They come down, it's just football. They're having fun with each other. I don't know how much they lean on their families. Their coaches, anytime they want us, we're available.

Q. To the field, your short yardage offense, is that something that you're trying to address the last couple of games, it's maybe not been there in some situations?

COACH BRADLEY: Absolutely. We talked about it. I'm pretty much -- pretty sure you're alluding to the goal line offense. We've got to be able to make first downs in crucial situations. We've got to get things done, address the (Andrew) Szczerba situation jumping off sides. We need one first down, first and ten. We've got a shot, first and 15. So we've got to be mentally smart down on the goal line.

I told the players before the game everybody's got to man up. That includes me. I told them on second down, I said "it's done. If it's fourth down, you're going for it. I'm not going to flinch."

And I thought that was a chance to put the game away. I also felt, worst case scenario, we could hold them in there, cut their offense in half, get good field position again because it was a possession game. I felt the defense was playing well. I wasn't sure they could score a touchdown and go the length of the field.

But that's why that decision was made. And I wanted to let them know I have confidence in them. It didn't work. I think they know where I'm coming from now.

Q. Can you talk about Wisconsin and the challenges that they present especially at home, and also talk about (Russell) Wilson, their quarterback as well?

COACH BRADLEY: Wilson? Wow. You know, anytime you're completing 80 percent of your pass, 25 touchdowns, three interceptions, he's about as efficient a quarterback as I've seen in a long time. Decision-making, excellent; everything he's done for that football team.

Obviously, his leadership skills have been unquestionable to walk in there as a guy coming from another team and be able to take that team like he has, he must have tremendous leadership skills.

They're a hard team to defend in the fact that they have -- if you look at the games we've broken down, the five games that we broke down, they were only in third and 10 plus a total of seven times. There's seven to 10, maybe eight times. So there's always efficient in downs of third -- the worst case scenario for them is third and five. That's a long third down for them. They're very efficient on offense. You always see them in thirds and twos and threes, and they hold the carrot. Great wideouts. Offensive line is dominating. Big, strong physical Wisconsin group.

(Montee) Ball is averaging seven yards a carry, has, what, 30 touchdowns? They're hard to defend because they're not one-dimensional. They have (Nick) Toon on the outside. A dynamic wide receiver. No. 4 (Jared Abbrederis) is an efficient receiver. They have their two tight ends. They have their blockers, tough and physical. It's your typical Wisconsin offense. It's been that way since Barry Alvarez came in, when Barry started coaching up there.

Defensively, they're sixth in the country in total defense; sixth in scoring defense. Third in pass defense. So we've got our hands full. Arguably they've got a front four, they rotate like we do a lot. They're sound fundamentally. They've got two really solid, big, tough linebackers inside. Their secondary is by far the best we've played all year. Kicking game is solid.

It's a good football team. They've lost two games both -- one was the last play of the game, the other one is pretty close to the last play of the game. Playing up there, tough place to play, but a great place to play. Exciting. We've been to Columbus, the Horseshoe.

And I do want to address what happened at Ohio State. And I take my hat off to the class of their fans, for them to cheer our team as we came off the field for warm-ups with a standing ovation, big league. Big league, class from the Ohio State fans. And I thank them; it meant a lot. And they should be awful proud of their team and their university.

So it will be a great place. I know they're going to play Jump Around. I get it. I've been there before. Great college football. Camp Randall. Good thing we're playing for a championship. So, it doesn't get any better than that.

Q. Going back to when Matt (McGloin) was a walk-on playing scout team and you're on the other side and earlier this year he's shown kind of a grit and determination and a confidence. Can you talk about that progression and maybe?

COACH BRADLEY: When he started on as a walk-on for us?

Q. And all the way through the beginning of the season, the challenges he's had and maintained who he is?

COACH BRADLEY: We first saw Matt, he was on the scout team. He walked on. He was really good; quick release. He threw the ball. Did a good job. Obviously he's been through a lot of trial and error like every quarterback. Everybody goes through that. Getting better.

I've talked to him a little bit about his leadership. I said: "You better start hanging around those offensive linemen a little bit more, because they're your bread and butter." Just like I told Anthony Fera, "you better start hanging around the team, because if you miss a couple, I'm going to take a vote whether you're coming home with us or not. You might need a couple of friends." That's not bad from Columbus. You can thumb it, maybe make it in 10 hours. But Wisconsin is a little bit different; it will take 24 hours to get home (laughter).

And Matt and I have talked. I've talked to (Rob) Bolden. I've talked to them all. And I told them what I expect. And I think we'll continue to further that relationship. He doesn't know me very well.

I'm on the defensive side. I've always been not around those players as much. So I'm feeling my way through this in a very short period of time.

Q. What's the status of Silas Redd, especially being a short week. Got anybody else that's injured?

COACH BRADLEY: Our injury report -- we're banged up, bumped up, as you would expect. Silas only played 14 plays last week. We did not use him a lot. We've got a fine stable of backs that can step in with Stephfon (Green) and (Brandon) Beachum and (Curtis) Dukes. We plan on not hitting him (Redd) again this week. We will not hit Silas again this week. Hopefully we can get him healed up a little bit.

Q. Galen Hall has come out with some public support for you getting the job moving forward. He says he hopes you get it. Some of the other coaches, the assistants, say they would like to stick around. Have they talked to you privately about this? And what does it mean to have that kind of public support for them?

COACH BRADLEY: It's awful nice. Really we get in there, we're working. Most of our time is spent how can we help these guys; it's all about them. It's their team. I mean, that's all we do is -- I don't worry about it. I said that stuff all takes care of itself whenever the time is right. Whenever the administration thinks the time's right.

