

Pac-12 Conference Football Media Day

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Hollywood, California, USA

UCLA Bruins Chip Kelly

Press Conference



CHIP KELLY: Good afternoon. How are you?

THE MODERATOR: You want to give an opening statement?

CHIP KELLY: I'm good.

THE MODERATOR: We can start with questions.

Q. General expectations for the team this season knowing that you're more experienced than any other team in the Pac-12, returning guys, having that late spring practice? What does that mean to you, having everyone kind of back?

CHIP KELLY: It's comforting. It took us a while to get to this point. It will be the first time we've had over 80 scholarship players. We were under for a while.

Part of the depth part is, I think we had 115 kids for spring ball. My first season here we had about 65 for spring ball. So our numbers have changed drastically, and our classes are now a little more evenly distributed. We have a group of juniors and seniors that have been around, played a lot of football.

We're going to have to rely on that experience. The one thing I'm happy about going into the season is just our depth. I think that's where we've been challenged the most. We feel like we've solved some of the depth issues.

The big thing will be, can we stay healthy going into camp and get ready for our out-of-conference schedule before we get into conference play.

Q. The transfers that came in, what kind of practice did you see on spring practice?

CHIP KELLY: A bunch of them have played a lot of football. I think the one thing that happens when you bring in transfers is just the language. It's one of the reasons we

went so late in the spring, we had an opportunity to get in the meeting room, spend time with them, kind of get them up to par.

They certainly understand how to play football, were successful where they came from. We're really excited about now we get into pre-season camp, ready to get the season started. But I think we've got a real good base to start with.

Part of the design of going so late, getting everybody up to speed, especially the transfer kids that came in not in January but into that April window so we can get everybody on the same page.

We're excited about that. I think that's one of the pluses of this team.

Q. How much of an advantage was it practicing late in May? Was it almost like your days in the NFL of an OTA, mini camp?

CHIP KELLY: Yeah, it was. That was kind of our plan going into it. We're a quarter school. We had a bunch of kids that enrolled for April. Normally we would have knocked out six or so practices in the winter term. We waited till late. Because of the COVID rules, you couldn't go on the road recruiting.

Part of the design, we had it set up like OTAs when we were in the NFL. Our retention I think will be a lot better. We start camp on Friday. There wasn't much time off when we ended spring ball until here. They've had a good session with our strength and conditioning program in the interim. We're excited to hit the ground running.

That was the design of going as late as we went. I think it's going to pay off for us.

Q. (Question about not getting enough credit about the way Chip changed college football.)

CHIP KELLY: When I was in Eugene, we were the only team that had shiny helmets and played with five wide receivers. Everybody plays with shiny helmets and five



wide receivers now, so...

I think the game of football is cyclical. There's ebbs and flows to everything that goes on. It's very gracious of David to say that. I owe him 20 bucks because I didn't believe he would say it.

But I think we all steal from whoever was in where we are. The one thing is because of social media, there's a huge coaching group on social media that posts a lot of stuff, I think people have more access. Back in the day, you couldn't get NFL film, you couldn't watch all 22. Now you can, study it.

The best coaches can take what they've learned and then how can I apply it to the group of people that I have, what's the best situation to put my players in the best situation to make plays.

David does a great job with what he does at Stanford. They're unique in what they do. He has an answer for what people do to combat him. I think that's part of the whole process that we're going through.

Where we got it from or how we did it, we were just trying to score points. That was beneficial to us at the time. When you go back to just in the history the football, the Buffalo Bills were running no huddle in the National Football League with Jim Kelly. Sam Wyche was doing it with the Cincinnati Bengals and, Boomer Esiason in the 1980s.

It's not something we invented and brought to the game. It's something we thought would be beneficial to us at Oregon, we added it, and it helped us be successful.

