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An interview with:

TEXAS TECH COACH KRISTY CURRY

PETER IRWIN: Coach Curry has now joined us from Texas Tech University.

Coach, welcome. Your comments.

COACH CURRY: Thank you. We're real excited to get started. We feel like we've had our best incoming freshman class since we've been at Tech and have six new faces. I think they bring a lot of athleticism and size.

We're really excited about the fact that Kaylan Talley and Lindie Kimbro may finally be able to play at Texas Tech because of injuries. Those two redshirted a year ago. They're in practice, and it's good to see their faces out there.

We feel our returnees bring a lot to the table. I feel Kierra Mallard had a tremendous freshman season. She's done a great job of getting herself in the best shape of her life and really matured a lot.

Jordan Murphree, Timila Martin, Ashlee Roberson are really leading the way as seniors. I think Jordan Barncastle is stronger and more aggressive.

As young as we are -- and maybe we'll have a lot of kids who haven't played in this league -- I think we have a chance to really do some special things.

I know we're not expected to do that, but I think no one expected more than we do of ourselves. It's like I tell them, age doesn't define beauty. Hopefully our experience level in this league won't define our beauty this year.

We're loving the challenge. And, again, I'm just happy to have a great incoming class, and hopefully some healthy bodies this year.

PETER IRWIN: We'll take questions from the floor.

Q. With all the changeover now, what's the biggest difference that you think you'll see in your team?

COACH CURRY: I think the athleticism. I think we're a lot bigger on the perimeter. Again, I think we're more athletic. That's what you have to have in this league to be more successful, especially in the South.

We're bigger, so we're real excited about what our incoming class brings. You know, we have four commitments in this class that went 4-for-4.

So we feel like we're recruiting the type of athlete and the level of talent that we need to be successful in this league.

Q. I guess two questions. Not knowing exactly what these lineups are going to be like, but it looks like you have a potential for a really big team at times you can put out on the court. Is that going to be the case? And, also, did you feel like last year you made enough progress just in terms of, you know, the program?

COACH CURRY: I think we are making progress. You know, I think you see that in the fact that we're able to do some things the past couple of years and some key wins, some big wins. Just not that second or third or fourth win that we needed to get in the tournament.

It's really helped us in recruiting because we have been able to beat the Texases and the A&Ms, and we have done some good things.

Just not enough, so it's a matter of what that's done for us in recruiting. I think that's given folks they're going to be able to do that. A great opportunity to come in and play immediately.

We can be big. You know, I did lose 6'4" Shauntal Nobles to an achilles tear for the year, our freshman we felt like would have contributed a lot.

But, again, having Kaylan Talley. We have a waiver filed with the NCAA on Teena Wickett, who's 6'4" and brings a tremendous amount of talent.

If some things can fall into place and stay

healthy, I think we may can surprise a lot of folks.

Q. Kristy, can you just talk about what you expect out of Jordan this year.

COACH CURRY: Well, I tell you, Jordan has done a tremendous job of leading the way all summer, this fall. She's very motivated. I see a different look in her eye. She's got a swagger about her. She's playing her best basketball.

She brings a great work ethic, very unselfish. Right now she's really taking these young kids under her wing, and she's trying to show them the way.

There's nobody I would rather have leading the way. I will say that I think Ashlee Roberson has done a tremendous job. She's really taken her game to a new level, worked hard in the off-season, very versatile.

So I think those two really understand what it's about. You know, Jordan's been the only kid that's been there with me for four years, so I have a lot of respect for her. I have a lot of respect for what she's been through personally with her mom and having breast cancer and how she's fought through a lot of adversity. She's ready for a big senior year and has a chance to be as good as anybody in this league. Hopefully, she can consistently do that for us night in and night out.

Q. You mentioned a couple times surprising people. Did you feel a little bit snubbed being picked tenth?

COACH CURRY: Not at all. You know what, I've learned that what's on paper really doesn't matter. We don't talk about that. You know, we don't talk about playing Tennessee in November. We don't talk about going to Baylor in January. Or, you know, playing up here in March.

We're just talking every day about getting better. And if we can get better with each day, each month is going to take care of itself. Right now we're working for January and getting ready for the Big 12 season.

So what's on paper really doesn't matter. Obviously, you know, the past three years we haven't been respected very much, and I understand and respect that. But at the same time, nobody expects more than we do of ourselves. Within our family, we know what our expectations are and our goals. We're working toward that every day just getting better.

Q. I wonder if you could talk about how Mallard, what you look for her. She had such a good season last year.

COACH CURRY: She had a great freshman year in a league that was very dominant in the South as far as the post play. Knowing that some of those dominant posts are gone, I think she has the opportunity to really, you know, once Jordan's gone, be the face of this program.

The thing that I've noticed so much about Kierra is she's really matured on and off the floor. She's doing a great job of really stepping out early in her career and saying the hard things.

You know, you always -- I've talked a lot with her about your best players have to be your hardest workers, and she's really done a nice job of trying to turn the corner with that.

I think she has a chance to have a great year as a sophomore, which is exciting for us.

Q. Kristy, you've talked about needing athleticism to compete in the Big 12. If you don't have that, if you lag behind in that area, where does that show up on the court?

COACH CURRY: Well, I don't think there's any question in the South it shows up on the boards, it shows up defensively, it shows up in transition. It shows up in a lot of areas.

Again, whether it's size and athleticism, you know, we also too want to be fundamentally sound. So I think it's a great combination, and that's something we were able to do at Purdue that put us in a position to be successful in that league.

In this league, it's the best league in the country from top to bottom. Night in and night out, you've got to have the athleticism, the size, and the depth.

I think depth is really important too. That's another area I'm really excited about. As young as we are, we have a lot more depth this year if we can keep everybody healthy. You don't have to always count on your time-outs or timing with that.

Putting people in and fresh bodies and the physicality of things really make a difference.

Q. How much do you think the whole -- I guess the dynamic with the Paris twins gone because they dominated so much of the conference the last four years. How much does that change the way people are going to look at the conference this year?

COACH CURRY: You know, I just -- I

think the thing I enjoyed the most was sitting back and observing those two. How they handled themselves as people and as players and the recognition that they gave this league was just unbelievable.

You know, I think it gives a Mallard, I think it gives a Griner what they can continue the tradition that the Paris twins have put in place.

From Starks to Gant, I mean, Player, Morrow, there's a lot of faces in this league that did so much. That was a tremendous senior class.

I think a lot of young players can look to fill their void and carry on the tradition they've put in place.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, thank you very much.

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