



Western Michigan Offensive Interviews



Thursday, December 29, 2016
Omni Dallas Hotel, Dallas, Texas

QUESTIONS FOR OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KIRK CIARROCCA

Q. Coach, Northern Illinois AD (Sean Frazier) came out and said he'd like to see a playoff with the Group of Five. Just wondering what your thoughts are on that, your personal thoughts, not team thoughts but with the experience you've had obviously coming up through the coaching ranks and being an O coordinator at a group of five school?

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: Obviously that's really not my area of expertise or I'm not going to really have a major say in what they decide to do. But I personally like the way it is right now. So it's a great experience for our players and our coaches and our families. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Q. I know Coach Fleck has talked about he'd like to see the current bowl situation spread out to about six or eight teams going for the national championship. From a personal standpoint that seems like a more viable option to include some group-of-five teams in that equation, even if you guys are not one of group of five this year, if you go up against Alabama. As exciting as that might be from an opportunity standpoint, it makes sense, hey, okay, you want a shot but you knock off the best team in the world right now.

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: Yeah. (smiling) Again, I mean, honestly you're asking me something I've spent zero time thinking about. You've spent more time thinking about it obviously than I have. I'm sure Coach Fleck probably thinks about that stuff. I'm just trying to find a way to make a first down in the Cotton Bowl right now. And in the springtime when people are thinking about these things, I'm thinking about playing golf.

Q. What's your earliest recollection of Zach Terrell and the guy he was when you first met him? Much greener, very, very talented, less refined obviously.

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: I can still remember the initial impression we had as a team when we got here. There was about nine days before the team reported back for their spring semester. And so we started winter workouts. And in the winter workouts, my first impression of him was there was a young man here, that he was listening to everything we were telling him to do. And he had an ability to take the verbal commands and apply them to the physical movements, you know? And that's a little bit unusual to a guy, especially because he hadn't really heard my way of talking or explaining something to him before.

We're right there and we're throwing him right into it. And so that was my first impression of him, was here was a guy who is a very good listener and can apply the information that you're giving him.

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And then my next impression -- I still remember to this day -- we were in training camp. We went through the first spring and nobody looked very good. And you learn a new system and everything. And then we were in training camp, and it was probably around practice. I know it was near the end of training camp and it was practice 16 or 17 and we were in a competitive drill against our defense. And he went through his progression and he made a confident, decisive decision.

PJ was standing next to me, and I still remember looking at him and saying, "We're going to win a championship with this kid someday." He was not the starter yet. He was in a battle to be Number 2 at the time. I said we're going to win a championship with this guy.

Q. What was Coach Fleck's reaction? Do you remember?

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: He looked at me and he was like, "I hope you're right" and the horn blew and we took off running in our own directions. But I reminded him as he was developing. PJ and I obviously were good friends, and we often have these private conversations and have often reminisced about that day.

Q. You think Zach's overall athletic ability coming out of Indiana, being a hands guy. He was point guard on the basketball team and everything. How much does that factor into just that quick reactionary knowledge and skill to bring to the quarterback position?

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: I think he's an outstanding athlete.

He might not win the 100-meter dash but he's athletic. And when people tell me how good a basketball -- when he tells me how good a basketball player he was, I believe it just by watching his movements on the football field.

And I'll bet he had great awareness of everybody around him when he played basketball, though he claims he was a shooter first.

But, yeah, he's -- you can see his athleticism everywhere. I think that's one of the things that makes him special, besides the fact that he has an ability to be a confident, decisive decision-maker.

So these eyes are just wonderful mechanisms that we've been blessed with. But not everybody can transfer the information that these eyes give you to your brain and get your body to react as quickly as needed to be. And that's what separates the good quarterbacks from the great quarterbacks and the great quarterbacks from the elite quarterbacks. So he definitely has that ability to be able to process that information and be a confident, decisive decision-maker out there.

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Q. Where would you rate his footwork?

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: His mechanics are fabulous. I mean, his fundamentals are outstanding. Again, he has the ability to be able to take the coaching that you're giving him and then be able to apply it and do it out there on the field. And for me, he makes you feel like such a good coach, like you're almost the world's greatest teacher of all time because I tell him something and he goes out there and he just does it like that. And I'm like "Wow," you know?

Q. Really got through to him there, huh?

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: Yeah, but somehow I don't think it's going to work with everybody quite that easily.

Q. Wanted to ask you about Corey. I was reading a story about maybe one of his early practices there was some slant pass or slant pattern he ran that and PJ said, Okay. We've got a guy here, his development, how he's coming along.

OC KIRK CIARROCCA: No question. It was interesting because again it was our first training camp. And the freshmen, they always go with the third unit at best. And we weren't very good, but he was in the third unit. And the first day he played a play right away.

Then the second day he did something again, and it was the third day he was up, his group was up, and I just kind of whispered at the quarterback, I said, "Hey, throw the ball to that guy over there ." The quarterback wasn't even sure who it was. I just wanted to see if he'd make a play again. And it was a go ball and they threw it down the field to him and he jumped up and made a catch, and that's the third day in a row he made me say, "Wow, no longer should he be on the third team". And I think that when we came off the practice field, PJ was like, "Make him the starter". And I was like, "I'm in."

And so we did. And the rest has been -- really the credit goes to him. His work ethic is second to none. I wish you could come out and watch him practice. Better than that, everybody will practice well at the Cotton Bowl with all these people around. But come in January and watch him catching balls or running routes with the quarterbacks. The detail and how hard he works at it is all a tribute to him.

QUESTIONS FOR QB ZACH TERRELL

Q. (Question about C John Keenoy.)

QB ZACH TERRELL: Can't say enough of John Keenoy. We needed him to play, he may not have been 100% ready to play but we needed him. That was a valuable experience for him. And

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he got a lot of reps and he got to learn a lot. He got to play against Ohio State and Michigan State and some of the best defenses ever to play the game. And that experience and him being able to build and learn through that has really helped him this year. And it's been fun to have a guy like that as my center who is a really smart guy and who understands the game but also has a real passion for the game, has a real passion for keeping me safe, which I appreciate more than anything. He does an amazing job. And he's a tremendous leader to that offensive line and getting them positions and the right calls. And we definitely built a really good chemistry over these past two years, which is really probably one of the most key relationships on the field. That quarterback and the center exchange is critical, because the play starts with us. And without that exchange and without that communication, the play goes nowhere.

Q. I asked Taylor Moton -- I said there are a lot of nasty guys on the line. He's a 4.0 student. Does he get nasty off the field?

QB ZACH TERRELL: He's very soft spoken guy and very, very nice. When he gets on the field, he's nasty. That's something the offensive linemen have. Off the field they're really nice guys. And these guys, especially Taylor Moton -- I don't know if you talked to him. He's the nicest guy in the world. But, when they get on the field, they get a little nasty in them. And I appreciate that because they keep me safe. And I can't say enough about those guys.

But John [Keenoy] is the same way. Off the field you'd never expect that he'd be out there crushing guys on the field and pancaking people, but he does. And that's the cool part is that's the quality of these guys. Off the field tremendous men in the classroom and community. And on the field, when you step over that white line, the game is the game and they get after it.

John is definitely getting there. That's been a cool part that Coach Fleck has brought out of him. Everybody is a leader on our team. It doesn't matter if you've been there five years like me or if you're a true freshman. Everybody is expected to lead and to influence others. And that's one of the things he's continued to get better at. Being a center you have to communicate a lot. Lots of situations, people throwing things at you. Be calm, cool, collected. Continue to emphasize calls. And that's something he's gotten better with. And that's been fun to see the maturation of him.

Q. In the season you had two picks against Ohio. I know that was the last game you played, so that might be fresh in your mind. How do you rebound from that performance against a better defense in Wisconsin?

QB ZACH TERRELL: As a quarterback, you have to have a short memory. So I don't remember you talking about those picks. Thank you for reminding me.

No, those are things that are part of the game. And a lot of people say, "You threw two picks in the last game, and you didn't throw any all season." They're part of the game. Sometimes they're out of your control. One went off Corey's hands and got picked off. That's part of it. That's

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something that happened. Ones you can't control. That one later in the game, that was a bad throw. That one I can control. And there's just things that's part of the game. As a quarterback, you can't get hung up on those little plays and things. You've got to stay in the moment and not let the moment get too big and find ways to continue to put your team in an advantageous spot to continue to be successful. And that's what I try to do and not focus on last game I threw two picks. This game I've got to be cautious. I'm going out there and play and do what I do and do what I know how to do best, and that's protect the ball and put my teammates in a position to be successful.

Q. What's it like running around AT&T Stadium? I watched you yesterday. It's like child-like glee.

QB ZACH TERRELL: You look around and everybody is smiling and having a great time. It's a special place. Everybody tried to describe to me about the stadium, and you don't really understand how amazing it is. It's kind of hard to take it all in until you get there because it's just massive.

We went and watched the game, and I couldn't believe I was going to be practicing on there. And they're like, Yeah, you're playing on there, too. Oh, my goodness. It's a dream come true to be not only at the Cotton Bowl, but playing at AT&T Stadium, and getting to play with my teammates one more game in this type of environment. It's a dream come true, and we feel fortunate and are soaking up every memory.

Q. Yesterday was a Monday for you. This is the starter practice. you're ramping up today. I don't think you need it, but talk about getting more focused. We're getting later in the week and game day is approaching.

QB ZACH TERRELL: It's time guys start to buckle down. We've gotten to enjoy a lot of different events. And now the focus shifts back. We're still going to enjoy and soak up all the different things and the southern hospitality and the things that the Cotton Bowl has kind of allowed us to do. But we're also now here for a reason and that's to play Wisconsin on January 2nd. And that's why we're all here. And the main thing has to become the main thing again and focus back to what really is important and that's being prepared and getting ready. And I think guys are really starting to shift their focus back towards that.

QUESTIONS FOR WR COREY DAVIS

Q. What does the game mean for you and your university?

WR COREY DAVIS: Very important not only to our team and our community, but to our entire program. It means a lot to them. They've been through a lot. Our entire community as well as this team. Like I said, the 1-11 season for us was extremely hard. And we learned a lot about

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ourselves, and we've been working extremely hard day in and day out ever since then. Our off seasons have been really, really hard, but we knew we had to pay the price then to reap the reward now.

Q. The Cotton Bowl as a whole and the hospitality they've extended to you guys, what's that like for you coming down here and getting treated this way?

WR COREY DAVIS: They've treated us like royalty ever since we stepped off the plane. We saw the buses with our faces on the side. That was pretty crazy. And the hospitality room. We went to the game, the Dallas Cowboys-Detroit game. They've been treating us really well. And it was very exciting, and we're very happy to be here.

Q. You got a chance yesterday to go to Children's Medical Center. What does that mean to you guys individually when you have that interaction with those youngsters?

WR COREY DAVIS: It means a lot just to see their faces and to see that they're battling. And every one of those kids we interacted with yesterday had a smile on their face. And that put perspective into us that whatever we're going through, it's not as bad as whatever they are facing. And they're always smiling and always having a good time. And it was just very enlightening to see their faces and see them light up when they saw us. So it was great.

Q. Now the Xs and Os. Talk about Wisconsin and you guys. What are the keys you have to see to either contain Wisconsin or take it to them?

WR COREY DAVIS: I mean, you know, they're a great team. It's no secret. The front seven is one of the best in the country. Great D-line. Great linebackers. And the secondary is phenomenal. We understand that we're going to have to play a pretty good game to beat them. Their offense as well is very lethal. We're going to have to take some shots and make some big plays on the field in this game.

Q. Talk about you're staying in a hotel where fans are in the hotel. What kind of interactions have you had with fans since you've been here that made the trip with you?

WR COREY DAVIS: There's been a lot of interactions with the fans, just walking through the hotel and just seeing them and seeing them light up when they see the players. Such a blessing just to be a part of that and just to see their faces light up when they see you.

Q. Jarvion was talking about the tiles in the floor and going through and the experience of that. Talk a little bit about that and the interactions you've had around that.

WR COREY DAVIS: That was probably one of the best parts. Walking through the hotel on the first day. Seeing my name seeing other players' names and numbers on the tile. That

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definitely made us feel special, and that was great to see.

QUESTIONS FOR OT TAYLOR MOTON

Q. Who on this team inspires you?

OT TAYLOR MOTON: Zach [Terrell], we were in the same class, two or three of the only redshirt left on the team (along with WR Mike Henry). Just to see how much he's grown into a man in the past five years. And I've never been around a better leader than him. He inspires me to be better, all of us to be better. He's a really cool guy, but he's still got that feeling because he's always doing the right thing and inspires everybody else to do the right thing. 4.0 on the Master's program, always going out and giving and serving, won the Campbell Award for academic scholar. Everyone strives to be like Zach Terrell.