Q. (No microphone.)

CHIP KELLY: I think our lines just from a depth standpoint. We feel really confident with the amount of people on both our offensive and defensive lines that we can now play in a game. Think that's where we were probably challenged the most early, replenishing the offensive and defensive lines. Feel really confident with the group of guys that we have on both sides of the ball up front. That's really where the game is won. That's what kind of gives us some confidence going into the season.

Q. You guys are a few weeks into the new deal with Jordan Brand. What has been the feedback from recruits and what kind of impact do you anticipate this deal having in recruiting?

CHIP KELLY: I think that helps. It always helps. It's such an iconic brand. I think everyone wants to be associated

with an iconic brand.

I always have been such a big fan of the product. I think sometimes that gets glossed over, what a good product it is. I had a chance to be in the office yesterday. Spent a little time with our equipment guy, checking all the new stuff that came in. Looking at the new prototype cleats that Jordan has, what that is going to provide for especially our big guys. We have some really big guys on our team. The support that product itself gives is.

Twofold, it's going to help us with recruiting, because everybody wants to be associated with it. I think the product is outstanding and we're excited to get started using it.

Q. You mentioned shiny helmets, any plans to spice things up for UCLA?

CHIP KELLY: That's one of the things I like about UCLA. You don't have to make any decisions from a uniform standpoint. There's a couple football programs in football that have iconic football uniforms, UCLA is one of them. I call it the airport test. If you walk in an airport, you look out the corner of your eye, you can tell who's playing. You know when Alabama is playing, Penn State, UCLA is playing.

That's working really well for this program and I'm not going to change that, so...

Q. You obviously have a very long and established relationship with Ryan Day. Historically, why did it take him so long to end up working for you? Why didn't he end up working for you in Oregon?

CHIP KELLY: Because he turned me down. I wasn't as good a recruiter as I was when I got to the NFL. He's gotten a lot of very East Coast ties. Both from the same hometown and have known each other. I coached him in college. We've always tried to get together. It just didn't work when we were together at Oregon. When I got to Philadelphia, it worked. He was with me in Philly and San Francisco before he went to Ohio State.

Q. You really did try to bring him in at different points when you were in Eugene?

CHIP KELLY: Yeah. Timing, family, different things. Kind of where he was in his career, commitment he made to Coach Addazio, things like that.

Q. When you converse with him in the off-season, can you characterize those conversations, how much a lifelong relationship is football and how much the



converse is life?

CHIP KELLY: The unique things about our lifelong relationships is when we're together, I actually talked to him yesterday for a while. We're talking about our families, played golf with him over the weekend. We were both back home in New Hampshire. Very rarely do we talk football anymore. Just talking about life, family, his kids, my wife, his wife, so...

Q. (No microphone.)

CHIP KELLY: He's improved a lot. I think the one thing that I love about Dorian is his thirst for knowledge. He constantly is working on his game, whether it's the physical stuff, whether it be the weight room, speed work, film watching, decision making, how to become a better leader. Those are questions where he's like, Coach, you got ten minutes? I'll pop up, he has a notebook out, a list of questions he's rattles off. He's always trying to improve. That's the one thing I love about him, he never stands pat on what he is.

He's in the best shape of his life. I could have said that going into every camp. He's continued to improve from that standpoint.

He always wants to get better, knows if he can be a little bit better tomorrow than he was today, he's on the right track.

The unique thing is it is year four. We have an opportunity to get to work together for four full years. I'm excited to see what this season brings for him because I know how much he's invested in it.

Q. (No microphone.)

CHIP KELLY: Sure. I think our players have a lot of confidence. It was evident when we worked in the spring. I think they know what it takes. First and foremost, we have to do a better job protecting the football. In the games we lost, we lost the turnover battle. If we can straighten out the turnover battle, I think we have a pretty good shot.

We have to not give it up too much on the offensive side of the ball. We were better at that in the spring. We'll continue to work on that. But our guys know how close we are to being a really, really good football team. We have a bunch of guys back with a ton of experience, so...

