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An Interview With:

BAYLOR COACH GUY MORRISS

PETER IRWIN: We'd like to welcome Coach Morris to the podium. If you'd like to make some opening comments, then we'll take questions from the floor.

COACH GUY MORRISS: Do I have to?

PETER IRWIN: You do whatever you want to do.

COACH GUY MORRISS: First of all, it's good to be here. We're extremely excited about the upcoming season. Our kids have been in Waco since the first of June, working very hard. I think they're very excited about the season coming up. And, you know, we're going to report on the 2nd. We'll start on the 3rd. The key for us is obviously winning the first game. We've got the spring before us and I think it's going to be a very successful season. And it will be an old southwest rival. It's my alma mater, so I'm getting pretty giggered about it and the kids seem to be. Seems to be a little noise coming out of Fort Worth, and so that's getting fired up. I want to thank the frogs for that. But other than that, that's about it.

Q. Guy, the last couple of years you've kind of put a lot of stress on, you know, winning those nonconference games, particularly with TCU, opened up with TCU and played Washington State on the road. How much do you put on the first few games?

COACH GUY MORRISS: Quite a bit. We'll be 4-0 when we start the conference. That's what I think. You can't win 4 if you don't win the first one. That's our goal right now, just to make sure we win the first one and then the rest of them will take care of themselves.

Q. Guy, can you talk about your decision to change offenses?

COACH GUY MORRISS: Yeah, we had some coaching changes. Coach Pease has wanted to get back to the northwest, and he's gone

to Boise. And Coach Carr's new offensive coordinator from Buffalo University, and so at that particular time I made a decision that I needed to coach the offensive line again.

Coach Chris Lancaster had been coaching the offensive line. He came to me and wanted to be the running back coach. He felt that was his strong suit. He was a fullback over at Clemson. He wanted to get more involved in the passing game. He wanted to learn the passing aspect of it rather than the front 7 stuff. Hit his goal, he obviously wants to be a coordinator one of these days, so on and so forth.

So I was missing it, to be honest with you. I wanted to get back on the field. That's all I've ever done or ever coached is offensive line. I thought this is a pretty good time to do that. But I wanted to implement a system that I knew and I wanted to get more involved in our offense and this was it, because back in the early '90s when Coach Mumme went to Valdosta, Coach Leach and I went with him as assistant coaches. And that's where this whole system got kind of put together.

The original system, and I want to give credit where it's due, came from LaVelle Edwards and BYU, the two-back throw the football over the yard kind of thinking.

So Coach Mumme and myself and Coach Leach came up with our little version of it and that's how it got started. Mike has obviously gone to the one back pretty much exclusively. I like the two-back version because I think two of our better play makers are tailbacks want to keep them on the field at the same time. I think it gives you better pass protection if you need it. Better running game when you want to doubt it.

So I made that decision that we'll start off with the two-back and we will dabble with the one back stuff but not as exclusively as Mike does.

And so that's kind of how we made the decision. I needed somebody to coach quarterbacks and call plays. So I started looking around and I talked to two or three people that know the system pretty well. And Lee Hays happened to be our guy. Wes Phillips was the coach out of Texas. I interviewed both those guys.

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It's obvious they know the system backwards and forwards. So I hired those two guys. Now you got myself who managed to hire GA from Texas Tech. Now we've got four people in a new system teaching it rather than one coordinator coming in teaching the staff and then the staff relaying it to kids. I thought I'd make the transition a lot easier. So we kind of gobbled up a lot of Texas Tech people. And that's how we ended up with the system that we have and the people that are coaching it.

Q. Considering the progress you made last year winning five games, two conference games, how did you feel when you saw the media poll when you were picked last in the division again?

COACH GUY MORRISS: Kind of PO'ed, to be honest with you. Everybody is entitled to their opinion. I don't think we'll end up in the cellar.

Q. Yeah, kind of along those lines, do you feel like -- do you feel almost like it's a Bowl season or bust for you guys? Would you be disappointed if you're not going to Bowl?

COACH GUY MORRISS: Yes, I was disappointed last year that we didn't go to the Bowl. I don't -- I'm not going to put a limit on the number of games, but I'm not going to be happy if we don't get in a Bowl and win several games, let's put it that way. You bet.

Q. Coach, I know you played a lot of close games, finishing those games is something that you get in the habit of learning how to get done, red zone, with this spread off and its red zone difficulty last year some games, just making it a whole new dynamic in the red zone?

COACH GUY MORRISS: I think it does. We were a poor football team in the red zone. And I knew that part of our offense was going to have to change. I think with this offense, because of the quick strike capabilities, you don't spend as much time in the red zone. A lot of times you're scoring from way outside of it, the red zone. But at the same time I do understand and there's I guess this is the old fashioned part of me.

At certain particular times in areas on the football field, you still have to be able to knock people off the ball. And so that's another reason we decided to do the two-back version, because I think you get a better running game with two backs

and it's not like we're, you know, getting rid of all our tight-ends. We can still put two tight ends and three backs, line up with three tight ends if we have to. That phase of our offense is going to stay in. We just have to execute better when we get down inside the red zone, hang onto the football. A lot of our problems were turnovers, inside the red zone we have to hang on to the football down in there, and that with added passing power should make us a better football team on all parts of the football field.

