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An Interview With:

NEBRASKA COACH DOC SADLER

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined by Doc Sadler from Nebraska. Opening comments.

COACH SADLER: Thanks for coming out this morning to talk a little bit about basketball last year. We've got a lot of things to talk about but this year I think it's just basketball. So let's talk a little bit about our team. A lot has been made about our size, a lot has been made about the guys that we had sitting out in our program. A lot of things have changed a little bit I think since we talked a year ago, we don't have the size we had with Aleks.

I really do like our basketball team. It's been the hardest-working basketball team that I've ever coached or been associated with, and we've got that quality of people that are willing to come in and give their best each and every day we have a chance to be successful. And that's what these guys have done.

It's been the hardest preseason and probably it's been even the hardest five or six days of practice through the team. So they've answered the bell. We've got a couple of injuries, but as far as just coming and competing and getting better, they've done that. As far as the size is concerned, I'm not really concerned about that. I think we have to understand that our defensive rebounding is going to be important. But other than that I think the things we can do offensively and defensively can make up for maybe not having a big guy there in the middle.

The redshirts, we had four last year, all of them I think will contribute at some point this season. Two of them have been injured. One hasn't practiced at all. Alex Chapman and the other one Brandon Richardson has only practiced for a few minutes. So Toney McCray and Alonzo Edwards are continuing to get better. I do think as the season goes along both those guys are going

to be major players and help us win some basketball games.

But saying all that, probably the greatest strength that we have is our seniors. We've got four seniors that understand what it takes to win and more importantly understand the work that needs to be put in to give yourself a chance to win. And when your seniors are your four hardest workers, then I think good things are going to happen for you and that's what we're looking for too.

PETER IRWIN: Questions.

Q. Doc, you think that you're going to have the players this year to play the game you like to play and given the transition that many of the programs are going through this season, do you see an opportunity for your guys to make a move?

COACH SADLER: Well, again, I do think we do have the players that I like to coach and that's highly competitive people that can shoot the basketball. We're going to be a good defensive team, there's no question in my mind. But the thing that I've been a little bit surprised about is how well we shoot the basketball.

So with that, yes, we're going to get up and down a little more. We'll press a little bit. Probably a little different than some. It's more a control type situation, but it's one that our guys are going to like to play and it's going to give us a chance to be competitive with our size.

The transition, I don't know that just because we graduate some great players, I think the year before they graduate some great players, the league did. So this league's always going to be good. It's going to be one of the top two or three in the country each and every year. And at least it has been the last few years. So just because our guys that aren't here there's going to be some new guys that some of you already know about that's going to be new in this program.

But I do think it gives us a chance with the four seniors that we have to compete to maybe get in that top half now. And if we can do that and

then we'll continue to take steps in the right direction.

Q. When you look at especially the North and then the Big 12 as a whole, do you see it maybe more wide open than it's ever been, the program like yourself to maybe step up and get to the Kansases and Texases?

COACH SADLER: I think that question was asked a little bit earlier. Obviously we all want to get to where Kansas and Texas have been, especially where Kansas was last year. I think the league is going to really, really balance. But at the same time, Kansas graduated a lot of guys, but if you look at the roster that they brought in, those guys are pretty talented, too.

And I think I heard Bill say the other day that maybe two or three years ago you didn't know that much about some of the guys that just graduated, and that may be the case here.

I think Missouri, with all the guys they've got coming back, could be a team. I think it's a little bit more balanced. And so, therefore, the importance of every single game is going to be really, really important. You're not going to be able to end up at the end of the year looking at who the maybe 10th, 11th, 12th finishes are, not where we all think they're going to finish, but where they're at, you don't need to have slipped up and let one of those teams beat you twice or maybe beat you once, or you're not going to be up there where you need to be. And that's what we are.

Q. Couple of your receivers, JUCO last year, can you talk about the process they had last year and at what point are they this year?

COACH SADLER: I think that you get a chance to visit with a lot of people and I think everybody knows how close I was to Coach Haskins, and Coach always told me if you recruit a junior college player, do it with the understanding it's going to take them eight or 10 games to get ready to play at the level that they need to play at.

And I think that was the case last year with Steven and Cole, I knew how good they would be. We stuck with them. And I would say the last 10 or 12 games of the conference play those two guys were as good as anybody that I would like to have.

So I think he saw the shooting percentages go up. Their scoring averages go up and I haven't seen anything but to see that that's going to continue to improve. I think they're ready to have a great year, but the season that they had

the last half was probably directly related to the success that we had.

PETER IRWIN: Thank you, Coach.

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