Q. Anyone else on the team successful?

OT TAYLOR MOTON: Keion Adams, defensive end, one of the best defensive ends in the conference this past year. Seeing him, he's done a lot of tremendous growing from a freshman to a senior and to senior leader on defense. I'm really proud of him and really happy to have him on the team. There are a lot of stories.

Q. What motivates you? Why do you play?

OT TAYLOR MOTON: Well, I started playing when I was in seventh grade. I always looked up to my late grandfather. He always inspired me and always wanted to grow up to please him and make him happy and just be like him. He played football, and I was a big sports fan because of that. What inspired me as I got older and older, I started doing it for him and doing it for my teammates. I've made lifetime bonds with some of these guys. So that's the kind of stuff that inspires me.

Q. When you're sitting at 0-11, how far did this feel looking back?

OT TAYLOR MOTON: My redshirt freshman year, first year starting, we were 1-11. It was crazy. I didn't know what the future was going to hold for us. And it was something else. It was just like it can't get any worse, I guess. That's what I said in my head. Can only go up from here.

After that off-season, we had to do a lot better, have the best spring we've ever had. We just have to take it one day at a time getting better every single day, and that's what we did for winter conditioning, from spring ball, and that's why we went from 1-11 to 8-5 the next year.

First bowl game in school history last year and that turned into now the Cotton Bowl. Won the

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first MAC championship in 26 years, something like that. So that's really what it's about. That's the secret sauce, is just why Coach Fleck taught us rowing the boat, our mantra. Taking it one day at a time and trusting the process. That's what it's all about.

QUESTIONS FOR RB JARVION FRANKLIN

Q. Did Coach Fleck show you the Cotton Bowl logo after last year's bowl win?

RB JARVION FRANKLIN: When he first splashed that logo on the screen, as a team we were all shocked. We thought okay. There goes Coach Fleck doing something crazy. At the same time we realized that it was possible. But, as leaders on the football team, we felt that we couldn't really set a goal like that because it's looking too far down the road. So for us we always set our goal on the MAC. So we were focused on winning the MAC. We broke the huddle saying, "MAC on 3. MAC on 3." Only way this would be possible is we had to win the MAC and all the games on our schedule.

So Coach Fleck provided us with the mindset of having one-game seasons. And that really fueled us and kept us grounded. Kept us not listening to the outside noise and stuff like that. But, when he first brought that up, we were a little bit shocked. But, as time went by, I guess he saw something we didn't see, which is not that uncommon knowing Coach Fleck because he really is an amazing individual.

Q. How did a guy get recruited into a 1-11 team?

RB JARVION FRANKLIN: Just the dream of being able to write your own traditions and being able to pretty much start from scratch. So the year before you were 1-11. So your presence on the team should have a direct impact on the team, so it was a measuring stick. So for me just a dream of being able to go somewhere and write my own tradition and not be part of an already successful program.

Q. What does it mean then to be at this point? I know you wanted to accomplish more. But to be at this point one of two undefeated teams in the nation?

RB JARVION FRANKLIN: To me that means that we have come a long way and we haven't forgotten where we came from. And we still can change our best every day.

Q. Let's ask about Corey [Davis]. A lot of people feel he could have come out last year and been a front pick last year. He wanted to come back and be part of the MAC championship and be with his teammates. Where did you see him and how different is he this than he was last year when you finished?

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RB JARVION FRANKLIN: As far as different, I mean, one way he's changed a tad bit is he's a tad bit more vocal. But, as far as Corey Davis being Corey Davis, he's Corey Davis. He's one of the most consistent guys, one of the most humble guys I've ever met in my life and one of the guys who inspire me every day. He could have left last year. He could have done all this. But knowing that he had millions of dollars guaranteed already, he chose to come back and further his education more, further his skill set, and just really live for himself and not really for the temptations of money, glamour, and all that other stuff.

Q. Some people are starting to take notice and realize who he is. But is it a kind of a shame that more people don't realize who he is and how good he is? I think if you said who is the FBS receiving leader of all time, they're not going to go "Corey Davis."

RB JARVION FRANKLIN: Exactly. I wouldn't necessarily say it was a shame. But I definitely would say that the time will come when everyone will realize who they might be speaking to at that moment, who they might have had contact with, who I might have had the opportunity to practice with every day, sweat with, grind with for three years. So we have to realize that.

