

October 21, 2010



An interview with:

COACH SCOTT DREW

PETER IRWIN: We are now joined by Baylor coach, Scott Drew. Scott, your opening comments and thoughts.

COACH DREW: Well, I think, first of all, there is a lot of pressure on all of us coaches to begin this season because last year with 13-1 nonconference record and 63-game winning home streak in the nonconference, I think everybody wants to get off to a good start and doesn't want to be the team that has that streak break.

As far as our team goes, last year we were the second tallest team in the country behind Kentucky. This year, we love Tweety Carter, he was a great player, but now that we have lost the 5' 10" guy, I think we might have Kentucky for the tallest team in the country.

We really like the team's togetherness. I think we have great chemistry. They really get along. The big questions obviously this year will be will we have the same type of leadership and will we stay injury-free.

As far as a couple players that are returning that a lot of people have asked about, A.J. Walton, people say: At your guard position will that be a weakness or a question mark this year? I think A.J. has had a tremendous summer and done a great job in practice thus far. And Tweety Carter really did a tremendous job mentoring him and helping prepare him for this year.

Udoh did the exact same thing with Quincy. I think Quincy has taken a step forward in the leadership department. Also improved his overall skill level.

As far as Anthony Jones, he is somebody that's returning and with his new fro, I think he might be listed at 7' 2". He has gotten bigger and stronger.

And with another person that's returning that will help with the leadership is Fred Ellis. He is somebody that went on a mission trip this past summer with the Baylor University and was in Kenya and I think really grew spiritually and socially and just matured as far as appreciating what we have in the United States. I think he is going to be a great leader.

As far as new guys, Perry Jones is here with us today and he is a very pleased man because he doesn't have to come up here and speak in front of everybody. So right now he is very happy. But everyone is going to enjoy watching him play, very talented young man. Not many things he can't do. He is young for his age, and he is somebody that when he is 28, he is going to be a much better basketball player than he is right now. But I think everyone in the Big 12 is going to love watching him play this season.

J'mison Morgan is a transfer from UCLA, he's from Dallas, South Oak Cliff, won four state championships there. Highly talented coming out of high school. He received a waiver to be able to play right away for us. I think those two help replace the size we lost with Ekpe and with Josh Lomers. As far as the other two newcomers, Stargell Love and Brady Heslip. Stargell is a guard out of North Carolina, very athletic. Brady is a transfer from Boston College that will sit out.

Last but not least, March 5th is a big day for Baylor University having College GameDay. I know Baylor Nation is very excited about that. It is also a big day for the Drew family because my wife is expecting that day. Pressure is on to make sure we get it done in time for game time.

Q. What are your thoughts on everything that's going on with LaceDarius right now?

COACH DREW: The only thing I will comment on Lace is what we put out in the last release, and that is that he is back in school and we are pleased about that. He is attending practice, but he remains indefinitely suspended as far as competition goes until further notice. That's

all we can comment right now because it is a legal matter.

Q. How have you tried to handle the PR flip from last spring to now given certain things that have happened?

COACH DREW: I think part of life is adjusting and handling ups and downs. I think we do that every day in the sports world from wins to losses to injuries. And with the good comes the bad. Again, I think it is how you focus and how you carry on your attitude.

I know the last two weeks have been tough for Baylor basketball, but we're hoping the rest of the season is good.

Q. You touched briefly on Perry and what he brings to your program. But obviously the highest-ranked recruit you have ever had and I know there are high expectations, but kind of walk us through what do you expect from him? What can he bring to the court this year?

COACH DREW: Excellent question. I think one thing Perry's very good at is his versatility. He is someone who can handle the ball. He can shoot it. But he also can play inside. And I think if -- for fans, they're going to see not a 6' 11" post player, but a 6' 11" small forward-type player.

Again, most NBA drafts have him projected as a top 5 pick. What I have shared with Baylor people is sometimes the NBA doesn't just draft on production but also potential. And Perry is somebody that in ten years is going to be a much better player than he is now. If the average fan watches and says, Why isn't he dominating more, doing more? He just turned 19. If you look at who is projected First-Team All-Big 12 this year, it is four seniors and a junior. There is a difference between a 22-year-old and an 18- or 19-year-old.

But I think fans are going to see his -- Quincy is good for one or two highlights a game. I think you will see the same from Perry Jones. We have been so blessed and fortunate in Big 12, look at the great players we have had in the last few years, people you saw like a Kevin Durant, 6' 10", 6' 11", he can do those things. Blake Griffin, Michael Beasley. I think Perry will be able to do some things that is just special.

It is fun coaching. Every day you come to practice, you see something. Obviously we can't teach any of that.

Q. Perry, have you compared him to different guys, other people have? Who does he remind you of? And second part is, it seems like at one point you said -- maybe last year -- that he is a guy who sometimes needs a little shove. Is he still like that?

COACH DREW: I think -- first of all, as far as comparing him, it is tough to really compare him because he's just different. That's what makes him so special because someone with his size, he can play outside similar to a Kevin Durant. But I think he is an inside guy a little bit more than Kevin is as well. Obviously Kevin is one of the best players in the world. So it is hard to compare anybody to him.

But as far as the one thing that Perry is such a good teammate and such a nice guy, if it is a two-on-one break, you and him, he is going to half the time give you the ball and let you score. No offense, you are a great player and everything, but Perry at 6' 11", he needs to finish that himself and he needs to be more dominant. I would love to be Perry Jones in practice because the only thing we usually tell him is he's got to shoot it or you got to make a play.

Again, it is just his unselfish nature because he is such a team-oriented guy. At times, Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, those people knew you had to take those shots and we need him taking those shots.

Q. I understand the CCA has recommended eliminating July recruiting. There's going to be a lot of talk about this before anything is done officially. What would be your thoughts? Do you think that would be good or bad?

COACH DREW: Well, I know one thing is in the summertime for coaches, it is really hard during the season to evaluate players because you want to be with your team. And the summertime is about the only time where head coaches can continually get out and look at players. So I do know that we enjoy having an opportunity to see people we're recruiting personally versus watching videotape or watching them on T.V. or something like that.

I know one thing in basketball, we try to stick -- control what you can control. So my thought is if it is passed and that's the legislation we have, that's what we will deal with. If it is not passed, then we'll go that route.

So right now, most coaches are focused on this upcoming season and trying to get offenses and defenses in for the first exhibition game.

Q. Can you comment about how your team has dealt with a lot of these distractions these last few weeks and the type of effect this has had maybe on them?

COACH DREW: I think the great thing about college athletes, when you are 18 to 22 years old, basketball practice keeps them focused enough and making sure that they're in the training room beforehand and after-hand taking care of their bumps and bruises. I know for all the new guys, they're just excited to be in practice; for the veterans, they are excited to show their leadership.

And every year, those first couple weeks in practice, everybody is just excited to be a part of the team and practicing. So the outside distractions really haven't affected them as far as that goes.

Q. Following up on what Mike asked you, just from the PR aspect, because on a lot of these things you really can't comment on them right now.

COACH DREW: Correct.

Q. But people are forming kind of snap judgments maybe about your program, maybe even going back even before you were at Baylor and resurrecting bad old memories. Is there any way you can combat that? Are you worried about maybe the way your program is being perceived?

COACH DREW: Well, I think, again, coaches control what they can control. I know media is going to do a fair and honest job. So you put your trust in that.

And as far as perception and how people perceive the program, I think the biggest thing is you get a chance to cover people or get a chance to know them or see what they're doing. Our last 18 seniors have all graduated. We had a top 34 APR out of 347 schools. We have had three straight post-seasons, three straight 20-win seasons. And I know if we're doing things the wrong way, that will come out.

So as far as I look at all we've accomplished and covered right now, I think Baylor basketball is definitely headed in the right direction. And obviously, you never like to have any bad publicity or bad PR, but, I guess, that comes with life. The big thing is how you handle adversity.

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And I'm very pleased so far with how our team has been focused on practices and just getting better every day.

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