

October 20, 2010



An interview with:

COACH BILL FENNELLY

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Coach Bill Fennelly from Iowa State. Welcome. And your opening comments?

COACH FENNELLY: Good morning, everybody. Certainly appreciate you being here and it is always fun to come to Kansas City. This is a very, very special place, a place that loves women's basketball and great facility here. Like everyone else, we are excited to start the new season and certainly appreciate all you do for our athletes and what you do is important. Certainly not just for our league but for the kids that you cover. So thank you very much for being here this morning. Enjoy your day.

Q. You mentioned facility, two questions. One, how's your facility? And then, two, you talk about this facility but you don't play here. Do you like Minneapolis and would you like to play here? Would you like to see a separate week? Talk about facilities.

COACH FENNELLY: Our facility, I think, will be ready. The people have worked very hard to get Hilton ready to go. As far as I know, we have an exhibition game November 4th and we are anticipating playing. It might not be completely done, but we can play there as far as we know.

I think any time we can come to Kansas City, I love coming here. Our fans love coming here. I think Minneapolis is a great facility. I love playing there. I have a lot of fond memories. Certainly the Sprint Center is one of the nicest arenas in the country. If we could play here, great. I don't -- the court is the same. I'm in the minority maybe worrying about where you play, what you play.

But I am totally -- the first question I am going to get in trouble of the year. I am absolutely, totally against separating the tournaments, have

been, always will be. This is basketball. It is a week of basketball that our fans love, look forward to. People plan their vacations around a week of Big 12 basketball. It is a special time of year. So I certainly hope they always do it the way we are doing it now.

Like at home, they don't ask my opinion.

Q. You are probably the most prolific Tweeter in the Big 12. Can you talk about the philosophy behind your Twitter and who you recommend following?

COACH FENNELLY: Who do I recommend following? Darren Lavelle is a great guy to follow if you are a Twitter person. Business guy, has a great business mind for sports. So that's one of the people. And, of course, the Big 12 always.

You know, it is just something I fell into. I really don't know why I started doing it. I enjoy it. I think our fans like it. I think our fans like to be engaged. I love talking about sports. I love talking about St. Louis Cardinals baseball. I love talking about anything Iowa State. It has probably gotten me in trouble a few times by some of the comments I have made.

None of them are malicious, but it is who I am and I like to be engaged with people on a daily basis. And it is fun. I enjoy it. My wife hates it. She thinks it is stupid. But I really do, I enjoy doing it.

Number one, it is a way for our fans to be connected to our program on a daily basis and feel like they know things about our team and makes you feel like a normal person because unlike most coaches, most people don't think coaches are normal and have a life. I think it is encouraging to show people that you do have other things besides basketball that you're passionate about and you enjoy. I enjoy doing it. It is fun.

Q. The point guard question, that's obvious Lacey went on to win a WNBA championship this past season. It just seems like this is a little bit different situation.

Sometimes when Iowa State has been in, you maybe have more answers in the post than you do immediate answers at guard.

COACH FENNELLY: You are exactly right. It is the first time in my 16 years at Iowa State that we don't walk into practice feeling like we have a point guard that is really good. I mean, every point guard we have ever had at Iowa State has been drafted. It started with Tara Gunderson and all the way through.

It is the first year where you don't have someone like that. We have five people we are trying. And it will be a little bit more by committee than in the past. I like the kids that we're using, Chassidy Cole has done a good job, Lauren Mansfield will probably be the two people that have the best that have a best chance. Kelsey Harris is a freshman guard from California, is not a point guard by nature but I think she can play the position.

Alison Lacey, we recruited her as a small 4 and she turned out to be a first-round WNBA pick as a point guard. Practices are harder. I could leave practice last year for 20, 30 minutes and come back and Hoss would say, We are fine, you can go back. This year I have to be there more and act like I know what I'm doing.

But we'll find someone. But you are right, for our point guard to be a good player, the players around them have to be better. Kelsey Bolte, our post players, Jessica Schroll, if those kids do what we are supposed to do, our point guard play will be enough to have a chance to be successful.

Q. Kim Mulkey was up here saying she thinks she has probably the most talented and deepest team she has had at Baylor. I guess, what's your perspective how salty they might be?

COACH FENNELLY: I'm on the preseason -- I do the ESPN Top 25 poll, I voted them second in the country and I believe that. They are. They're very talented. I think -- obviously they have the most unique player maybe in the history of the women's game in Brittney Griner. When Melissa Jones is healthy, that's a kid that changes their team.

We beat Baylor at our place. Melissa couldn't play. And I think that kid changes their team, changes the dynamics of how they play, her competitive spirit. She acts, she plays like Kim played. So I think you put her on the court with those other kids, they are, there is no weak spot on their team. And you are talking about a team that it

is a lot better. And oh, by the way, they were in the Final Four last year. Without question I think they are a team that has a chance legitimately to the be a National Championship contender and certainly -- and I think -- I have been in the league a long time, longer than anyone.

And so my reward this year is we get to go to Baylor to start the Big 12 season on national television. So I want to talk to the Big 12 people afterwards over here to ask how that happened.

So we get them right off the bat. So get it out of the way.

Q. Baylor is the team to beat. Who looks like the top challengers in your opinion to maybe contend with?

COACH FENNELLY: The two teams that I would say have a chance -- and you are talking about a 16-game schedule. I think Texas A&M is very, very talented, well-coached, play a different style. They will certainly be there at the end. I think Kansas is a team that will be very good. They're deep. They're strong. They are in the post. I think last year unfortunately for Danielle McCray, she got hurt. Those kids played at the end of the year.

I can see them like Nebraska. Two years ago Kelsey Griffin got hurt, all those kids had to play a lot key roles and, by the way, you throw Kelsey Griffin on their team. I think Kansas is that kind of team.

When I did my poll, I did Baylor, A&M and Kansas.

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