Q. When you first heard the term "Row the Boat," what did you think? How has that mantra changed you?

RB JARVION FRANKLIN: When I first heard the term, I was like hold on. I'm going to the Broncos. I'm going to Western Michigan, which is the Broncos. But I'm going to row the boat there? That doesn't even make sense. I used to laugh, too.

But I was the type of guy that kind of liked the way people can just apply things in their life and just build that custom mindset, make up something and make it work for them.

So, when I heard the term and got to understand it, I really respected Coach Fleck for it. And I knew the meaning behind it. I know where it stems from and stuff like that. So I really did respect Coach Fleck for it. And I respect the fact that he used it. And at one point he was the only one who believed in it. His voice never wavered. His voice never got quieter. People were screaming at him, and he stayed true to himself and his beliefs. And I definitely respected that and the vision.

You can go to any D1 school across the nation and one thing is guaranteed. And that's football. I wasn't making my decision based on football. I made my decision on the type of people I was going to be surrounded with and how those people could further me in life and how I'm going to come in contact and just really put myself in the best position to really become a man and mature.

Q. Had you ever actually rowed a boat before then?

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RB JARVION FRANKLIN: Only time I went to his house and I was in a canoe. And that's not rowing, but I was screaming "Row the Boat!" But I'm in there. I'm not usually on the water like that. That's probably one of the few times I'd be on the water, so I told myself I was rowing the boat. Kept my oar in the water.

QUESTIONS FOR RB JAMAURI BOGAN

Q. What is it about Wisconsin you are watching for prep for them? What have you seen?

RB JAMAURI BOGAN: They're physical. They're tough. And any team that's played them it's always been a fight. And I think it's not going to be anything different when we play them.

They're going to fight and they're going to fight and they're going to fight. We better be ready for a fight. If we're not ready, they're going to roll all over us. So we must prepare ourselves mentally, physically, and emotionally for that game.

Q. You just won your first bowl game last year. Did I hear the story right that one of the first things Coach [Fleck] did was show you guys the Cotton Bowl logo?

RB JAMAURI BOGAN: Yes. Obviously, at the time he showed it to us we were like, "We just won a bowl game. We're in the Bahamas and you're talking Cotton Bowl?" But the key to that was week in and week out we focused on one-game seasons. And by executing on a one-game season, it allows you to be 13-0 at the end of the season.

And I think that was kind of like -- our focus was the right focus, to enable us, to allow us to be the team we wanted to be. And we never thought -- the craziest thing about it, we never really thought about being 13-0. During the process, when we were 10-0, we were still thinking about who do we even play next? Our focus was laser sharp each and every week and led us to this moment. I really can't stress it enough. We're only here because we were so disciplined in our beliefs to win another [game] and our coach's philosophy.

Q. But did that make an impact for him not letting y'all even -- I'm not going to say enjoy the moment but you just had your first bowl and he's talking about where to go next year.

RB JAMAURI BOGAN: The Cotton Bowl, that's right. His motto is "Change your best." We ran for 281 yards and broke the single game rushing record at one. And the next week Coach was saying, You got to run for 300 next week. That's kind of how we go about business and made us who we are. I think it's going to carry us the rest of our lives and striving to be different and always changing when the world wants you to be the same.

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Q. What's your favorite Bronconese term?

RB JAMAURI BOGAN: Favorite? We have a lot. Probably “don't ever let the situation dictate your behavior.” I think that's so, so true. I think a lot of times we get caught up in the here and now and what's going on and we allow things, the littlest of things, to dictate our behavior when a lot of times things are so small that we should be brushing those things off and focusing on the main thing. I think that's probably my favorite one.

Q. When you got the book, what's one you thought was outlandishly stupid the first time you saw it that you have grown to appreciate?

RB JAMAURI BOGAN: The pamphlet has gotten pretty thick. When we first got here, it was probably a page or two but now we're probably five or six pages deep. We have videos. Our Leadership Council reads books. So a lot of those phrases come from different kinds of things that we do.

“Your how creates your who.” When you first hear that, you're like, what does that mean? But your how creates your who.

And when you first get here, a lot of our shirts say "how" on them, "how" something, "how" this, "how" that. That means how you go about your business kind of is what makes you different. How we do things is not about who does it or how they do it but it's how they do it. That kind of makes us special. At the end of the day, everybody can do something but it's how you do it that makes you who you are.

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