

Bobby Petrino says it's good to be home

Written by George Browning

Thursday, 09 January 2014 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 09 January 2014 14:01

Coach returns for second

stint at the Cardinal helm

Bobby Petrino met with members of the media shortly after 10:45 Thursday morning at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium.

He held back emotion as he said those famous words, "It's good to be home!"

Much of the press conference was focused on the way Petrino left the city to take a job in the NFL and his off-the-field behavior that led to him being fired as head coach at Arkansas.

"We have a sign in our locker room that says, 'It's a show me world!' and that is what I am going to have to do," he said when asked how he can win back the trust of those who have been vocal against his return. "I think there is nothing I can say, I am just going to have to show them with time that I am here to stay."

Athletic Director Tom Jurich told the more than 70 people who gathered at the press conference that as he interviewed the list of candidates one name continued to stand out above the rest.

Jurich and Petrino had a marathon interview that according to Petrino started at noon and

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ended after 8 p.m.

“We talked about a lot of things,” Petrino said.

One of the subjects was his departure.

“Tom told me he was mad when I left after we worked so hard to build what he had built here,” Petrino said.

Petrino offered no explanation other than to say with the passing of time, he has gained wisdom.

“There have been times as a coach you think, 'I wish I would have known what I know now while I was playing' because I would have been such a better player,” he said. “The same is true of coaching in the sense that I wish I knew then what I know now.”

When questions weren't about Petrino's departures or off-the-field indiscretions, they were about his staff.

“We are going to get started on that right away,” he said. “We won't drag it out.”

One of the reasons Petrino will act quickly because national signing day is approaching.

He wouldn't say how he will handle the student-athletes that were recruited by the former staff except that, “We will look at each player individually.”

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While Petrino said he hasn't spent a lot of time evaluating the roster's returning players, he has been impressed the times he has been able to watch them play.

"I've been a Louisville fan and when I've been able to watch them I've been impressed," he said. "I've been impressed with young players making plays and the way they fly to the football."

He did acknowledge that he is not coming into rebuild, but to build on what former coach Charlie Strong started.

"Charlie and his staff laid a solid foundation and we want to continue and build on what he did on the field and in the classroom," Petrino said.

After the press conference Petrino was taken to another floor in PJCS where he met with boosters and fans.

Once that stuff is over, he will hit the ground running preparing for what he calls an "exciting and challenging schedule next season."

Job one, however, is to make sure the players who are already in the program have a smooth transition.

"That's one of the areas where I've changed the most," Petrino said. "There was a day when I would have coached the player and not the person. That's not how I do it now.

". . . I want to make sure this transition is a smooth one for those kids and we help them adjust to the change."

From the sounds of it, there will be plenty of former players on board to help with that transition.

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more than a dozen took to social media in support of the university bringing Petrino back.

Before leaving the podium a member of the media shouted, "Can we expect a kinder, gentler Bobby Petrino?"

The question got a wide smile from the coach and while he never really answered it, he did manage to say one more time before leaving the room, "It's good to be home!"