

October 21, 2010



An interview with:

COACH BILL SELF

PETER IRWIN: Coach Bill Self from Kansas. Coach, welcome. Your thoughts about the upcoming season.

COACH SELF: Good morning. You guys are probably worn out by now. But I'm excited. I don't think that very often you lose two lottery picks and your best player and you are supposed to get better.

But based on what I have seen so far and how hard they work in the offseason, I think this team has a chance to be very good. We're athletic, we are not as deep as what we have been, especially inside. But we do have a team that I think can make plays you can't coach. I'm certainly looking forward to getting a chance to work with them. And hopefully by conference play, we can be a team that people have to contend with.

Q. I have a two-part question. First of all, what are your thoughts on the whole Josh Selby situation? And, also, how are you and your team dealing with that distraction?

COACH SELF: It hasn't been a distraction for our team. He has practiced every day. He is involved every day. He does the same thing everybody else does every day. So it hasn't been a distraction.

Now, from the coaching staff's standpoint, we're going to have to see how we are going to approach things as we learn more information. But the thing about the Josh thing to me, it is unique. And it is a situation that we knew that we were going to be dealing with.

It hasn't come as a shock to us. I do believe that we're hopefully going to have some answers sooner rather than later, but I'm still confident that he'll be in uniform. I hope that to be the case.

And if the NCAA deems differently, then, you know -- or if there is any type of penalties at all, then we'll certainly deal with that and work with it. But he is a terrific talent and he wants to be in school and he is doing great in school. He has totally bought into what we are trying to do. He has been nothing but an asset since he has been there.

Q. With Cole Aldrich and Xavier Henry gone, what do you think of Marcus Morris' outlook?

COACH SELF: We had a guy named Sherron Collins who was pretty good, too. To me Marcus was our most consistent player last year. If -- he may not have been our best player in every game, but he was probably our second or third best player at worst in most every game. He is consistent.

I think it will be different because the target will be on him more so and he will be the defense's number one option to stop, whereas in the past he probably had the luxury of defenses keying in on somebody else. He is ready. He is ready. He is prepared. He has worked hard. And he is poised, in my opinion, to have a big, big junior year.

Q. Who do you see as stepping in to fill the team leadership that Cole and Sherron provided?

COACH SELF: You know, I would think the twins, I would think Tyshawn, Brady, Tyrel, Mario Little, you could say the whole team. I don't think we have one guy that you will say is definitely the guy. But in '08 when we had that great team, everybody asked all along who our leader was and we never gave a definitive answer. It was just kind of a collection of guys.

I think we will have to do it more by committee this year, which I'm fine with. The guys are holding each other accountable. I think it remains to be seen who will be that guy on the floor. Marcus will probably be as much as anybody else because basically he can play anywhere on the floor.

Q. There is a lot of unsold tickets, I understand, at Allen Fieldhouse. Do you think they will eventually get sold? If they don't, how different would that place be without a sellout every night?

COACH SELF: It will be sold out. The games will be sold out. From what I understand, it will be season tickets -- there are still season tickets remaining, for a lot of reasons, from what I understand. But when you say "a lot," you are talking about -- I don't know if it is 5% or 7% or something like that. But the tickets will be sold individual game no matter what.

It has been our goal each and every year, Doug, to sell out season tickets before the season even begins, with just limited tickets on a game-by-game basis after that. I don't see any problems in us selling those tickets game by game.

I do think it is something we have always sold from a recruiting standpoint. I don't believe Kansas has played for less than a sellout since 2001. You may know better than me. 2002? I think there was one or two games. But it also is a reality of the economic times and we've had some things going on that I really believe it will get done.

But, you know, whether or not the season is sold out or not, I don't know if that will be the case. We will just have to wait and see.

Q. What kind of impact do you see from having Mario back? I guess Travis Releford as well.

COACH SELF: Those guys really benefitted last year by not playing. It is one of those situations. They probably could have both been in our top eight or nine last year. But they have a chance to impact the program in a much bigger way than that.

And so Mario can score and Travis is a legitimate big-time college defender and he can steal extra possessions.

They're different. Mario is probably a three-four, kind of a bad matchup big guy or a big guard. And Travis is definitely a tall guard. But I see them both being in our rotation and both having an impact.

Q. Over his career, Tyshawn Taylor has been up and down. What are you expecting him to do for your team this year?

COACH SELF: Be up. (Smiling.)

You say "over his career," his freshman year he was on an uptick all year. Last year he

had some big games, but he wasn't as consistent. I don't know this to be a fact, but I believe last year he had quite a few more stints than he had as a freshman year and far less turnovers, just expectations were off the charts for him.

And I believe that he's really prepared to have a big year. He is a very talented young man. He just doesn't need to deal with any distractions. None of us do. And, certainly, he's worked very hard to make this a special year for himself.

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