

Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

Tuesday, July 9, 2024
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA
Allegiant Stadium



Texas Tech Red Raiders Joey McGuire

Press Conference

JOEY MCGUIRE: It's great to see everybody. When we're here, it means we're that much closer to college football. And, man, I can't wait.

I'd like to welcome Arizona, Arizona State, Utah and my good friend Deion Sanders to the Big 12 and Colorado Buffaloes. Known Deion for a long time. Excited that he's in the conference.

It's exciting time to be in the Big 12. I think this conference is as good as anywhere in the country from top to bottom. I think every single week you're going to have to play well, and you're going to have to have your team ready to go.

It's exciting time to be a Red Raider. Fixed to finish up a \$250 million facility build. I think you guys that have come to Texas Tech before who have been and seen our stadium will be blown away with the south end zone and then with the adidas partnership, with adidas and Patrick Mahomes, and it's a really good time to be a Red Raider.

I'm excited about this football team. I'm proud of the guys in the offseason and the summer and what they've done so far.

Q. Obviously Texas Tech has a very big lineage of great players. How have you managed to kind of attack on the culture to make Texas Tech just tough across the board? And in addition, how has that kind of melded with the alumni of the past, like let's say Wes Welkers, Dat Nguyens, Crabtrees. How have they embraced the new style that you brought to Texas Tech football?

JOEY MCGUIRE: The alumni has been absolutely incredible. Wes Welker came out and spoke to our team this year and spoke at our coaches clinic. Zach Thomas came out and spoke to the team. The alumni and the past players, they know that the doors are always open.

The one thing -- you asked about the roster. The one thing going into year three, this is the deepest that we've been. We have 142 college starts in the offensive line. My very first year we played three defensive tackles. I had two defensive tackles that played more snaps than anybody else in the country. We feel like we have seven defensive tackles that can play in the game.

And so I think the one thing, the roster has really changed. We have more talent and more depth. Just the style of play and what we believe in we've embraced, Texas Tech and west Texas, and I think the alumni really appreciate that.

Q. Last couple of seasons you've had some turmoil, some early losses in the season, but then some really strong finishes that culminated in a bowl victory. What do you credit those strong finishes to, and what are things you're trying to do to start faster out of the gate to start the season?

JOEY MCGUIRE: That's a great question. That's the question we've been searching throughout this offseason because we played well at home and we played well late. We're 8-2 in November and December games, and we've got to continue that because we've got some really tough road games late this season.

I think the biggest thing is you contribute to being able to play and keep playing throughout the season is our culture. We have a really healthy locker room. Our guys love each other, care about each other and will really step in and keep playing for each other. So I think that's a big part of it.

To get to a fast start, the great thing is we've got five of our first seven games are in Lubbock, Texas, and everybody knows it is a really tough place to play in Jones AT&T Stadium. So we've got a great opportunity to get started on a fast note, and we need to do that this year to get going in the right direction.

Q. You mentioned Patrick Mahomes in the opening there. We've seen the imagery on the field and the



adidas relationship now. Can you expand more on the relationship between your program and Patrick Mahomes?

JOEY MCGUIRE: I really would -- I don't think anybody in here can come up with a guy at the level that he's playing at, the best quarterback in the world, and doing what he's doing whenever it comes to the university and is going to continue to do that.

I always tell everybody we're playing in Lawrence, Kansas, last year, and probably the large majority of the NFL and their bye week are going somewhere to take a break, and he's on the sideline in Lawrence, Kansas, watching us play the Jayhawks. The guy just absolutely loves Texas Tech.

What's cool is being able to join adidas and Patrick Mahomes, he gets to wear the double T every single day without any tape over any other logo. And I just really credit him for what he's done. He's one of the guys literally that texts me, because his number changed, texts me: Coach, what do you need? He's one of those guys that's always there for us.

Q. Having the number one recruiting class in 2024 in the Big 12, how soon will we see the impact from these players, including five-star wide receiver Micah Hudson?

JOEY MCGUIRE: You'll see, week one, Micah Hudson, a couple of coaches have talked about generational player. Like he is really special. He's extremely athletic. But his maturity level and the love of football and just the love of the locker room, I haven't been around a lot of people like that. But one thing about that class, I'm really excited.

We have three safeties that all ran in the state track meet. They've come in, and I'm anxious to see them. They didn't go through spring because they were still in high school. So I'm anxious to see Malik, Oliver and Peyton.

We had some guys that did come in along with Micah, Will Hammond had an absolutely incredible spring. To give you an idea, he threw 25 touchdowns and only four interceptions in every competitive throw in the spring. I've never seen a freshman do that.

And he was with the 1s, 2s, and 3s, so that's not just saying that he was with guys that have the same amount of playing time at the college level. He did it all levels. Really excited about that class, but you'll see Micah August 31st.

Q. You brought up Deion Sanders' name. What is it that Coach Prime brings to this conference and CU's return to the Big 12?

JOEY MCGUIRE: I'm a Texan and grew up in the old Southwest Conference and the old Big 12, so it's great to see Colorado back in the right conference.

Man, I love Deion. I always tell everybody, I coached Bucky, his oldest son, in high school. He's honestly the best dad of a player that I've ever had.