As I've said in this press conference before, players play, coaches coach, administrators administrate. My job is to coach as best I can these players. I promised that to their parents. We went in recruited them to their high school coaches, communities, and friends in that area, when they selected Penn State.

I'm not going to back away from that promise or any challenges academically. Our slogan has been "the expectations are the expectations."

And that is academically. I know they try to test me. I get it. And we'll work it out.

Q. At the press conference where you were introduced, you implied that you had been told not to maybe show as much of a sense of humor with obvious good reason. How difficult is it to balance that now because it's obviously a big part of who you are in terms of communicating, but also being respectful for some of the difficult things that have happened?

COACH BRADLEY: It's been a challenge for me because there are times that I do like to have some fun in a lot of different situations. I like to try to understand the whole process, the feelings of everybody that's involved in this whole thing and be respectful of everything. So I hope one of these days I can get back to being a little more, whatever the word is, I'm not sure. You know me.

Q. Has there been any more communication with Joe (Paterno)?

COACH BRADLEY: No, no communication with Coach. I guess Friday, as I said, Jay came over to me on the plane, explained to me what had happened. His brother, Scott, had released a press conference about Joe's condition.

One of the things, nowadays, that's a challenge is everybody, they all have cell phones. So when they get off (the plane) that cell phone, there's information as they get on the bus. I made sure I addressed it. Because you have to remember a lot of false information also goes out that I wanted to make sure they were hearing exactly what we knew, exactly what I knew so they could put to rest some of the rumors that go on about different things.

Q. Dukes looked pretty good early, and he hasn't played much recently. Is there any reason for that or you just have too many guys there?

COACH BRADLEY: I've talked to Curtis about that. He is going to be a good back. Some of it has been based on ball security, which this is a big thing for us. We can't afford turnovers. And I've talked to Curtis about that. But he's going to be a good back some day and he's going to get his chance soon.

Q. There's been some reports about bowl game possibilities that maybe certain bowls would not want to invite Penn State. What would you tell officials from bowl games about what they would get if they were to invite

Penn State, the players, everything that you guys could bring to the table for bowls that might be concerned about what the scandal could bring?

COACH BRADLEY: I think, first of all, I have not heard that from anybody. Our administration has assured us, Dr. Erickson has talked to people that that's not the case. Some of the bowl people have personally stopped me to say that. All I can tell you it's a great group of players, a great group of young men who have done everything we've asked them and they're not a part of this investigation.

Q. You said you made sure everybody has your number, make sure you're as transparent as possible, keeping the guys informed of what's going on. Have they still come to you about things outside of football these last few days, or is this stuff they're asking you more about the day-to-day football stuff?

COACH BRADLEY: No, absolutely. They all have questions. That's why we're here. They have questions about a lot of different things. They're still young men. They're growing up. They would like to come -- every once in a while they just want to sit in your office and talk. And that's okay. Because there's some things on their minds that they just want to get out in the open and from anything, it's anything that I think a lot of us shouldn't forget what it was like when you were 17, 18, 19 years old.

When things that were so important to you at that time, now we look back and say that it wasn't that important. But they have questions from all different standards, "what do you see in my future, what type of player do you think I am?" All I try to do is be as honest as I can. That doesn't mean I'm right.

That doesn't mean I have the answer. But at least when they leave there, I don't want to play with their life, I don't want anyone playing with my life. Just tell me straight up what you think. At least they know what they're dealing with when they leave my office.

Q. You talked about the sportsmanship they displayed at the Ohio State. Have you heard proactive messages from Wisconsin?

COACH BRADLEY: Yes. Barry Alvarez called me the other day. Barry asked me. He said they would do something in memory of the victims and the situation. But he wanted to make sure that we were okay if we just went up and played football. And they would handle the rest.

Q. There's a report in the Wall Street Journal today about discussions that Coach Paterno had with the administration regarding discipline between '05 and '07 clashes, I guess they termed it. Is that anything you want to comment on?

COACH BRADLEY: I haven't seen the Wall Street article yet.

Q. A little earlier you talked about the doghouse and having a clean slate. Derrick Thomas is a guy synonymous with the doghouse. What's his status? He hasn't played in the last few games.

COACH BRADLEY: He's played on special teams; been on trips with us. Derrick is doing well. There's a couple of things that he's -- I've wanted him to get straightened out academically. And then I'm going to hold him to that. But he's working hard. He's done a great job on the scout team. You'll see some more of Derrick.

Q. A lot of people come to you for advice, sounding board, things like that. Considering what you've been thrown into here, who do you go to?

COACH BRADLEY: I have a good support staff around me. I have good people that have been a part of my life that have been trustworthy friends and people that I respect, too, that if I wanted to run something by them or get a different opinion, I certainly can.

Q. Yesterday the Trustees appointed an investigator to look into the Sandusky case. And one of the things that they mentioned that they would be looking at would be the control environment at the university. Do you think that the environment of the football athletic program needs to be changed given the comments from the Trustees yesterday of a control environment?

COACH BRADLEY: That's not my decision. That's up to them. They're going to investigate and they'll make their decisions based on what their findings are.

Q. All distractions aside, you're one game away from your goal of playing in the Big Ten Championship Game. What does that speak for your players that they're able to persevere through, maybe one step away from Indianapolis?

COACH BRADLEY: Like I said, they've done everything we've asked them to do. They've eliminated the distractions. They've hung tough. It's been a heck of a group. There's some great leadership on this group for a lot of different people. And that has to filter down from the top to the bottom. They've been practicing well.

I've been impressed with -- a lot of the times in these situations we have some guys wavering. But at our practice, people are surprised who come to our practice how well they're performing and their spirits.