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An interview with:

COACH LINDA LAPPE

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Coach Linda Lappe from Colorado. Coach, welcome to the Big 12.

COACH LAPPE: Thank you. It is great to be here. I thank you all for coming. Being a new coaching staff at the University of Colorado, we are even more excited than most other coaches at this time because we now get to start to work with our players and really get to see kind of what they have on the floor and, you know, what they bring and start to get to implement our new offensive systems, our new defensive systems and really, you know, start to develop what we're going to be all about this year.

I'm very excited and happy to be one of the two new coaches to the Big 12. It is a great conference. I'm even more proud to be at the school that I was able to attend, University of Colorado. It is a great place. I'm so excited to get going with this season, and we've talked a lot about getting back to the Colorado tradition and the Colorado way and starting to implement the Colorado way and what that's all about and kind of go from there.

So we -- our players have done a tremendous job. They have worked really diligently throughout the last couple of months to help us ensure that we can have a successful season this year. They continue to improve every single day. And they continue to learn and be extremely coachable. I think that's one of the things that I have been most impressed with, with our team, is their ability to learn and their willingness to learn and look you in the eye when you are coaching them. It doesn't matter what you are saying to them. And they take it and they run with it and they continue to get better.

We're led by one of our seniors, Brittany Spears. She is poised to have another good season for us. We have asked her to continue to

get better in her game, both offensively and defensively, as well as her leadership.

Julie Seabrook and Britney Blythe have also been two of our more vocal leaders throughout this year. They have both done a great job. They are working extremely hard. Chucky Jeffery and Meagan Malcolm-Peck had good freshman seasons in the fact they got a lot of playing time and they are ready to have good sophomore seasons. We have four freshmen that are coming in and starting to impress us already. And we are going to need some minutes from those guys as well.

So we're looking forward to a good year and, you know, we are looking forward to getting things started off on a good foot and continuing to improve as the season goes along.

Q. Ask you the same parochial question I asked Robin: Growing up in Iowa, the things you learned in Iowa, how have they helped you get to where you are now? Both that and also being at Drake, how has that experience helped you to progress through your coaching career?

COACH LAPPE: Well, I have been extremely lucky to have always had really good coaches growing up, not just in basketball but in every sport that I was able to play through junior high, high school, and in college. Girls basketball in the state of Iowa is probably unlike any other, and it has been like that for a long time. They have storied traditions and so I was lucky enough to be from the state of Iowa. And really get to know what girls basketball was all about and to feel really special playing girls basketball in Iowa.

Coaching at Drake, I think it was great. Amy Stevens was the lady that I worked for and just taught me a lot about the game and, you know, really expanded my basketball knowledge as well as how to run a team and I think she does a great job there. I learned so much in my first three years working for her. So I couldn't -- I couldn't be happier to have grown up where I grew up. And I'm extremely fortunate to have always -- I

can't think of one coach that I have ever had that hasn't been good. I don't know too many people that have been able to say that. So ...

Q. Bianca Smith took and made about a third of the team's three-pointers last year. How do you plan to replace that perimeter offense?

COACH LAPPE: Well, we've got to get easier shots. We've got to move the ball. We've got to set better screens. We've got to really teach our players how to work with each other, set each other up, and we've got to get some easier shots. We have got to get the ball in the post. We have to establish a post game. We have to establish inside, back to the outside.

Brittany Spears can also shoot really, really well and she will be able to shoot better when she is open. I think that's a huge part of that as well. A lot of different ways that you can figure out how to score other than shoot 3s. And I think that's one part of the game. But I think there is a lot of the other parts of the game, I think the 15-foot pullup jumper is something you don't see very often, if you can be pretty good at that, you can score a lot of points and win a lot of games with the midrange jumper as well as the post game.

Q. Linda, you were part of teams that perennially went to the NCAA tournament, went as far as the Elite Eight. It strikes me that sometimes it can be easy to lose that feeling in a program and hard to get it back. Being an alum and Colorado meaning so much to you, how do you use that to try to accelerate that process to get that feeling back?

COACH LAPPE: Well, I think we have to teach our players all about those years and who came before them. They have to know the players that were able to establish that tradition and that wasn't me. Those were players that came way before I got there even.

And so to start to teach them about the Colorado way -- and that's part of that Colorado way, is, you know, here's what we have to do and here's how we play the game and here's how tough we have to be.

You know, I think the mental side of the game is a part that we are lacking right now, and we're spending a great deal of time on that. You know, it is not necessarily all about the Xs and the Os. You know, a lot of it -- there is going to be a point in every game where you can go one of two

directions. You can either get better and rise through adversity or you can fold. We want to be a team that gets better in those situations and continues to get better, and I think that's what those Colorado teams in the past were able to do because they knew that they had the confidence and the training that they had been through, and they had confidence in playing on their home floor.

So we really have to start to implement and teach our players all about the players and the teams that came before them. And we've already started to do that.

Q. You mentioned that you need Brittany to get better also. She's done well her first three years and she has a good work ethic. What specifically have you challenged her with to do that?

COACH LAPPE: We have challenged her first and foremost of going hard all the time. It doesn't matter what drill, it doesn't matter what sprint. We think she should win every single sprint. We think she should be the best defender in every drill, and the best offensive player in every single drill and hold her accountable to doing that every single time and not being okay with not doing those things. She could be -- she could be one of the best defenders in the league if she really wanted to and if she really put her mind to it. She is strong, she is athletic, she is quick.

When she gets into it, she has a defensive mentality. Offensively, she's got to continue to get better at reading situations, being patient. Sometimes she is a little bit impatient with her game and coming off screens too quickly and those sorts of things. So really challenge her to just learn and wait, and we watched some film.

And then vocally, she needs to continue to get better. That's not one of her strong suits, and she will tell you that. But at the same time, you know, she says, well, they have never really asked me to do that and we're asking her to do that this year. And I think she's poised to be able to lead a little bit more vocally than she ever has in the past.

Q. Is there some -- there is a lot of newness at Colorado, the new staff and then next year new conference and how you sort of build even though you are going to be experiencing a lot of new things in the next two seasons.

COACH LAPPE: I think with anything new

comes a lot of excitement and a level of excitement that you don't necessarily get in any other situation. And so we have to really use that and build on that and focus on that.

And, you know, we -- we are in the Big 12 this year, and it is a great conference. We know if we prepare to do well in the Big 12, that we will be just fine in the Pac 10. And we focus on one day ahead and we can't focus on -- too much further ahead than that. We just have to continue to get better every single day. We have to use all those new experiences and new things that are to come to really get us excited to be where we are.

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