Good part about us is we don't talk about glass is half empty or half full, we just talk about football. We're excited about the opportunities presented to us this season.

Q. Obviously the season opener has its own hype, kids are ready to play. Right after that game you got the big shiny object right next to it, LSU. What is the approach to keep the kids focused on Hawaii and not worry about the marquee game coming up?

CHIP KELLY: Yeah, we really have a standard that we train to on a daily basis. We won't talk about Hawaii or LSU or Fresno State or anybody in the league until we get to that part.

We have a specific week in practice where we'll lay our initial install down, then spend a couple practices on Hawaii, then a couple practices on LSU, then a couple practices on Fresno just to get in preparation for those guys before we get to game week.

We respect everybody we play and understand that the only way you can get beat by an opponent is if you don't respect an opponent. Our sole focus is can we get better on a daily basis? We'll spend a little time in camp on it. Really the week of the Hawaii game, it'll be our sole focus that week.

Q. You were talking about how Nike and Jordan helped the recruiting. You also have name, image and likeness that started earlier this month. Have you discussed that with recruits who have come to visit? What does that do for college football and sports as a whole?

CHIP KELLY: We've discussed it with our team. Name, image and likeness came in on July 1st. We didn't have any visits because it's been a dead period. We'll start to get some people on campus this week.

But from a name, image and likeness standpoint, I think players were allowed, and rightly so, to make decisions that they had to wait till their eligibility was expired until they could start to capitalize on their name, image and likeness. Right now they can capitalize that on when they enroll as a freshman. I think it's a positive. Our job as educators is to make sure we provide them with the information they need to make really smart decisions.

Our school is partnered with Influencer and Compass. Compass from a compliance standpoint, Influencer from a personal brand standpoint. Our players have had meetings throughout our whole athletic department in all sports of what you can do to kind of capitalize on this, but understand the decisions you make can affect your image.

You really got to be well thought out in what you're looking at. We encourage them to have advisors and have some people to bounce some ideas off of in terms of where they



are.

I think it's a really good thing. I think it's time coming. Some people were concerned it was an Armageddon, what was going to happen. I think they forgot the Olympics went to this model a while ago and it doesn't seem to really affect what they do. Apolo Ohno got a Subway commercial, some people had some visa commercials, but I don't think it changed the landscape of any of those sports. I don't think it's going to make that big an impact in our sport. But I think it was something that was necessary at this time.

Q. (No microphone.)

CHIP KELLY: That question is for them. Same thing, like I don't ask my assistant coaches, Did you paint a house this summer, make any money for that? It's all individual things for those guys.

It's questions you can ask the players. It's up to them in terms of what they want to reveal and not reveal. I guess that's part of running your own business.

Q. Along the same lines, how do you expect this to impact the locker room? How much time have you devoted to coaching your players up, making sure they know what's good and bad on the name, image and likeness?

CHIP KELLY: As I said earlier, our entire athletic department are partnered with Influencer and Compass. Compass from a compliance standpoint and Influencer from a personal brand standpoint. We've had multiple meetings with our players on the subject. It's also a resource.

Erin Adkins, in our compliance office, has been tremendous in terms of providing support for our players. As I've talked to her and had conversations, many players have called her and asked questions. We tell them you always have to ask questions and permission instead of forgiveness because it could jeopardize your eligibility.

Our players have been great on that. We'll continue to educate them. That's just part of the process. Again, I think it's something that was totally necessary. I think they deserve it. It's just making sure they handle it the right way.

Q. Do you expect it to have any impact on the locker room?

CHIP KELLY: Any time you introduce anything new, you got to be conscious of it. Right now so far so good. All the

reports I've gotten back from talking to our players.

We've been away from them because it's been a dead period for us. We actually will start back with meetings on Friday. We'll spend a little bit more time with our guys on a face-to-face basis.

We have a mature team. I really don't think -- first and foremost they know part of their image is they have to be doing the right things in the classroom and on the football field, so...

