

Television Development of Michigan State College in cooperation with the athletic department presents the Spartan Sports Clinic, featuring this week, John Kobs of the Michigan State Coaching Staff, along with the College Station sports director, Bob Shackleton. This program is presented each week at this time to better acquaint you with the fundamentals of the game and take you behind the scenes of collegiate football. And now to the office of the College Station sports Director and Bob Shackleton. [Bob Shackleton] Hello there, everyone, and welcome again to the sixth in our series of Spartan sports clinics. Now, one of the most important phases in collegiate football today is scouting the opposition. One of the best men in the business today is our guest for this week, Mr. John Kobs of the Michigan State Football coaching staff. John, I'd like to ask you a question concerning this very important phase of football and that scouting. What is the value of a scouting report? [John Kobs] Well, Bob, that's a rather moot question. It's been debated, but I think it's pretty well settled now that scouting is a very definite value in the playing of football. They've been doing it for many years, and I think that scouting helps each team be better prepared for the game. It makes a faster, sharper game, less mistakes, and I think generally all around that it has a very definite value. [Bob Shackleton] The scientific aspect of it certainly improves the game, isn't it? [John Kobs] Yes, I would say the game has become very much more scientific and the game has developed, of course, and it takes more scouting now to play the game. [Bob Shackleton] Well, you've been scouting for a number of years, John. How do you actually prepare yourself before you go out, say, to scout Notre Dame on a Saturday before the big game? [John Kobs] Well, Bob, if I were going to scout Notre Dame, the first thing that I would do is to write in and get a press box ticket. You can't scout without a press box ticket. I mean, that's where the people are with the information. You get your ticket and you get your railway ticket or a plane ticket, and then you start preparing probably a couple of weeks in advance. Now, you prepare by looking at, say you've played Notre Dame the year before, you look at the old pictures and get back in your mind their general scheme of play. You watch the players that played and they are going to be back and you get as much information in your mind's eye as you can if you've got the pictures. Of course, you may not have pictures of the game of the previous year's game. So you've got to go on other things. You watch the school paper, you subscribe to that, you get probably a paper or two in the hometown. You keep watching how their practices are going and who the fellows are that are showing up well and the specialists, you read about them and you get an old program of the previous year. That's very important and you've got to remember a lot of numbers. That's a very important thing. It's pretty hard looking down on the field to tell one from another if you haven't seen them, but if you see a number, you know who he is. And you've got to memorize those numbers, and this is especially true before the game. When you go to the game, get there in plenty of time, take your materials along with you. Be sure you've got a pair of field glasses. Get up there well in advance of the game and get yourself all prepared and all your stuff spread out so that you can go to work because you're going to have to go to work in a hurry once you get out there. And that's the way the game starts. Take everything along that you can in your system of scouting. Each fellow has his own system, and he watches the pre game workout and watches the kickers, see who is the best kickers, the two step kickers, the three step kickers, who their best kickers are against the wind, who their place kickers are. The passer is very important. The best receivers. You watch them, see how they receive and watch their speed and try to get as much information you can watching a pre game workout. All the while you're writing this down as best you can and trying to remember what you can't write down. [Bob Shackleton] Well, you mentioned before that you placed considerable value on an old program. How would

you do that? [John Kobs] Well, you can oftentimes write in for a program of the previous year, if you can, or possibly you might ask them for one. They'll generally send you one. A lot of people write to us for programs of previous games, and if we have extras, we send them out. And of course, if we don't have them, you can't get the program. But you do get one of the programs right up in the press box if they have, and you may have to go right to work, memorizing a lot of numbers right away up there. [Bob Shackleton] Well, you use any of the statistical information such as the weights and stuff, is that of any value? [John Kobs] Yes, it is value. Of course, some fellow may give his weight as a certain weight and then he's gotten ten or 15 pounds heavier or something like that. That oftentimes happens. You don't always go by the statistics because sometimes the statistics are a little less than what they should be. But you can use it as a measuring stick. If you see a fellow that's supposed to weigh 200 pounds and you look at him and look down on the field and with your practiced eye, you say, Well, he's at least 225 and you put him down is about that. That's about the way that part works. [Bob Shackleton] John, what are some of the various systems that are used in scouting today? Do you have report cards of some sort or how work? [John Kobs] Well, they're almost every scout that is scouted has a system of his own. I've seen all different kinds, and you can buy books and charts and things that they have for scouting, regular scouting books. A certain fellow likes to do it one way and he writes a book about it and so forth. Now, as far as I'm concerned, I've got a kind of a system of my own. For instance, we have some charts of the football field so that we can get the kickoff teams and the receiving team and so forth. Then I take a notebook and I map every play that's played and what the yards to go on and so forth. But I have a stamp. We have different stamps, single wing stamps, T stamps and things like that, and we stamp those in the book. For instance, with this notebook I have, if we're playing Notre Dame and I can show you here on the chart what I mean? I scout of Notre Dame and they play out the T for a good deal, and this is their basic formation, but they aren't always in that formation. They may have several formations. I've got a stamp something like this two or three on a page so that they use that formation and play a play, I immediately draw the lines on where the play went and how they blocked on the play. Now, for instance, I might see this formation and then a man is sent in motion. If they line up and this fellow starts in motion, I usually put a line something out like that, showing that he has gone in motion and then the play that comes from that. Or, for instance, they may put this man out here. I just cross him off. And put him out there. If this man if this man is here and they take this man out someplace or in motion, I either put him in motion going out here or if he's set out here, I put him out here. So in consequence, if the end moves out, I just put him out there, and so forth. He sort of improvise as you go along. And then the play, say the play started on the 40 yard line, I'd have the formation and I'd put down first 40. That means first on the 40. If the play made say it was a regular handoff through here, then they made 3 yards, I'd put plus three and so on and go along. And then I would try to watch as I go along, how close they get to having a first down then watch what plays they like to use to pick up a first down. And that's the way you get the offensive play. You've got to watch who the best receivers are and how they like to play their plays and who they depend upon in the tough spots. Now, that's on offense. And there's a good deal more to that, too. But coming to defense, you've got to watch. The teams nowadays may use a four man defensive line, a five man, a six, a seven, an eight, and almost every team has a goal line defense, and you want to make sure what they're using and keep track of their defenses on different downs because that's a tip off of what they like to play. So when you're watching their defense, of course, you put down the other team's formation. On another chart, I put down the other team's formation so that I can write the defenses in on that chart. Then you've got to watch

their pass defense, whether you're using a man to man, a zone defense, or a combination of man to man, who the best defense men are back then? Who are the best linemen, who are the best individuals? What centers pass the best on punts and things like that. Do they use a spread punt? Or do they use the regular pump formation and all these different things you're pretty busy, I'll tell you, you're busier than a one arm paper hanger. I'll tell you that. Of course, that's just briefly what you have to go through now scouting. I want to show you here some teams use a lot of scouts. I've known before they had agreements, they'd have a couple of scouts up in the press box. Maybe they'd have one up here in the end, another one there, maybe somewhere on the other side, and they'd have oh a half a dozen scouts. Of course, now they've sort of taken care of that by schools having scouting agreements. They usually scout the Western Conference. You can scout a team with one man three times and that's it. That's been a general pattern. I think that's a sensible way to do it. Otherwise, in this scouting business, the rich schools who was a lot of money could go out and send all kinds of scouts and scout every game and watch for everything, and the team couldn't afford to scout that often, why they'd be at a disadvantage. Consequently, I think the thing has gotten to be more sensible now in the scouting. It's a tough job for one man, but if he's practiced at it and got a good eye and a good memory, why he can do it. [Bob Shackleton] Boy, it seems to me, John that you're awfully busy. Then when you get all this information compiled and the game is all over, then what do you do? Just fly home and then have your meetings or with the coaching staff? [John Kobs] Well, you know, after the games over, that's when you usually have a headache trying to remember a lot of these things, and you go immediately if you've got time to your hotel room and you try to put the plays down, write the things down that you had in your mind, try to remember and get the thing into a logical sequence. That's only part of it. You get that down, and then by that time you decide you need a little rest. Now, I do want to say, however, that I have seen scouts and in our own press box. They had an ingenious method of scouting. They had to take along a tape recorder. They sit there writing out diagrams and While they're writing, they're talking into the tape recorder. They don't have to remember, they just go ahead and keep talking. Then of course, they run it out when they get back home and they synchronize it with the diagrams and so forth and make out a report for the head coach and the coaching staff and for the team. A scout can bring back too much stuff too. You try to bring back the things that are very essential, very pertinent to the play and their style of play. That's something that a good scout always does, but he's got to have a good memory and it takes long hours of work, believe me. [Bob Shackleton] That tape recorder, you call electronic scouting? [John Kobs] I would say so. [Bob Shackleton] What do they have a floor or a switch so they don't have to keep turning? [John Kobs] Yes, they work with their foot and their hands are free and mic is there and they just keep writing and keep talking. There's many times when I think I'd like to have had one of those. So many things happen. I couldn't write them down in time. I think, well, I'll remember it. And your memory, you know, has to go pretty good. [Bob Shackleton] Well, John, this certainly has been informative and very interesting, and I certainly appreciate you being with us on our Spartan sports clinic this week. Thanks to you, too, for being with us on the clinic. Now next week, we're going to talk about something that's very important to collegiate football, and that's the equipment and the uniforms that are used to offer the protection that's given today. I'm sure you won't want to miss it. We're going to have Mr. Irwin Caffee, Michigan State's equipment manager. Now, this is Bob Shackleton saying so long and good luck to everybody. The Spartan Sports Clinic returns again next week over the same station with more inside information behind the scenes of collegiate football. Featured today was John Kobs of the Michigan State Coaching Staff, along with your

College Station sports director, Bob Shackleton. Don't forget next week at the same time for the next edition of the Spartan Sports Clinic. Film clips for this series prepared by Claire Tettemer. Television direction by Harold Niven. This has been a video recording by Michigan State College Television.