

October 20, 2010



An interview with:

COACH GARY BLAIR

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Coach Gary Blair from Texas A&M University. Coach, welcome. Your opening thoughts?

COACH BLAIR: It is nice to be up here with you again. You are the only person here that's older than I am. Everybody else looks a little bit younger than us, Peter. It is good to be here, it is good to be back in Kansas City, next to Dallas and College Station, this is probably one of my favorite towns.

We went to the Final Four here in '95. We won the Big 12 championship last year and two years prior to that my wife got her doctorate here. We are always looking for somebody for the Texas Rangers to beat and it is usually Kansas City. I am a Rangers fan, by the way.

THE MODERATOR: How about them Rangers?

COACH BLAIR: That's why I am doing the morning so I can get home and see the game in the afternoon. We are hoping to win it in five to rest our Cliff Lee so we don't have to pitch him.

Q. Who is your Cliff Lee on this basketball team this year? Who is the player you can count on to get it done?

COACH BLAIR: I think it is going to have to be Sydney Colson because she's healthy for the first time and she is such a fun person to play with, to coach and to be with off the court.

I think you are going to -- she doesn't have Danielle Robinson's speed, but she is probably about a step behind once she is healthy and can go. She is just quick with the ball. She makes things happen.

It is hard to have one player. I mean, Carter and Danielle Adams aren't bad either. But you ask for one, I gave you one. But she's a pretty special individual. Some day she is probably going

to be in Peter's place up here because the kid's a communications major. She is very, very good at expressing herself. And like on Friday afternoon, we had the Aggie 100 -- top 100 Aggie entrepreneurs all over the world. She will be one of the leaders up there. They use ten students, and Sydney will be one of them that will be calling the names out of these people that are receiving the award. She is a special young lady.

Q. Who is the Josh Hamilton on your team?

COACH BLAIR: That's got to be -- that's probably got to be Maryann Baker, even though she is not putting -- Maryann Baker is one that will run through that wall. The problem is she has run through too many of them in three years and has not been healthy.

This year she is healthy. She is ready to go. She is going to be competing to start at the three position for us, bat third like Josh. But she will do whatever it takes for her team, a very good team-oriented player, a very good leader that none of y'all have ever heard anything about because she has never been in a press room after a ball game.

But I promise you, she will have a good senior year, if we keep her healthy, and you will get a chance to talk to her in person.

Q. Colson has been a team captain for four years. You already said she is a Cliff Lee. Do you think she is the point guard of your team? Talk about how she is going to lead the squad.

COACH BLAIR: Well, she is going to be playing more than 22 minutes a game this year. We have been sort of sharing -- because we -- Colson couldn't go for 40 minutes. This year she is going to be up in the 30-minute range and we will probably be backing her up with Adrienne Pratcher and playing Carter more at the two position. And sharing that position with Tyra White or moving Tyra White down to the three spot.

But you are going to see Carter more of a

scorer this year and more of a defensive stopper.

Colson, I think to win at the highest level, you cannot play your point guard 22 minutes. She has got to be out there on the court longer. That's where you win championships is at the point guard position. And I think she is going to be a good one.

And I think we also have some five players this year that can score down low instead of just defend. And I know we will in a couple years, but she's going to be very good for us. And I think her assist total will go up to around 150 range instead of the 120 or 30 or where she's been.

Q. Gary, I won't ask you who your Benjamin Molina that is on your team. But I did want to ask you about --

COACH BLAIR: God, he's slow. Do you see how slow he is? (Laughter.)

My gosh, he didn't even get a chance to get down to second to break up that double play last night because, my God, he is slow but he can hit. Don't throw him a fast ball.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Karla Gilbert because obviously even with the success you had --

COACH BLAIR: That's Molina. (Laughter). That's Molina.

Q. What kind of low-post presence will she bring? She is a freshman obviously. She has got an awful lot of talent?

COACH BLAIR: She is 6' 5". She is a great kid. Her dad was a very good player at A&M, Jimmy Gilbert in the '80s, and her mom was a very good player at North Texas. In fact, I recruited her mom and lost her. I was at Stephen F. Austin at the time. She chose to go to North Texas. I kid her mom all the time, I am wearing rings and you just got a degree.

Karla has got great hands. She was MVP. Correct me, in the McDonald's game or the WBCA game, one of the two, she was -- no, she was MVP in the state Texas All-Star game but she played in the other two games. Had 15 in one of them. She needs a little bit of room. She is not going to be as quick as, say, a Griner is, but she has got the size and she has got the bulk.

We just got to get -- we are not going to get her faster. We just need to get her quicker at getting to spots. She plays hard every day and she's got to give us at least 15 minutes a ball

game, regardless of how well she plays or how bad she plays.

She has to give us 15 minutes because of the size of the Big 12. Everybody has sort of changed their recruiting because of Griner coming in. Colorado has got a 6' 7", Oklahoma has got 6' 5" again, Oklahoma State has got 6' 6", Iowa State, they are all large.

But the game has changed, and we are trying to change with it to be able to be able to do something with the Griner factor that everybody has to face.

And so we've got size and we've got size coming, and that's the good thing. And now I have been playing small ball for so long and playing my five player, taking charges, running the floor and all that, we're going to have to make a few adjustments ourselves.

But Karla is a great kid. You are really going to love her. She has got a nice, quiet, soprano-type voice. I want her to growl and get a little meaner in there. She will work on that.

Q. With Danielle Adams, I know you are still pushing her. You want more consistency, more fitness, more to be there all the time. Can she reach the level that you want her to reach in this season?

COACH BLAIR: I hope so. As some of you know, sometimes it's tough for that kid that's had a weight problem all her life to consistently lose that and all of a sudden, all of a sudden there is training camp and all of a sudden you have got to be in shape and the whole nine yards.

She is a kid that's always played well by being overweight, okay? What can she do if she ever gets down to the weight that I would like to see her at? I'm not sure. It might happen when she gets to the pros. I'm not sure. You saw it happen to Ashley Paris. She had a very good career after that. You saw it happen to Abi Olajuwon. She is still playing.

So sometimes -- this is a kid that has so much game, I mean, she is the best passer I have ever coached for a big player. And she loves the game. She knows the game. She can shoot it. She can drive it.

But I hope not to have to play her at the five spot this year. But due to circumstances, due to who we are playing, you might have to see her down there some. But if that happens, you tend to get into foul trouble in this league if you are playing

the five against some of the giants that are in this league.

But Danielle has got such a big heart. I have used the analogy before, she has got a George Foreman personality and a Charles Barkley's game. And someone that I coached in 1994, Leslie Johnson who played at Purdue, but Leslie was strictly an inside player. Leslie had a little bit of that weight problem, but she was all Big Ten, I believe, for four years.

A little bit of the same type but Danielle is more of a perimeter player than an inside. And Leslie Johnson will wear you out inside. If you want to go back even further than that, Pam Kelly, Louisiana Tech 1980 to '84, won a couple of National Championships with a young lady like that. But she was also strictly a five player.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports