

October 20, 2010



An interview with:

COACH ROBIN PINGETON

THE MODERATOR: Next up is Robin Pingeton, who is our new coach at the University of Missouri. Coach, welcome. Your opening comments?

COACH PINGETON: Thank you. First of all, it is great to be here with you guys today. And I just want to thank everybody for coming out and being a part of this press conference. Certainly an honor and a privilege to be in the Big 12. Really looking forward to being a part of this great, great conference. I have been in Missouri now for six months and it has certainly been a dead sprint and we have a lot of work to do.

The things that you will always find with me, I'm very real and very transparent in regards to who I am, what I'm about, where our program's at. And we've -- we have got just a lot of work to do. And it is going to be a process. It is going to be a journey. It will take a lot of hard work. I'm really proud of our players. Our buy-in has been tremendous from top to bottom out of our players.

Our seniors have just done an outstanding job in regards to their leadership, the sense of urgency that they approach every day with, and their productivity on the court.

Right now I feel like we go about two steps forward, one step back. Even on those days that maybe it's not as productive as we'd like on the court, I just feel like there has been so many great teachable moments for us in regards to build a family within our program and developing better basketball players, better teammates and preparing these girls to be successful in life.

So it is -- we don't get much sleep around there in Columbia. The journey has been fun. I know we have a tough road ahead of us. Our nonconference schedule will be extremely, extremely tough for us. And then after that you go

right into the Big 12. It will be a tough, challenging year. I believe our girls will overachieve this season, without a doubt. I do not know that it will show up in the record book or on the scoreboard, but just their approach and the effort they have given us day after day.

We will become a better program and a better team this season, and we will lay the foundation for the future in Missouri's women's basketball. And it is in the best conference in the country and it does not happen overnight. And we are looking forward to the journey ahead.

Q. How difficult is it to sell veteran players on them being a foundation stone, a stepping stone, that the success they want right now they may not achieve?

COACH PINGETON: Well, I think it's a testament to the kind of character and integrity that we have within this group of seniors. And it has not been a hard sell at all. I think they want this not only for their senior year to go out on a strong note but also, you know, as an alumni of the program and they want to be the class that really leaves that legacy behind in regards to the year that we started to turn the program.

Again, I just -- I couldn't be more proud of that senior class and just the effort that they have given us, the buy-in. They're hungry. They want to be successful. And I think it's our job as coaches to lead and to mentor and help mold and help prepare them to be successful in life. And everything we do in our program at Missouri will absolutely be a carryover, absolutely we're committed to winning and that's the goal, is to win games and win championships.

But our passion is to impact our players' lives and prepare them to be successful in the real world and graduate our seniors. And I think they understand that this is a growing process within our program, and I think they're really excited to be a part of it.

Q. What's going to be the biggest adjustment going from Missouri Valley to the

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Big 12 and how much did your stint at Iowa State help you as far as understanding what's ahead now this season?

COACH PINGETON: Well, you know, you are looking at playing against the best players and coaching against the best coaches in the country. And so I think the level of play obviously, I mean, it is pretty obvious in regards to the level of abilities out there.

But in regards to our approach, it won't be any different. As a coach, you know, Xs and Os as a mentor, you get an opportunity to work with greater athletes that have more athletic ability. But I also think the runs that we had at Illinois State in our post-season, the opportunity to play some of the Big 12 teams, some Big Ten teams has certainly prepared us as a staff on what that level all entails.

My time at Iowa State was so beneficial in many ways and I think there's probably not one person out here that's not a fan of Bill Fennelly's and just his approach to what he does and how he does it and learned a lot of things from Bill that go far beyond the basketball court but about running a program and being successful.

And the thing about Bill is he does it the right way and he doesn't compromise in regards to his values, his character and integrity. And that's the same approach that we'll have at Missouri. But my time with Bill was absolutely extremely beneficial, not only in the position that I'm at now but just in my coaching career.

Q. Do you feel like since you are inheriting so many new players that you will have to change your style to fit the team that you have inherited or will you try and run the things that you have done at Illinois State or some of the things that maybe you inherited from being on Bill's staff?

COACH PINGETON: I don't know that Xs and Os-wise my philosophy has always been what they ran at Iowa State. You know, I'm more of a motion offense, transition, some pressure defense.

But it absolutely -- I think you have got to be so careful as a new staff that, you know, it's not just about implementing your style, but it is also about evaluating your players and putting them in a position to be successful.

And so it is a little bit of both. Do we want to run and have a transition style game? Absolutely. But as you work with your players, every year you tweak your system a little bit, again, so that they are in a position to be successful and

have success and so it is a little bit of both, to be honest with you.

I think you recruit players that can play the style that you like to coach, but as you inherit a program, you have got to be awfully careful of that because there is a fine line.

Q. What's been the best advice you have received from any of your Big 12 coaches? I know there's going to be -- just in terms of building a program, I know there is going to be days that are exhilarating and other days where you really have to keep in mind the big picture. What's some of the advice you have gotten from other Big 12 coaches in terms of building a program?

COACH PINGETON: Well, I think -- you know, it has been just a busy six months. Everyone is busy running their programs from the time I took the job in April with running their camps to summer recruiting to on-campus official visits. There hasn't been a ton of interaction, to be honest with you. I hear a lot of people tell me how tough it is, how tough of a job this is, you know, just the challenges that lie ahead.

I have always had kind of the mind-set that it is a great opportunity. I like to look at it from that angle instead of how tough it is. I think it is a great opportunity to be part of these young players' lives and to change a culture and change an environment and change the program and leave a legacy behind at Missouri. So unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to talk to a lot of them.

But early on when I took the job, obviously there is a lot of congratulations and just all of them, class-act coaches in this league and that's why they are some of the best in the country.

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