

**October 21, 2009**



An interview with:

## **BAYLOR COACH KIM MULKEY**

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined by Coach Mulkey from Baylor University.

Coach, welcome. And your comments, and then we'll take questions.

COACH MULKEY: I really don't have any. I'm ready for questions.

PETER IRWIN: We'll take questions, then. That's easy enough.

**Q. Talk about the opportunity that you'll have this season to play Louisiana Tech with Teresa Weatherspoon as the coach, and you have three former Tech coaches in the building.**

COACH MULKEY: Well, I'm excited that Teresa and her athletic director agreed to play us. I tried very hard this year to play teams that were coached by former Lady Techsters. We'll have one against Jennifer White at St. Edward's team. Jennifer played with me at Louisiana Tech. Coach Barmore coached her. And then Angela Lawson, Incarnate Word, we'll play them also. Teresa Weatherspoon. At the time we scheduled the game, Tennessee Tech was coached by Amy Brown.

So I made a conscious effort to try to play as many schools to allow Coach Barmore the opportunity to see his former players in action.

**Q. You lost four starters. Your top three scorers, your top two rebounders. You're picked to win the conference. Were you surprised?**

COACH MULKEY: Yes.

**Q. Elaborate.**

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COACH MULKEY: Elaborate? I don't know. You'd have to ask those coaches that picked us. I wasn't allowed to vote for my own team, and I would imagine a lot of that has to do with Brittney Griner, the number one recruiting class in the country. We haven't accomplished anything.

You lose 60 percent of your scoring, 50 percent-something of your rebounding. There are teams returning in this league that have many starters, if not an entire starting five back. I was very surprised.

**Q. I guess then tell us about these freshmen. You said you don't want to have them rushed along before they've done anything, but what do you think they can do this season?**

COACH MULKEY: Well, I'm going to treat them as I do all freshmen. They're going to have to take time to learn. They're very talented, but talent doesn't win anything.

I think it's going to take a long period of time for them to adjust to the college game. Many years they have not ever had to do. They've never had to be intense for long periods of time. Most of them have never had to play defense in their life.

So those are the types of things we're spending a lot of time doing right now. And one day, when it all comes together and all of them are on the same page, I think it can be a very special team.

**Q. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about Brittney Griner. Not everyone's gotten a chance to see her. You start reading the numbers, and 52 dunks or whatever it is, and you kind of just starting to piece together how special of a player she is. How special of a player is she?**

COACH MULKEY: Well, I've been playing basketball a long time. I have coached the last, gosh, I don't know, 20-something years, but I've played at the highest level. I've played against 7'2" Russian. I've played against a 7-foot Chinese girl.

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I've played with Americans that, you know, are 6'8", 6'9". I've seen the dunks in collegiate basketball. I've seen them in international basketball.

I've never seen a girl that can effortlessly dunk it any way she wants, left-handed, right-handed, two-hand jam. I think the only dunk I've not ever seen her do is the windmill. But there's more to Brittney Griner than just dunking the basketball. She understands there's so much more to basketball than dunking.

What she is learning is the intensity that she has to play with and practice with every day. She's learning she's got to move her feet and guard people. She is just someone that, you know, not many of us in our lifetime will ever have the opportunity to watch or, I know, coach ever again.

She's going to be a very good basketball player. Right now she's probably more known for her dunks than anything. But when she's in the weight room for a longer period of time and she's played at this level for a longer period of time and had time to adjust, I think she's really going to be special.

**Q. Can you talk about your -- the returners who are going to be leading. Kelli Griffin and Melissa Jones, and just how good a postseason they had last year.**

COACH MULKEY: I think, when you talk about our returning players, there are three that have -- that just stand out more so than anybody else on our team. I think you start with Melissa Jones. She's our team captain this year. Melissa had an outstanding sophomore year. She was Sixth Player in this league. She's just a young lady that's very versatile. She plays the perimeter.

But when we were hit with injuries in the playoffs, I used her some in the post. Tremendous rebounder for her size, just a competitor. Can hit the open three. Probably could play any position on the floor if you needed her to.

She practices so hard and just her leadership ability from the way she practices is contagious.

Kelli Griffin, I thought, when the season ended last year, was playing as good a basketball as she's played since she's been at Baylor. She's also a junior, and she is a young lady that can deliver the basketball to people when they're open. She won several games for us at the end with shooting or making a layup or just making the play that needed to be made.

Morghan Medlock is our only senior, and she unfortunately has only been in our program one year, came in and did a tremendous job off the bench. Could have easily started for us, and she's playing extremely well in practices. She's a post player that will give guidance to Griner and Mariah Chandler, the two freshmen post players.

**Q. I guess, if you're saying you're surprised somewhat that you guys were picked the favorite, would you like to say who you thought might be the favorite for this season?**

COACH MULKEY: Well, I think there are three teams that have returning players: Kansas, Texas, and A&M. I think those three teams stand out to me with who they have returning. So I would say those three.

PETER IRWIN: Okay, Coach. Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

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