

October 20, 2010



An interview with:

COACH DEB PATTERSON

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Coach Patterson from the University of Kansas. I said that wrong, Kansas State right off the bat. I knew I did it. Sorry about that.

COACH PATTERSON: That's okay.

THE MODERATOR: Kansas State University. Coach, would you like to make some opening comments?

COACH PATTERSON: Well, we're excited about the season ahead. I think with our sophomore point guard Brittany Chambers leading this basketball team, we've got, I think, one of the best young point guards in the league. And that definitely excites me. We've had some great point guards at Kansas State, and I think she lines up with the very best we've ever had. And so it's neat to think about starting a season with her at the helm.

I think with Jalana Childs, who is also here at media day, she has the potential to be one of the great breakout players in the league this season, I think. I'm very excited about the summer that she's put in. With the loss of Ashley Sweat, we are going to need a real step-up presence in the post. I'm very much looking forward to what I expect Jalana is going to bring to the floor this season.

So we're young. We're picked, I believe, ninth in the league. But we've never been too preoccupied with where we're picked. I think we've got a team that will fight extremely hard all season long and it's our goal headed into the season to find our way into post-season play. So that's really how we're approaching the season. And we'll build around those two players and looking forward to competing in this great league and looking forward to having that Big 12 tournament here in Kansas City. Very excited about that.

Q. Coach, can you talk about the new rule change that's allowed you guys to start practice a little bit earlier, but obviously you have to spread those practices out a little bit more. How have you dealt with your scheduling and do you like the earlier start?

COACH PATTERSON: Well, I think I'm in the minority, but I love more practice, and I've enjoyed having the extra days in the gym with our players.

I think the players certainly enjoy a tighter window relative to the conditioning, so I think it's more fun for them to be in the gym. But for us, particularly with the young team, I think it has been real valuable. Really, we have just worked our extra days around the calendar, when we are recruiting, when we're not. Logistically we haven't had any special equation. We really have just worked those extra days in around other things that we might have obligations with and to.

But I like those extra days with my players and I think you -- you would have to ask them, but I think they have enjoyed it as well.

Q. What about Alina. I heard that she had a pretty phenomenal summer for you and this is probably going to be a season when you do need people to sort of step out of their comfort zones because -- not just Ashley, but Kari not being there.

COACH PATTERSON: Yeah, I think Alina looks good right now in our early stages of practice. And she had plantar fasciitis procedures in both of her feet last year. And I think people will be very surprised by what they see from her.

She's got the potential to be a very agile, almost Ashley-like scorer. She can shoot the three. She can drive the ball. She's linear. And very agile. Obviously has not proven herself or had the opportunity to compete much, but she almost has a game that is a mirror of what you might have seen from Ashley in terms of the versatility factor.

The challenge for her will be, again, the speed of the game and making the transition

defensively, but I like her potential as a scorer.

Right now in the early phases of practice, she's looked very good for us. So if we can get her to be a physical presence in this league as is required, then she's got great, great upside and a lot of basketball ahead of her.

Q. With the WNBA season Shalee had, making it to the finals, what does it mean to have a player of that caliber come back as a coach? She has chosen to coach as opposed to going overseas, to have her working with especially as many young players as you have.

COACH PATTERSON: I think it's a tremendous advantage for us to have someone like Shalee, you know, walk away from the WNBA finals and come with all of the knowledge and the experience that you gain competing at that level, whether you are in the finals or not. But just being in that caliber of basketball and then walking into the gym with your players and being able to share and communicate what you've learned, what you know, the intensity required even off the court.

The perspective that you gain from being around players from other programs all over the country, many of whom and some of whom are playing international basketball. It is just a great piece for your young people to have in their program each and every day and it is also an element, I think, that in a recruiting picture is significant to prospects in that it's nice to hear the perspective of a coaching staff member who is playing at the highest level of the game and who has achieved great things and who is -- you know, on a day-to-day basis really competing with and against the best.

And when you are trying to involve yourself with some of the best prospects in the country, that increases your credibility, I think. And so, certainly in all those respects, it is a great positive for our program and for our young team. She is a great voice of experience, not just from her Kansas State days, but now from what she has experienced playing for the Atlanta Dream.

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