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An interview with:

COACH DOC SADLER

PETER IRWIN: We are now joined by Nebraska Coach Doc Sadler. Coach, welcome. And your thoughts about the upcoming season.

COACH SADLER: Thanks, Peter. First of all, I think a year makes a lot of difference. And just in my voice from a year ago, I hope you can hear me a little bit better than you did last year.

You know, this team that we have, I think, has a chance to be as good a basketball team as we've had since I have been in Nebraska. For the first time I think we've got good perimeter players with some inside guys at the same time with some experience.

Last season, you know, we were going in the right direction, I thought, with a 12-3 record going into the Big 12 play and just wasn't able to continue the momentum that maybe we had built for whatever reason.

I think the biggest reason probably was the league in itself because the games that we did play, you know, for the most part besides the Texas game, we had a chance to compete in most of them. And the experience that the guys we have on our team now got a chance to get last season is going to really benefit us, even though for the most part we're still a young basketball team.

The two guys that we lost last year, Toney McCray and Christopher Niemann, have a chance, you know. The good news is they have a chance now to play for us and the three other guys that we've added, Andre Almeida, Caleb Walker, and Kamyron Brown are some pieces that I think fit into what we are trying to do now.

So for the most part, we have got the one senior that has played before and that's Lance Jeter. He has put in a lot of minutes as a newcomer at the point guard position. It's going to definitely benefit from that.

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And overall, there is no question that, you know, the league in itself is going to be just like it always is, but hopefully we are going to be able to be a big -- maybe a bigger part in what happens down the road in January and February.

So I'm looking very much forward to it and really like the team that we have.

Q. Will this team still hang its hat on defense, but maybe have to rely less on that to be successful than some of your teams in the past?

COACH SADLER: Well, I hope, Mike, that it will look a little bit different probably because, you know, with a small team, it looks like you are probably playing harder than maybe you are playing, which in the past that's been the case.

I hope this team plays just as hard as any of the teams I have ever coached. But it may not look that way because we are much bigger. But it does change some things up the way you can play. I mean, you know, in the past, guys could catch that ball on the wing or whatever and drive in and not really be concerned about getting a body put on them that may make them think about coming back in there.

So, sure, we want to force things in there. When people do come in there now, I think we are big enough to make them remember when they do come in. So that part of it is going to be a little bit different.

So we will be able to stay out with shooters a little bit more than having to help on dribble penetration because of the size inside, making guards finish over us. So hopefully that will help us a little bit.

And then, you know, defensively, the whole game starts with the rebounding end and with you being a much bigger team, maybe that's going to allow us maybe to get out on the offense a little bit better, too.

Q. Brandon Ubel, does he fit in your plans this year?

COACH SADLER: Most definitely.

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Q. Can you talk about his prospects.

COACH SADLER: Brandon is probably one of the most consistent people I have ever coached, from being a manager at Arkansas in the '80s to all this time. "Consistent" meaning everything he does is right, whether it be on, off the court, and he has improved in his athleticism the year that he spent here.

But he definitely figures to be a big, big part of what we do. He is going to be a guy that maybe a lot of people don't talk about, but he is a huge part of the success we're going to enjoy the next three years that he's at Nebraska.

Q. What's he bringing in?

COACH SADLER: Just the consistency of doing everything right. You know if it is an 8:00 class and you get back from a road trip at 2:00 in the morning, he will be there. You don't have to be concerned about him speaking one word but doing another. And guys follow that. And he's not a vocal leader as some people would say, but he is definitely a leader on that basketball team that everybody respects.

Q. Coach, could you talk a little bit about Andre, as someone who is coming in to your program from the junior college game, is he someone you are going to have to bring along kind of slowly? Or because he has got those two years of experience, is he going to be someone who can hit the ground running and help you right away?

COACH SADLER: First of all, speaking a little bit about a dude that's big -- that's that big is hard. You know, I think foreign kids play so much more basketball than kids over here. And the level of play that they play against maybe sometimes is, you know, against more experience.

So you are not talking about your typical junior college transfer. You are talking about a guy that has had some experiences on world teams and things like that. The biggest thing that Andre has to overcome is the sickness that he got this spring where he wasn't able to do anything. But once he gets back into some type of conditioning that is going to allow him to play in the league like we are playing in, then it is not going to be experience or anything like that, that's going to keep him back. It is just going to be the conditioning part.

Q. Lance Jeter really did it all for you last year. Can you talk a little bit about what he brings to your team and also how his role is either going to grow or change this season.

COACH SADLER: I think most of you all that have followed Big 12 basketball understand how difficult it is to play in this league, more or less be a point guard in this league and especially one that his first year has put that much responsibility on. All of the players think they are ready for it, but, you know, I think it took a toll on him late in the year.

Now that he was put in the position really where he didn't have a backup for him and he was put in a position where he had to come every night, and for the most part he did do that, he's got himself in tremendous shape, probably the best shape he has ever been in. You know, if you look at Lance's statistics in the first 12 games, the turnovers were really low. The last four or five, they kind of went up a little bit.

I think he is just going to be more ready for that, and there is no question to have any chance in this league, you have got to have somebody out there with that ball that has been through it. And now he has been through it.

Q. Your school's last year in the Big 12. What kind of reception do you think you will get when you play for the last time in Lawrence and Manhattan and Columbia, places where Iowa State has played for 100 years?

COACH SADLER: I think in most situations when a coach retires, they give him nice gifts. So I would expect to get a nice gift everywhere we go. And if not, then maybe they are just going to give us a win. But I want to tell you something, I don't think there is a league in the country that is as good as this one as far as going on the road, being treated with respect.

Now, it is not always easy to win, don't get me wrong. It is difficult to do that. But the coaches are tremendous. The fans get into it like no other league. I will expect they will get into it like no other league again this year when we come in there.

But it is fun, it is fun. To me it is going to be exciting, not because it is the last year that we are going to be playing in this league, I think as a coach, growing up, you dream of getting a chance to coach in a league like this. And then when you have the fans and the coaches and everything,

administrators as classy as you think they would be, it's just fun. That part -- I will be worried a lot more about the teams than I am all that other stuff.

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