

October 21, 2010



An interview with:

COACH FRED HOIBERG

PETER IRWIN: We are now joined by Coach Fred Hoiberg from Iowa State. Coach, welcome to the Big 12. And your opening comments?

COACH HOIBERG: Thank you very much. Let me just, first of all, say I'm honored to be here at my first media day in the Big 12 conference.

Little bit about what's going on with our program right now. We have had a very good first week of practice. Going all the way back to September 1st when we had our groups of four, guys came in with the right work ethic. And they came in with the right mentality, and that was the big thing for me, was to see an effort that first week with the guys and they showed that.

Once we started working with the team, once September 15th hit for the two hours a week, we started implementing our philosophies both offensively and defensively. And I'm excited about what I have seen. You know, when October 15th hit, we were a little bit ahead because of everything we have put in in that previous month.

With the seniors that we have, with Diante Garrett who I anticipate having a breakout year for us, the ball will be in his hands a lot. A lot of ball screens for Diante. If he shoots the ball so far like he has in the preseason, he has a chance to do a lot of great things here.

Jamie Vanderbeken, who is here for us this year, is shooting the heck out of the ball right now. I think that was a tough loss for Iowa State when he got hurt, when Lucca Staiger left. Everybody was able to double down on Craig Brackins. With Jamie back, it opens up the floor for you. Any time you have a 6' 10" guy that can shoot the ball and space it like he can, it is a heck of a luxury to have.

Scott Christopherson, he was actually out right now with a back injury. He should be back for

his first practice on Friday. He is another floor spacer that has experience in the Big 12. After he got healthy last year, after a midseason bout with mono, finished the season very well. And I'm excited about that.

So we are going to get up and down the floor this year. That's what Hilton magic is all about, trying to get it back to -- when I was playing back in the early '90s when Johnny Orr took over the program back in the early '80s and got the program on the map, I have been talking to Coach Orr about how he implemented his philosophies that first year, even if he might not have had the personnel to get it going his way.

That's what we are trying to do. We want to play an exciting fast style of basketball. We don't have a lot of bodies this year, with only ten players right now. We are still waiting to hear on Royce White, a player that we got as a transfer from the University of Minnesota. We should hopefully hear back in the next couple of weeks. It is out of our hands right now. We just don't know what direction that is going to go.

But I'm excited about the future of Iowa State. We have got a lot of transfer with Chris Allen from Michigan State. Like I said, Royce White from Minnesota, two top 30 players in their classes. Anthony Booker from Southern Illinois was a top 50 players out of the St. Louis area. And Chris Babb, who was one of the top shooters in the Big Ten conference the previous year, who averaged double figures.

I like the future. I like the direction we're heading. This year, we are picked last by every coach in the Big 12 and we talked about that. We put it up on the board. And these guys will go out and play with a chip on their shoulder and try to prove some people wrong.

Q. Can you kind of elaborate a little more on just the whole challenge of coming home and your arena flooded and just the loss of personnel. Can you just talk about everything that you have to encounter.

COACH HOIBERG: It was certainly an

interesting first couple of weeks. The first thing that we dealt with was all the conference realignment talk. It was a stressful time. I think Dan Beebe deserves a lot of credit for how that whole thing went down and how everything ended up.

I think it makes us the toughest conference in the country. I think it is right now as well. But with our schedule, the way it is going to be, with 18 league games against the toughest teams in the country, it is going to be a battle every single year going up against that. It is what you want. You want to go out and compete against the best and get a high RPI, prepare yourself for the post-season which is what our goal will be every year.

After that, Hilton Coliseum floods. It flooded back in '93 when I was playing at Iowa State. And it was -- I would wake up at 3:00 in the morning and see a purple blob all the way back to Lincoln, Nebraska, and we had about five straight nights of that. Hilton is scheduled to open up for our first exhibition game on November 5th.

FEMA is involved right now. So I don't know how that whole thing works. Hopefully that will stay on track and we will be back in that arena right away.

Q. You said you talked to Coach Orr. What advice have you been getting? What have you learned?

COACH HOIBERG: I talked to a lot of people when I first got this job. Tim Floyd is somebody else I have talked to a lot and leaned on. Have a very close relationship with Coach Floyd, who coached me my senior year and played with us for two seasons with the Chicago Bulls. Everybody that I have talked to that has experience in the coaching world, even going to my NBA days, it is a very close-knit community in the NBA and we are watching games with scouts every night who are former college coaches. I made a lot of calls. The first thing they said to me is I have to assemble a staff that has great chemistry and try to hire people that are smarter than you.

And the first guy that I went after was Bobby Lutz who was the head coach at the University of Charlotte in the last 12 years. He was in the post-season eight times and got fired after winning 19 games last year. He is a heck of an addition to our staff.

Big-time coach, very creative. Very similar philosophies. His teams always played fast. 11 of

the 12 years in Charlotte he had the leading three-point shooter in the conference. That's a pretty good conference, Conference USA and Atlantic 10 the last few years. That was the big thing first in talking to people. Coach Orr, Coach Floyd, Gar Forman, who was the general manager of the Bulls, was on staff at Iowa State. That was the big thing. Getting the right staff around you.

And then they talked to me about the ins and outs of recruiting. It is not that dissimilar to what I have been doing the last five years in the NBA, you know, as far as going out and watching games and bringing kids in and interviewing and talking about free agency. It is a lot of those same things, trying to get in close with the kids and talking about what your program has to offer.

Like I said, I think we've done a pretty good job so far with that as far as the talent that we brought in for the future of Iowa State basketball.

Q. With Jamie back from injury, will he factor in as a leader on the court?

COACH HOIBERG: Jamie has been a tremendous leader for us, both he and Diante. I think those will be two guys that will provide a lot of leadership. Darion Anderson from Northern Illinois will provide that as a senior who transferred in, has one year left. He graduated and we got him in a graduate program that wasn't offered at Northern Illinois. So those three guys I will be leaning on a lot.

You talk about successful teams you play on, you know, they can discipline themselves a lot of times. And I'm going to lean on those seniors to do that. When we are not in the locker room, they have to pull the guys together and make them believe in the system we're running that it will lead to success.

But Jamie is -- he is down to what he weighed in high school. He is down to 240. He is getting up and down the floor, really running well. If you have a big guy that's 6' 11" that can space the floor and shoot it like to that, that's tough to guard. Those bigs aren't used to coming out and guarding guys than can shoot it like that on the perimeter.

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