Q. Line open offense, is that something pretty much you're going to have to be able to do to get by in the Big 12 for the foreseeable future?

COACH GUY MORRISS: I think it's going to be something we'll have to do for the next couple of years to level the field, yeah. That particular point, it's hard to say past a year or two. Hopefully we'll win enough games that we'll become very attractive to the top players in the state of Texas and we get better at each year. Better athletes, you've got the more you can do and maybe more traditional you can become. I mean, that's kind of the way I see it.

Right now it's a system, I think, that we're leveling the field for us much like it's done for Texas Tech, because it's a system I think you can operate and be successful with, without having the ready-made player coming out of high school that maybe the Texas and Oklahomas are getting.

And for us to be successful, we have to take a kid, make sure they develop, keep them in class and win with them four- and fifth-year players.

I think that we obviously can do. I think this class that we're assembling right now for '07 is obviously going to be the best class we put together. But there's some -- it's the best class of athletes we've ever signed. And I think that's in due in part to the stability that, you know, this is our fourth season. These kids are seeing us come back to their high school year after year after year.

Coaches are seeing the same thing, that they trust us to send their kids to us. And that sort of thing. And all that kind of goes into the picture. But I think this offense will help us for the next couple of years, and then, you know, at some point we're just going to have to recruit better.

Q. Coach, how well do you feel or how

comfortable are you with the how quickly the guys were picking up this new system? Do you feel like they're doing --

COACH GUY MORRISS: This is about like falling off a log. You know it's pretty easy, really. It's about knowing where to go with the football. And it's about, if you've got some speed, you can always run away from man coverage. If somebody is going to play in the zone, just find a hole and get in it. The quarterback is going to find you and get you the football. For our offensive linemen it's simple as well; there's not a lot of protection schemes. There's one main scheme, a couple of wrinkles off of that. Four runs and a ton of screens.

But for the guys up front who have got the big physical job, it's very simple to learn. It's not ever going to change. A lot of motion. A lot of formations. It looks like a lot. It's harder to implement in two days of preparation before Saturday.

But when you really study it, boil it down, it's pretty basic. Pretty simple. It's an offense that you -- I don't think you can take bits and pieces of it and plug it into a traditional offense, though. It's a system that you have to commit to. You have to be willing to chunk the ball 50 and 60 times a game. And a lot of coaches are not willing to do that. Just don't feel that good about the passing game.

Q. Could you talk about David Gettis, will he be an impact player?

COACH GUY MORRISS: Yeah, I think he will. He's been in Waco for the whole summer. I mean, the kid was built to run, I can tell you that. He can flat get it. And he's got nice hands. You know, he's a football player that runs track. Everybody thinks he's a track guy that just wants to play football, but he's truly a football player that happens to be blessed with tremendous speed. Great hands. I mean, he's a kid that he can give you 100 percent effort.

He will run, I don't care how many posts in a row. He's always jogging back to the hill, lines up and goes again. He's got a God-given ability that most people don't have. He's in tremendous condition. Like I say, he was built to run. And there's not a route that he doesn't run pretty well. There's some little things that Coach Jackson will help him with, obviously, but he's going to be a super impact guy. He's the guy we've got to get the ball in his hands.

Q. Guy, I wonder if you could talk about how this change of your offense, from your own background in the NFL and all, is it a little bit difficult for you to make the move to a wide-open offense after, you know, kind of being weaned by knocking people off the ball in a running game?

COACH GUY MORRISS: Not really. I went through that earlier when I went to work for Hal. He and I used to go round and round about some of that stuff. But I've seen the system work. And I'm sold on it.

I mean, you know, I'm used to throwing the ball in this season 700 -- nearly 700 times a season. 652 times one year, that kind of stuff. I love to throw the football. Not to say that we're not going to run it as well. That part of me is still intact. Talking about the old NFL days, that's it.

And we will run it when we need to. But we're going to throw the ball and be able to pass -- we're going to throw the ball and be able to run the football.

Q. Guy, when Daniel first got hurt, you were kind of skeptical that he would -- he said he would be back by the TCU game. You were kind of skeptical. How do you feel now and do you think he'll be back by that first game?

COACH GUY MORRISS: I wasn't kind of skeptical. I was a lot skeptical. I told Daniel I've never seen it done. I didn't think he could do it. But he, Daniel, is the kind of guy that will make a believer out of you in a hurry. If you watch this kid rehab his knee, day after day after day, it's mindboggling. He's fanatical about it because he wants to be back on the football field.

I will take him at his word. He says he's going to be able to punt the ball in the TCU game, he's going to be ready to punt the ball. Hopefully we'll be able to trot him out there, and I've never seen anybody come back from an ACL that fast. But he told me he could. And he's proven himself right so far.

PETER IRWIN: Okay, coach. Thank you very much.

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