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An Interview With:

NEBRASKA COACH CONNIE YORI

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined by Coach Yori from Nebraska. Coach, your comments about the upcoming season.

COACH YORI: Well, I always hear coaches talk about how excited they are at this time of the year. That holds true with me as well and the kids in our program. I get a lump in my stomach when I start thinking about the schedule, not only the Big 12 schedule but the non-conference schedule.

I think we've put together a great schedule, but I think we have the players in our program who are able to accept that challenge and perform well. And been quizzing a lot of people in Lincoln, Neb., saying if there's a team that returns four starters from a regular-season league championship, where would you expect that they would be picked in the preseason poll?

And, of course I'm talking about K-State and everybody's saying, well, they'd probably be picked first and second. Because of the nature of our league and how great everybody is and how tremendous the coaching is and how many great players we have in the league, being picked eighth is nothing to feel bad about because we feel we've got some great players in our program and we have a chance to have a really good year.

PETER IRWIN: Earlier they were talking about the coaches becoming rock stars. Which instrument do you play?

COACH YORI: The comb and wax paper.

Q. Your schedule is pretty serious. You alluded to it. Why did you do all that stuff with your schedule with like the LSU? Are you insane?

COACH YORI: Well, some people might say that. And there's probably going to be a rubber room available for me if things don't go well.

But our schedule is enormously difficult. If you haven't looked at it, I'm sure most of you have, but there's a good chance we'll play six teams in the non-conference that won NCAA tournament last year, three of them on the road plus a couple other teams that went NIT, that won one games in NIT.

But we've played the last couple of years as good a schedule as anyone in the Big 12.

And I want to remind my AD about that and remind everyone out there we're playing a great schedule. But it does prepare us. The idea is and the intention of scheduling as well as we have, we hope it gets us ready for those early season Big 12 opponents that we're going to see.

We felt last year that helped us early in the Big 12 season, and we hope that that will hold true for us this year as well.

Q. With the rules change in the men's game with moving the three-point line back a foot and the number of players you've rotated, have you noticed amongst your guard players early on that there's been some sort of confusion with the women's line and men's line, and they've been playing that maybe deeper now because of the rule change in the men's game?

COACH YORI: It's a funny thing because last year we were one of the worst three-point shooters in the league, so now our kids are trying to shoot from 22 feet, so that's probably not a good thing. But you're right, I think it has been a little difficult for our players to pick that up, but I think it will get better as we get going.

Q. Talk about Kelsey Griffin's offseason and what you need as far as leadership from her and maybe the lack of respect or lack of knowledge of her abilities on a nationwide scale?

COACH YORI: Well, unfortunately, from

our standpoint, Kelsey is out of commission right now. She's been out for nine weeks with an ankle injury, and we hope that we have her this year. It's a big question mark on our season.

And with the difficulty of our schedule, we don't have her. I think it could change our season a little bit. So number one we've got to get her back healthy for us to have a good year, and she hasn't done anything in our practices, hasn't really done anything in our conditioning other than be on a bike and swimming pool.

It's important we get her back number one, and those who know Kelsey, she was picked as one of the top five players in the league, and I would agree wholeheartedly. I think she's one of the best players in the league. I think she's a player that's been recognized by the Big 12 coaches as one of the best players the last few years, but hasn't been recognized necessarily on a national level. And we hope that she continues to have a good year. We continue to have a good year, that's going to help us and obviously that's going to help her to gain some of those accolades.

Q. Your first five or six practices, Connie, who do you think is your most improved player from last year? Anybody who has been eye-opening for you that you didn't expect to be?

COACH YORI: We played 10 players essentially double-digit minutes last year and nine of them are returning for us. And really pleased with the improvement of a number of our guards. We were really young at the guard. Now we've seen definite improvement, especially from our guard play. Dominique Kelley, who is here with us today, and Kaitlyn Burke and Kala Kuhlmann. Yvonne Turner is playing good basketball.

We're playing better at the guard spot. And we have been a team that a year ago as well as this year would have played guard by committee and played a lot of guards and haven't relied on three or four players. We relied on six.

So it's pleasing for me to be able to answer that question and say we've had a number of kids that have improved.

Q. Can you talk about just the fact that you've put together two 20-win seasons back to back for only the fourth time in Nebraska history? What has that done for the program and your recruiting class?

COACH YORI: Winning helps. The more you win, the more recognition you get. The more



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recruits take a look at you. We feel it's definitely opened some doors for us in the recruiting process.

Has it allowed us to solidify top 50 recruits? Maybe. Not necessarily. But it's opened doors for us, and I think it's the first step. It's been a process. I think there's a lot of coaches in this league who are great coaches who are going through the same process.

And we made another good step last year which we have had those folks out in the, high school kids recognize that, so that's been real positive.

PETER IRWIN: Thank you, Coach.

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