December 4, 2010

Oklahoma – 23
Nebraska - 20

An interview with:

COACH STOOPS
LANDRY JONES
KENNY STILLS
TRAVIS LEWIS
PRYCE MACON

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Coach Stoops and some of his players will be coming in in a couple of minutes. Coach, congratulations on the win and your thoughts on tonight's game?

COACH STOOPS: Thank you. I appreciate it. I guess I first want to start by just congratulating Nebraska again on an excellent season and a well-played, hard-fought game tonight. As I said all week, Bo Pelini and his whole staff have done a marvelous job in developing that team here in the last few years. Very physical, tough, well-coached team. Played with great discipline, and that was evident tonight.

I'm equally, of course, not equally, but just really proud of our players the way they stepped up and made plays. Especially through the second half. Answered the bell. We were down 17-0, and kept playing ball. Went in at halftime and told our guys, look, defensively in particular, we're not far off. We gave up two run plays. They had the one run popped in the first quarter, and then one at the end of the half.

Outside of that, we were playing well. And I knew, I said, listen, all we've got to do is stick to it in the second half and we're going to be in good shape. So be positive about what you're doing.

Offensively, we made some big plays. Stuck with it. It was tough going early, but then we caught our rhythm, and caught them in a few things, got them a few big plays that got things rolling a little bit.

So it was a good team win, and it's pretty special to have the last championship and to add to the number we already have is really pretty special for sure. Again, these players deserve the credit for it.

Q. Landry, this is for you. Obviously, this is a pretty accomplished secondary coming in. How were you able to put up the kind of numbers you did against them?

LANDRY JONES: They play a zone-match kind of thing. So we had great play coming in. Our coaches did a great job scheming for them and things like that. Got to give it to the people around me. They got open. They beat their guy that was covering them. Nebraska has obviously a great defense so they do a lot of good things. Did a lot of good things tonight.

But we were fortunate enough to make a lot of big plays on them. Kind of just our receivers. Our receivers did a great job beating the manned coverage.

Q. With all the stakes involved here, was this about as good a defensive second half or half of football that you've played all year?

COACH STOOPS: Sure. And, again, I'll throw in a good part of the first half. To hold these guys to 143 rushes for 145 yards with what they've been doing all year, shredding people. It was a great defensive effort.

Compliment the players. They tackled well. Outside of the one or two big plays, they were in position. Again, I thought that the coaches, Brent did an excellent job in working in just a short time, working on our 50-front again. That really showed up, and these guys played well. The players made plays. Got a lot of pressure as

well. Forced a lot of turnovers, and they did a lot of good things.

Q. You've won a few titles over the years. Talk about how special this is this year with your group of players?

COACH STOOPS: Yeah, it's really neat. In this game with the stakes as they were, and the last one here at least for now, you know, and just to do it again recently. Just to have this one for these set of players with the older guys that are here. Not many older ones here right now, which is evident by the whole team.

There are just a whole bunch of young freshmen and sophomores that are really just special players. Hopefully we can keep chasing them.

Q. Talk about your receivers today. They had a big game against what some people considered the best secondary in college football. Made a bunch of plays for you especially there down the stretch.

COACH STOOPS: They really did. And my compliments to Nebraska's secondary and Bo and their structure and how they played. They are difficult to work the ball against. They do an excellent job. So we're proud of the guys that we have. Landry did a super job, then Cameron Kenney, again, steps up and had a huge night.

The main stays, Kenny Stills and Ryan Broyles for sure. All different guys stepped up and had their time.

When you're playing these guys, it takes all of them. You can't just go to a couple of guys. They make you work. And that's, again, give Kevin Wilson, and all our offensive coaches a lot of credit, too, for orchestrating it, and having enough things to go to and enough ways to try to work to shake some guys open, because it is not easy.

Q. For Pryce and then Coach, I hope you'll follow up. Pryce, talk about your game. We had you down for five sacks. Talk about your individual performance. How your defense came through and played so well in the second half. And Coach, I wish you would talk about Pryce and his development this season.

PRYCE MACON: Man, I didn't know it was that many, but I'll take it. But, hey a, coaches they got us ready to play. They've been telling us to finish. You know, we just had to go do it. There was nothing else to do but to finish and get that victory.

COACH STOOPS: Again, Pryce did a great job all year. We are proud of him. He's been through a lot of adversity, some multiple injuries, but kept coming back, and he's rewarded for it. He's really played well here down the stretch. To play so well in the Big 12 Championship game is something that I'm sure he'll remember forever.

Some of it was blitzes. Some of it was our 50 front. Whether it was coverage, made them hold the ball and Pryce gets to them. Some of it some blitzes where we got to them quicker. But we got a lot of pressure and that was a big factor.

Q. In a game like this your offense has to persevere somewhat because Nebraska has a great defense and they're going to make some plays too. Could you talk about how your team did that, and Kenny, if you could follow up afterwards?

COACH STOOPS: Yeah, it was really exciting to see the maturity of us being down 17-0, no one being rattled, just keep working it. Keep playing football. It's a long night. So nothing is decided.

They did. They just kept chipping away at it, chipping away at it, and making plays when they had opportunities. And we really seized some good momentum in the second half and held on to it to finish.

KENNY STILLS: I just felt like we got down early, and nobody's heads went down. Everybody had the confidence that we were going to go back out there and make this a game. Like everybody else has been talking about, we've been talking about finishing and staying strong and going out there and playing a great second half, and that's what we did.

