

## Biden Hosts Super Bowl Champ Chiefs at White House

June 6, 2023 **by Dan McCue**



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (left) and tight end Travis Kelce (right) present President Joe Biden with a custom Chiefs jersey at the White House on Monday, June 5, 2023. (Photo by Dan McCue)

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden played host to the Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs Monday afternoon, praising the team for playing with “the real joy of the game and love for each other and the great city you represent.”

Standing just feet from the championship Lombardi trophy and with the team gathered behind him, Biden began the roughly 40-minute ceremony with a bit of levity.

“I have to be careful what I say today ... I married a Philly girl,” Biden said, acknowledging both First Lady Jill Biden’s love of the

Philadelphia Eagles, and the fact the Chiefs defeated the Eagles 38–35 in the Super Bowl.

“Fortunately, she is overseas right now, in the Middle East,” Biden said, inspiring a peal of laughter. “She’s a rabid Eagles fan, and ... the way the game ended, I might be in for a rough night.”

“Jill still doesn’t even believe the Eagles player who acknowledged the holding penalty,” the president said, recalling what many consider the turning point in the dying minutes of the game.

With the score tied and just 1 minute 54 seconds to play, Kansas City was driving and had the ball on the Philadelphia 15-yard line.

Faced with a third-and-8 situation, Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes overthrew receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster, meaning Kansas City would have to settle for a field goal and give the Eagles the ball back with almost two minutes left on the clock to either win or at least tie the game.

However, a flag was thrown and Philadelphia cornerback James Bradberry was called for defensive holding, giving Kansas City a fresh set of downs with which to eat away at the clock.

Though the Chiefs did kick a field goal, this time, the field goal opportunity came with only 8 seconds remaining, sealing the team’s victory.

Standing among champions, the president recalled his own experience playing football at the University of Delaware.

“I played freshman football at Delaware,” he said. “Maybe I shouldn’t say this, but you have to have a 2.0 grade point average and I only had a 1.99 ...”

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes meets with reporters outside the White House. (Photo by Dan McCue)

Biden, who had been a defensive back, did return to the team during his junior and senior year, but eventually, he said his mother made him quit to concentrate on his academic studies. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1965 with a double major in history and political science.

Still, he had his moments, he said.

“After running in drills in spring practice, the assistant coach came up to me and said, ‘Biden, you run faster backwards than anyone I’ve ever seen’ ... my political opposition says the same thing to me,” he quipped.

Biden then led the crowd in a moment of silence to mark the death Sunday of Norma Hunt, wife of the late team founder Lamar Hunt, saying he was sending “our condolences to the entire Hunt family.”

After that, he turned his attention to the players themselves and what they had accomplished.

“The Chiefs not only hold the title again, they’re building a dynasty,” Biden said to sustained applause. “Super Bowl champs in 2020 and 2023, dominating the league with 64 wins in the last five years, the best record in the NFL.

“Yet somehow, last summer, people still counted you guys out. But you kept the faith, you overcame injuries, dominating the regular season 14–3,” he continued. “In the playoffs, you beat the Jaguars then the Bengals, avenging last year’s AFC Championship game.

“And then with 200 million people watching yet another thrilling game, you beat the Eagles, becoming the Super Bowl champs again,” he said.

The president then turned and nodded at the Chiefs’ quarterback, a broad smile spreading across his face, saying the dazzling victory was no surprise.

“The boy can play, man,” Biden said of Mahomes to still more laughter and applause. “Two-time MVP, comeback king, the only player in history with a winning record when down by 10 points or more.

“We saw him play with that high ankle sprain, another legendary chapter in the story of one of the greatest quarterbacks of his generation and, I predict, of any generation,” the president said.

“You’ve also got Travis [Kelce], one of the greatest tight ends ever. ... You’ve got a young team built from unheralded draft picks that turned into a deep roster of six All-Pro, an explosive offense and a tough defense.

Kansas City Chiefs Head Coach Andy Reid outside the West Wing of the White House. (Photo by Dan McCue)

“And then there’s Coach Andy Reid,” Biden said. “I was asked by the mayor of Philadelphia to arrest him and take him back to Philly, but I can’t do that.

“Twenty-four seasons, the only head coach in NFL history with at least 100 wins for two different teams. You know, they’ve called him ‘a beacon of offensive brilliance’ ... to me, he’s the guy

who gives full meaning to the word ‘coach’ because he makes you believe in yourself.

“Most important, as much as these guys know about football, they know about life and how to use their platform to make a difference: speaking out for racial justice, honoring veterans as you do, supporting tutors and mentors for local schools,” the president said.

“This is an organization that emphasizes community service and encourages players to create their own charitable organizations, which many have done. And it matters,” he continued.

“You’re showing the power of one of the most elusive things in the world: unity. When people from different backgrounds, each with your own personalities, work together as one team.

“And from that unity, you strive to bring out the best in yourselves and each other. In fact, I’ve heard how even after the wins, Patrick and those players go up to Coach Reid and ask him how we could do better. That’s pretty incredible. That’s pretty incredible.

“For everyone watching, especially our children, that’s the power of this team, the power of sports, and, I might add, it’s the power of this country. It’s the power to remind us who we are as Americans,” the president said in conclusion.

Mahomes and Travis Kelce presented Biden with a personalized Kansas City Chiefs jersey before posing for a team photo with the president.

Later, Reid, Mahomes and Kelce spoke to reporters outside the West Wing of the White House.

“We’re truly thankful to everyone here at the White House,” Reid said. “Everyone here has been really gracious and the time we’ve gotten to spend here today has been truly phenomenal.”

“What I take from this is, it doesn’t matter whether you are a Democrat, or a Republican or an independent ... it’s really about unity ... and the opportunity to come together as the United States and to be a part of that ... I think our guys displayed that today and that was what President Biden expressed to all of us.

“It was just a great time,” Reid added.

Mahomes said he’d never been to Washington, D.C., before and admitted to being blown away while standing in the Oval Office.

“It’s one of those moments you never really imagine happening when you’re a school kid, and to be there with the president, telling you about the history of the pictures and the furniture in his office ... some of it, the furniture, having been around since the 1700s, that’s pretty remarkable.”

“It was pretty eye-opening,” Kelce agreed. “As he [the president] explained why each piece in the Oval Office resonated with him, you could tell he [ran for office] for the right reasons.”

Later, Kelce was asked what it meant to him to be at the White House.

“Well, I don’t know if it’s better than winning the actual Super Bowl, but it’s right up there,” he said. “Just to be able to share this with the American people. It’s an experience I won’t forget.”

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