Q. George Kliavkoff will be your third commissioner since you've been a coach in the Pac-12. How does a new commissioner impact your job as a coach, if at all?

CHIP KELLY: I just knew Larry and that was it. I wasn't a head coach before. I never met the commissioner before Larry.

Obviously I think in these times in college football, who's the commissioner of your conference and who is leading you. Some of these uncharted inventories I think is critical. I got a chance to meet George yesterday. I thought he was really intelligent, sharp. I think he's articulate. He can explain his vision in terms of what he wants to get accomplished.

I'm excited to work with him. He seems like he is collaborative. That was kind of the words he talked about yesterday with us as coaches. So I'm excited to kind of see what the direction of this conference is under George's leadership.

Q. Having DTR as your QB for the first three years, heading into his fourth year, what is your approach with him? What do you expect for him after this year?

CHIP KELLY: I think the beauty is having Dorian for four years. He didn't get an opportunity to play in high school until his senior year. Played wide receiver as a junior because they had another quarterback that was a pretty good player.

He came in, just kind of jumped in both feet. Every day Dorian is always striving to get better. He's just a joy to coach. You love kids like that, that are thirsty for knowledge, have that kind of growth mindset that we always talk about. We want our players to have that. That's what he has.

I'm really excited to see where he is right now. I know he's in the best shape of his life. He's worked extremely hard in the weight room, on the field, throwing with receivers,

organizing everything that goes on in the summer program, because the coaches aren't allowed to be around them till this Friday.

We have great expectations of him. Our expectations of him are no bigger than his expectations of himself. It's all borne out of his work ethic. He's got a great work ethic.

Q. What surprised you the first three years with him?

CHIP KELLY: Not knowing him. I think the one thing that just jumped out from his true freshmen year is how tough he is. He's a tough, physical football player. Either his second or third game, we went into Oklahoma, he was getting knocked around a little bit. Just kept getting up and threw an unbelievable touchdown pass to Theo Howard down the far sideline with someone draped in his face. I think that's a quality in a quarterback that people don't spend enough time talking about.

For you to be a really, really successful quarterback, you have to be a tough person and he's an extremely tough person.

Q. Great segue. I was going to ask about that. How do you evaluate a quarterback's ability to stand in against pressure, blitz? How do you measure guts when you're recruiting?

CHIP KELLY: I don't think it's talked about enough in what that position is. I think everybody, they protect the quarterback. There's not a quarterback in the NFL or in college football that doesn't get hit. It's a different kind of toughness. You're not the one inflicting the physical punishment, you're the one taking it.

By the way, you're supposed to zip a 20-yard dig route in between the safety in the corner. I think it's one of those things that's difficult to quantify because all of us, I don't care what level coach you are, you don't let your quarterback get hit in practice because if you did, you'd probably get run out of the business. You're not going to lose your kid on the practice field.

So the only time they get hit is on Saturdays in college football and on Sundays in the NFL. It's a quality that if you understand the game, the nuances of the game, you just sit there and watch guys that repeatedly stand in there and are trying to avoid but know that, hey, sometimes I got to take it because I got to complete this pass.

Anybody that's played for a prolonged period of time at that position, you can tell how tough they are. Dorian is as tough a guy as I've been around. Darron Thomas when I was at Oregon earlier was one of those guys. We would

show clips to our players of watch the hit the quarterback takes on this play. Nick Foles was that way in the NFL. Watch the hit he takes as he throws a seam ball for a touchdown.

When you point that out to the players in the room, I'm not sure what other kids at other positions can do that. Stand there, let someone hit you, you still execute at the highest level. It's a quality for quarterbacks that doesn't get talked about enough. I think it's really kind of what is a difference maker for a lot of the guys that are the great ones. Tom Brady stands in there. Tom is going in at age 43. The amount of hits he's taken in his life, standing in the pocket, completing the football. Him, Ben Roethlisberger, almost anybody in the NFL, starting quarterback in the NFL is a tough dude.