Q. Pryce, I've got to get more out of you. You're a fifth year guy. You had hardly played at all before this year, defensive end, not defensive tackle. Talk about your career. I know you've got another game to go, but your whole development, and of course this game?

PRYCE MACON: I'm not going to say it's been easy. But parents wouldn't let me quit, friends wouldn't let me quit. You know, I just kept grinding and God had a plan for me. I'm just glad that I stayed and stuck it out and kept fighting, because, hey, I couldn't see this going any better

than this.

So I'm happy for my decision for staying and working.

Q. You and Landry, if you will, you've often talked about the fact that you've had several different quarterbacks win these Big 12 Championships. I think this is the sixth different guy you've had. Could you comment on that, Coach, and then Landry?

COACH STOOPS: Sure. We are proud of the fact that it isn't any one guy. It's a team effort, and to be able to come back and win it multiple times with a lot of different players in different years is, you know, it just speaks to the consistency, I guess, and the overall quality of play through the years.

But it's always a team effort. But Landry had another special game. When you look at the quality of defense he was going up against.

LANDRY JONES: I just think I'm blessed just to be able to play this game and to win championships and things like that. God has been really good to me this year and blessed me with a lot of wins and allowed me to do some things on the field.

You know, so I'm just thankful. I'm thankful for the opportunity just to get to play here. Follow after, of course, like Sam, everybody knows about Sam, and Coach Heupel, and people like that. To be able to follow them and win championships like this. That's why a lot of people are attracted to Oklahoma because you know in this century, not in this century, in this decade we've won most of the Big 12 Championships here. So just thankful for the opportunity.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk about, just you and your staff, what this feels like. You talked about how young you are to come out after a down year last year and to win another Big 12 Championship, just how satisfying it is to see your program rebuild in that fashion?

COACH STOOPS: You know, I was really pleased at how we finished last year to play so well at the end of the year. It gave you a strong feeling that this was coming, or it could come. Even though we fought through all the injuries we did a year ago, we weren't far off. We had character. Our guys got better through the year. Showed improvement.

A lot of young guys that weren't supposed to play by the end of the year were playing well. When you look at the Oklahoma State game and beating Stanford in the Sun Bowl.

So you felt that you took some big steps to lead into this. Then you put all of those guys back a year ago with the quality of young players and freshmen that we added, and they just kept growing through the year and getting better and better.

It's very gratifying and exciting to see so many young players play so well and to mesh so well with the older guys that we have.

Q. What did you specifically see on the fake punt that looked like it was coming? You got the timeout right before it started. Did you see something?

COACH STOOPS: Saw a different formation in there, they're usually in, and saw the motion start. As soon as I saw the motion start, I called a time out to be sure that we had our defense out there.

Q. Can you talk about the decision-making process of Landry all night long? It seems even when he had time in the pocket he didn't try to force it, and always made sure to throw it away when he had to?

COACH STOOPS: He did a great job of that. They are in tight coverage most of the time, so, you know, if you're throwing a ball off balance a little late, little behind, there is a great chance of it being tipped or intercepted.

So there are sometimes you've either got to eat it, throw it away or just give up on it. And he did a nice job in all those decision making times. And he came up with some clutch throws under pressure a few times and on the run. Found some guys late that really made a difference. The one we had 3rd and 20-something, and he picked up all but maybe a yard of it. Then we pick up the first down after that.

Q. Your interception in the end zone, they were in a situation where they could at least go up 20, maybe 24. Talk about how big a play that was just in general the defense and the pressure that you got on the quarterback?

TRAVIS LEWIS: It all starts with our defensive line. They did a great job getting pressure on it. And they ran a route that we expected to come and kind of baited them into throwing it. He threw across his body, and his

hands ain't what they used to be, but God gave me the gift and I caught it. You know, so it was a huge play.

Q. Can you just describe the emotions that you felt tonight as you guys won this championship?

TRAVIS LEWIS: This is a great feeling. This is my third Big 12 Championship, and this one's definitely the sweetest. In the fashion that we won this game in. We always pride ourselves in defense wins championships. I felt like we got rattled a little early, gave up some big plays.

But we never panicked. We came right back in and shut down a pretty great offense and pretty great quarterback.

So defensive line played lights out. I give the game ball, all the game balls to them because those guys got so much pressure on the quarterback and made him really uncomfortable. So this is definitely the sweetest.

Q. What does it feel like to be going back to the BCS Bowl?

TRAVIS LEWIS: We're on a one-game winning streak, so I want you all to note that. This is huge. We've got to finish. We've been talking all season about finishing. We're on a pretty hot streak right now. I think all the players are satisfied that we finished strong.

But it's not over yet. To cap this season off to win a Bowl game, that would be awesome.

Q. Landry and Kenny, talk about those two big pass plays in the first half. Looked like on the second one you ad libbed it a little bit. Kenny came across the middle of the field, and you guys seemed to be on the same wave length there.

LANDRY JONES: Well, the first touchdown pass was just a post-route. And Kenny got behind him. Kind of laid it out there for him, and he used his speed to run past everybody and made a great grab. Took it into the end zone.

Then that one, it was kind of a stutter route, we were trying to go by him. That guy jammed him up a little bit, and I saw him break inside and put the ball out there for him and he made a great play. I thought he got in the end zone, but I guess the referees didn't.

KENNY STILLS: Yeah, Landry described that pretty well. The second one, we ran a little stutter move, and I figured I couldn't go outside. So I slipped him inside, and Landry and I happened to be on the same page. I thought I was in the end zone, too, but obviously not.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the win. Good luck in the Bowl game.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports