

**October 22, 2009**



An interview with:

## **BAYLOR COACH SCOTT DREW**

PETER IRWIN: We are now joined by Coach Scott Drew from Baylor.

Coach, welcome. Your opening comments, sir.

COACH DREW: It's great to be here again. Wife's not in labor this time, so I can relax and have a great time here.

As far as the Baylor bears go, we lost the winningest class in Baylor history with our senior class. Very excited for all the new players we have. We recruited well. We're excited for the season. Really excited for the Big 12 conference. This is my seventh season, and by far this is the best top to bottom teams have been as far as parity and outstanding players.

I think the facts and stats speak for themselves when seven of the top ten players returned. We've done very well in the postseason the last few years. And I'm very excited.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, thank you. We'll take questions from the floor.

**Q. I hope I'm pronouncing it right. Udoh.**

COACH DREW: Ekpe Udoh.

**Q. Can you talk about him and what he's going to do for you guys.**

COACH DREW: Especially key, the last several years, defensively is where we've struggled. You bring in a player like Ekpe, and you bring make a better defensive team, better defensive post. He's going to make us better when opponents have to get in the paint and score over the top of him.

Any time you break Chris Webber's blocked shot record, you know you're an impact

defensive player. What's pleased us with Ekpe is he's very good offensively as well, and we knew he'd be very good defensively, but we did not know he'd be as good offensively as he is.

**Q. Like Kevin Rogers?**

COACH DREW: Similar to Kevin Rogers. At the same time, 6'10", 245 pounds. A little bit bigger. And Ekpe likes to bang in the paint a little bit more. Kevin liked to face up a little bit more.

**Q. Scott, the last couple of seasons, you know, you've been good early, good late. Have you figured out how to put some meat in the middle yet?**

COACH DREW: Well, this year hopefully we'll be good early because the last two years when you have an upperclassmen team, it's so easy to be good early.

This year with so many new players putting on the jersey for the first time, I think we're going to get better as the season progresses. I think our best ball should be at the end of the season.

But as far as I think the biggest reason we've struggled in the middle is because of the Big 12. I think that's a compliment to the Big 12.

Last year we started out. We were ranked for eight weeks, played and beat a number of top teams. One at Washington State, beat Arizona State, beat Providence. But then when we got in the Big 12, we hit some tough teams and lost some close games.

Again, I don't think people realized how good the Big 12 was until after the NCAA tournament last year, and then with most schools better this year than they were a year ago, everyone realizes it could be -- and I think is -- the best conference in America.

**Q. Coach, I was just wondering, with your experience through the years with your dad coaching, how have you seen just the general style of coaching change through the years?**

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COACH DREW: I think the thing that's really been consistent is the better the players, the better the coach. I've learned that from my dad. The more talent you bring in, the easier things are.

But I think the game is a lot faster than it used to be. I think coaches really emphasize transition offense, getting the ball in quick, especially in the Big 12. If you can't stop transition, you're going to really struggle defensively.

And then on the offensive end, we spend so much more time working on getting the ball up and down the court.

So I think that's the biggest difference from probably 15 years ago to today.

**Q. Scott, is Udoh good enough to make you guys better than coaches have predicted for you in the league this year? What can he do to facilitate that?**

COACH DREW: I think, first of all, with the turnover we've had, you would expect to be picked low. At the same time, I think the group that left have left the foundation. I think we've recruited well.

The returning players like Tweety and Lace and Ekpe and Josh, Quincy and Fred -- people that have been in the program and won the last two years coming off two back-to-back 20-minute seasons for the first time in school history, coming off two postseasons.

I think you have momentum and gives you a chance. Obviously, as a team and a coaching staff, I think we hope to be better picked in the preseason.

But it's a nice compliment to the seniors because when you lose 50 percent of your rebounding and scoring and assists, you expect to be picked low.

**Q. Scott, you said the game's gotten faster over the last 15 years. Why is that? Is that players like to play that way and coaches kind of went along? Why has that happened?**

COACH DREW: I think twofold. It starts out with players like to play that style. So I think coaches have adapted their style to players' strengths.

And then at the same time, if you want to get good recruits, you probably need to play a style that they want to play in.

Strength coaches have really helped. Players lift a lot earlier. Physically, they're stronger than they used to be. Athletically, they're better. So just makes for more an up-and-down game.

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Again, I think coaches adjust to the players. If you have teams and players that can go up and down, you're going to play to their strengths. Fans like to watch that type of style as well.

**Q. Scott, how do you see Tweety -- or have you seen Tweety's demeanor change now that, quote, this is his team?**

COACH DREW: Well, I think Tweety's one of those players that welcomes a challenge like this. For three years playing along so many good guards, like Aaron Bruce, Henry Dugat, Curtis Jerrells. Now he has a chance to control the ball more, control the team more.

I think he's very excited about that opportunity because, when he came out of high school, that's something that he did. So very excited.

Any time a coach has a senior point guard, he feels good going into -- better going into a season. So I think Tweety will take a step forward this year compared to maybe more backseat role in the past.

He's been our best defensive guard the last couple of years. We've put him on the best offensive player. And now I think he'll get a chance to show more of his offensive ability.

**Q. Another newcomer question. Nolan Dennis seems to be that tweener size. What do you project for him?**

COACH DREW: The great thing about Nolan is he can play -- his versatility. He can play multiple positions. He can play the one, two, and three.

Nolan is one of those players physically, because of his length, in the next couple of years he's going to be a lot better than he is now as he puts on 20 pounds of muscle.

But as far as at the end of the day, his versatility and length and skill set is going to make him an outstanding player for Baylor over the years.

PETER IRWIN: Thanks, Coach. We appreciate it.

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