Q. Is there a way to teach them how to fall?

CHIP KELLY: We do that. We talk a little bit about how to protect yourself when you land, kind of how you teach a wrestler or Jujitsu guy. Quarterback coaches will simulate things with bags.

But it's not the same as when Aaron Donald or a 300-pound three technique has just beat the guard, is coming at you clean, you got to get the ball off. It's the one thing that I don't think fans appreciate enough, is how tough you have to be to be a quarterback.

Q. I know how much you hate history questions.

CHIP KELLY: I love history questions if it's on Jeopardy (smiling).

Q. In honor of Ben not being here, the Hawaii game, considering your non-conference starts the past couple years with the exception of last year, how important is that Hawaii game?

CHIP KELLY: The two years that we've had non-conference starts, that long history (smiling)?

Q. Yes, that one.

CHIP KELLY: I mean, we'll never have a conversation with our team about our game against Hawaii compared to non-conference games two years ago, so... That's what I call a TBU, that stands for "true but useless." If it's true but useless, I don't really share that with our team, so...

Is that fair?

Q. Yeah.

CHIP KELLY: Okay.

Q. You were talking about having George here at the Pac-12, meeting him yesterday, the direction of the conference. Obviously there's a lot going on with realignment, expansion at other conferences. Generally are there any pros or cons to expansion from a coaching perspective that you have?

CHIP KELLY: I don't know. I think everybody, when things happen in the moment, you're trying to project what it's going to look like. 10 years ago when I was in this league, we were the Pac-16, we were at Texas, Baylor, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State. I don't know the reasons because I wasn't involved in the decision. But that fell through.

Then we added Colorado and Utah, then Nebraska left the Big 12, they went to the Big Ten. Everything was crazy. Then all of a sudden it settled down and everybody got back to normal day-to-day things.

The only thing that suffered was the math because the Big 12 was 10 teams and the Big Ten was 14 teams and that was it.

I don't know. I know the story is that Texas and Oklahoma are leaving. I think a lot of things this day and age, tradition is butting up against money. People are making decisions of tradition versus money. Is expansion equal to dilution? I don't know. I think it's something you have to look back on after you get a couple years into it to say was this a good maneuver or bad maneuver.

What are coaches looking for in expansion? I'll be honest with you, I think I'm speaking for most coaches, no one asks us, so I don't really look at it and I don't care. I was never involved in the conversations 10 years ago when I was in this league of who we were adding or who we weren't adding. No one has asked us since.

If they do add some teams to our league, that's great. I really enjoy the teams that we have right now. If we had some more that the people above us, the commissioner and the presidents of the universities, think will be great additions, then have at it. For us on an individual basis, I couldn't tell you if it's right for expansion or wrong for expansion.

I know it's got a lot more to do with money than it does with tradition right now, so...

Q. (No microphone.)

CHIP KELLY: I've never been a part of that. I mean, I think it sounds on paper it's a great idea. We'll see.

I think the scheduling thing really has to kind of fall in line with what ends up happening with conference realignment. If you want to go from nine-game individual conference schedule to an eight-game individual conference schedule, you need to pick up 72 games. Where are those games right now? A lot of teams are already scheduled out in their out-of-conference games through the next four or five years. It's easy to say, We'll drop one conference game, then everybody go out and pick up a game. If nobody has a game you can pick up, where do you go?

There's some work that needs to be done in terms of how you look at that. But I think the fact that one of George's first initiatives is he wants to take a holistic view of how can we make everything better in the league is a step in the positive direction.

Q. (No microphone.)

CHIP KELLY: I don't know. Because I've never played any other schedule, so I couldn't tell you. Hey, when I was in a league and I played an eight-game schedule, this was better. I don't have the data points to say to you when we were in an eight-team league, this is what happened. Nine is what I've always been used to. That's kind of just what I know.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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