

Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl: Texas vs Arizona State

Monday, December 30, 2024

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Texas Longhorns

Pete Kwiatowski

Press Conference

Q. There were a lot of guys that are still here that have become major parts, what do you attribute that development to for those guys?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: The belief, trust. You know, when we first got here, you're trying to gain the trust of these guys. We're all new, right. They are new to us. We are trying to get their trust. They are trying to get our trust. And that's a huge part of it. And so once you start having success, right, that breeds confidence, right. It shows them that, oh, these guys do know what they are talking about, right.

And so yeah, that's the No. 1 thing.

Q. Sark was mentioning because you were acquaintances didn't know each other super well before you got here. How did that come about? What was Justin's sense for connecting you guys and how did you hit it off?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: I'm not sure how it all went down from Sark's point of view. But yeah, he was the one common relationship that we both had. So Sark had asked him questions about my demeanor and my coaching style, and all the stuff that you're trying to get into to get to know somebody that you don't know and vice versa for me.

Q. What was the first year like, the learning experience working with him, not knowing him what was that like?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Everybody has got their style, and everybody's got -- what's the word I'm looking for -- I always use this word -- style, personality. You're trying to be able to -- we like to use the term read the coverage, right. So the demeanor; when is it okay to have a good time, have some fun, joke around. When is it time to not say anything. Listen to the message, right. So that feeling-out process. Just human nature, trying to read



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people, you know. Because not everything gets communicated in relationships. Some guys have different ways of communicating.

And so that was probably the biggest thing because you're not -- you're thrown into a new environment with -- I mean, it was the same thing with these guys. I never worked with Blake. The only guy I worked with was Joe. I knew Banks a little bit from when we were in the Big Sky together. But everybody else, I didn't know from Adam. So you're just trying to figure everybody out.

Q. How much has that part helped? I know you had a couple changes this year but for the most part --

PETE KWIATOWSKI: The continuity is huge. When we got our first year, I think they had three or four different coordinators, right. The position coaches had changed a lot. So when you have consistency like that, we had it at Boise State with Coach Pederson. We had it at Washington with Coach Pederson. That consistency matters, a lot. It really matters for the players because coaches, we've been through it. We're in that profession. So we know how to navigate it.

When they are always getting a new leader in their room, now they have got to learn what those guys and how they coach and the communication between the coaches from a schematic and technical standpoint, there's a lot that can get lost in translation. But when you have that consistency and you're working together for a long time, then it just flows. It flows so much better. Because now if I forget something, one of these guys is bringing it up, right. Or if they forget something, right, somebody else is bringing it up. So there's a lot of that going on, as you are preparing, right.

Q. What made you end up deciding to make this move and take this chance?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: I was with Coach Peterson for 14 years. He retired. I was there one more year. It was just timing, you know. I had been at Washington, that was seven seasons. And then, you have the opportunity to



come to Texas and you're growing up, watching Texas Tech, A&M, I don't know if it was Thanksgiving or the day after Thanksgiving, but that was one of those classic games. I was an Earl Campbell fan growing up, all that fan -- when I was younger, Texas, it's pretty cool, right.

So you get that opportunity. And recruiting, being in the profession. You can recruit Washington, but it's a lot harder than Texas just because of location.

And then going against him, knowing what kind of offense he has, it's always fun to be a defensive coordinator for a team that you know the offense is going to be pretty good. So there's a lot of factors that go into it.

Q. What was it like going against him? What was it made him do what he does well?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: First of all, the shifts and motions pose a problem. But just he is running plays -- not just running plays. He's running plays to set up other things to find those opportunities to put the red dot and take those shots. It's challenging because you know, you've got to stop the run. To stop the run, you've got to commit more people to the box. When you do that, your DB has to be able to hold, so that cat-and-mouse game that you're playing as a play-caller, it makes you better.

You've got to still -- we do what we do. We tweak it, obviously, week-in, week-out. But yeah, whatever I call, the guys know they have got to execute, right, and so there might be calls where the corner has got to hold up one-on-one, right. It's the nature of the call.

Do position coaches or do you get final say?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Sark's final say.

Q. (Inaudible).

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Yeah. Every now and then that comes up. A lot of that comes back to the relationship that is built, like in getting to know the make up of the player, the wiring. There's a lot of that that he might not know about that the position coach or recruiting, area recruiter knows about. So all that gets communicated and debated.

Q. I wanted to go back. What was it like to coach in the A&M game this year?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: It was unbelievable. It was awesome. Their stadium, their fans, it was cool. It was really cool. You get into the game. It was pretty. You win, it's fricking awesome. But even if we hadn't, it's a great experience.

Q. I think back to the fourth down stop in that game. I know short yard anal and the way you guys coach in the trenches. How far has this defense come from when you guys got here, when you had to stop in the run to now that's part of your identity where 4th and 1 you guys are going to go out there and get the stop?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Yeah. The guys believe, right. They have the tools and they know what they need to do to get the result. But it comes down to the belief, right, all those guys are in it together, right, and everybody doing what they're supposed to do. And then not everybody is going to make the play. But everybody's a reason why that play was made. The we versus me mentality.

Q. You mentioned the other day that you never actively sought a head coaching aspirations. Why is that?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Just over the years, just paying attention to what the head coaches, what that entails, just never really fired me up. I really like -- from a defensive standpoint, I love -- I love the camaraderie with the players and the staff. But just now being in charge of special teams, offense, hiring and firing, coaches, the recruiting, the boosters, that just never.

Q. Playing golf with celebrities.

PETE KWIATOWSKI: I didn't go, oh, that would be cool. I don't know.

Q. It's more ball that you enjoy and teaching?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Yeah. Yeah. The nitty-gritty of developing players from a technical, fundamental standpoint, getting the pieces, moving the chess pieces around as a head coach -- I mean he does an unbelievable job. But being able to do both, I've always been one where whatever my role is, that's what I control and I just try and do the best job I can. That's the way I was as a position coach and then I got the opportunity to be a coordinator, I was like, oh, do I really want to do this, and yeah, let's employ. Like I've never been put in that situation where someone was asking.

Q. You never thought to yourself, I want to go do that, I want to be the head coach at that school?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Yeah. I don't have an agent throwing my name out there for jobs.

Q. I can't imagine given the sent meant the way the game has changed makes it even most appealing for

you, I would imagine?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: 100 percent. 100 percent.

Q. Because there's not as much about actual ball?

PETE KWIATOWSKI: Yeah. There's so much that goes into it. I mean you're the CEO of a football program. I do like the details of football, right, of schematics versus all the other stuff that being a head coach entails.

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