He was absolutely incredible. But what he brings, he's who he is. He doesn't make any excuses, and he doesn't take anything back. He's going to say what he believes in and say what he thinks.

He brings a lot of excitement that I think Colorado is going to be really good. They've added a lot of talent and they do have one of the best quarterbacks in the nation. Whenever you've got a quarterback like his son that can make plays with his arm and his feet, you've got a chance to win games.

I think it's going to be a lot of fun. I am glad that he gets to come to Lubbock first before I have to go to Boulder. I think that's going to be a big game late in the season, and I'm excited to see him.

Q. How will new offensive line Coach Clay McGuire do in developing this offensive line that has quite a few new pieces to it?

JOEY MCGUIRE: That was a huge hire, number one, to get Clay back to Lubbock. He's got a lot of experience and very similar offense. But what I was excited about and what he's shown exactly who he is, he's an absolutely incredible teacher. And that's the one thing that I think we were needing, somebody that could really develop our offensive line, not just young guys, but whenever you're adding guys from the portal and they're learning a new offense, you've got to have somebody that's a great teacher, and that's the one thing Clay has done. He's done a great job.

Really excited. He was a guy that we were looking at whenever I first got hired. It didn't work out. But it's good to have him home.

Q. What do you want Texas Tech football to be most known for, and how close are you all to that?

JOEY MCGUIRE: I think the biggest thing, you know, being the toughest, hardest working, most competitive team, but it starts with being tough. If you're going to win games on the road, you've got to be a tough football team. If you're going to win games late November and December, you've got to be a tough football team.



We're growing -- we're trending in that direction. We have not been tough enough to win games on the road. That's been one of our biggest Achilles heels, consistently being able to win on the road. It's tough to do that in this conference, but if we're going to be in the mix, if we're going to be talked about at the end of the year, playing in the Big 12 Championship, we've got to go to Iowa State. We've got to go to TCU, and we've got to go to Oklahoma State.

So we've got to find ways to win games on the road. I'm fired up. We're going to get tested right off the bat against Washington State. It's going to be a huge game. Mike Leach is getting inducted into their Hall of Fame. So it's going to be a big game for Texas Tech and Washington State.

But it's tough. I want to be known as a tough football team that's very physical, that's going to play you every single snap.

Q. So you've had some guys speak very highly about you today when it comes to your energy and embodying that. So how do you give that away to your players? How do you allow them to just be themselves at all times and be just like you?

JOEY MCGUIRE: I think the biggest thing that as coaches, we put so much stress on our young men. This is a tough game. It's a full-time job. It's 24/7 being a student-athlete. And so if you're not consistent, if they don't see the same guy every single day whenever they walk into the building, then it puts a lot of pressure on them.

What they're going to see whenever they come to the building with me is I'm fired up to see them. I'm always going to smile. I want the best part of their day to be when they walk into our football facility.

And then I think it's hard whenever you try to put parameters or conform people and not let them be who they're supposed to be, and I think it kind of stunts their growth as men. I think you've got to help them become that guy, but I think you've also got to let them be who they are. And everybody's personality is different, and it brings different things to a team.

Q. Obviously you guys welcomed in Cam Brown this offseason. Could you talk about how you want to implement him? I know you promoted him to the backup quarterback. Talk about how you're actually going to use him this season.

JOEY MCGUIRE: Really excited about Cam. He's 6'2". Yesterday he weighed 237 pounds. So he's going to be a load. The thing that I love about Cam, you know, he understands that part of him being a really good quarterback is the way he runs the football. Not only the way he throws the football, but he runs the football.

And so one thing that we definitely want to do is add him to the quarterback run game, but use him in a lot of different ways. He's really a great athlete.

He brings -- talking about personality -- he brings a lot of personality to the locker room. He's always fired up. He's got a lot of energy and he's very confident in what kind of football player he is.

So he's another guy. We expect to see Cam in some role every single game.

Q. Can you talk about your running back, the workhorse, Tahj Brooks and what he means to your team and the offense as a whole. He's arguably one of the best linebackers in the country.

JOEY MCGUIRE: No doubt. And I'm on the side that he's the best running back in the country. I'll argue that. Tahj Brooks, somebody asked me earlier, and this is going to sound funny, but he's like the security blanket. When everything, chaos is going on and a lot of things are happening in the game, we've been through some injuries at quarterback, he's the guy that's there and is steady.

He's the same guy every day. He's an absolutely incredible teammate. And we're 1167 yards away from tying Hanspard's record, and we're 1168 away from breaking it. And our plan is to break it. And I love Hanspard. He's one of my favorite guys. I actually recruited and coached his son when we were in Waco. I love that family, but we want to break his record.

And it's important. Tahj brings a lot to the table. He's an every down back. He's got great hands. He's one of the most physical kids I've ever been around whenever it comes to pass pro. Just a complete back. I'm just happy whenever he came in my office and said he was coming back for one more year. There wasn't anybody more happy than I was to have Tahj back.

If you want to check anything out, TahjTime.com. We're promoting him. He deserves it. He is not only just one of the best running backs in the country, but he's one of the best players in the country, and I think you're going to see that week in, week out.

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