

October 21, 2010



An interview with:

COACH JEFF CAPEL

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined by Oklahoma coach, Jeff Capel. Coach, welcome. And your comments on the season.

COACH CAPEL: First of all, it is great to be back in Kansas City. We are excited about our season. Our guys are working extremely hard and we're excited to be into practice right now and look forward to getting better every day and getting to the games in November.

Q. Josh Selby, Perry Jones, some of those other freshmen are getting a lot of attention. But you have a good one yourself in Cameron Clark. Can be an impact freshman in the conference. And what kind of impact do you think he will make?

COACH CAPEL: First of all, Perry and Josh get a lot of attention. Those guys are extremely talented, are guys that will most likely not be in college for very long.

We think Cameron is really talented as well, think he has a chance to be a very good player. I love his attitude and his approach to trying to become a really good player, understanding that he is not there yet, but not being afraid of work. And then allowing themselves to be coached, that's one of the things that's been really exciting about him. He is a guy that you can get after, that you can challenge. You don't have to do it much because he is a pretty self-motivated kid. But he is a kid that has a really bright future.

Q. Did you experience last summer with the Under-18 team and getting with this new group sort of renewed the spirit, in essence?

COACH CAPEL: Well, my spirit was never really dead. I mean, I love what I do. I love the game of basketball. I love having the opportunity

to have some sort of impact on the life of young people and using our game to teach those lessons. So my spirit was never defeated. If anything, it challenged me even more and lit a fire even more, if that's even possible.

The Under-18 USA World Championships was really exciting. First and foremost, it was an honor to be chosen by my peers to be the head coach and to represent our country. And then to be able to get a group of guys, I think we started with 18, we got down to 12, and in a 16-day period to become a team and to have an opportunity to compete and win a gold medal is pretty special.

Probably the greatest satisfaction I took was those guys actually did really become a team, and you could see that in the gold medal game when we faced adversity for the first time in that tournament. We were down 8 with a little bit under 9 minutes to play. And you could see the spirit of our guys. Everything that we had preached and talked about, you could see it kind of come into play right there. So that was a great experience for me. I think it was a great experience for all the guys that participated in it and something that I will always cherish.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk with nine new players, the chemistry of the team and how important chemistry plays into being successful?

COACH CAPEL: Chemistry is huge. I don't care how talented you are. Chemistry is very, very big. And the main thing is that guys have to understand how much they need each other. That's the main thing. You can't be, you know, one person or two people trying to do their own thing. Everyone has to be about one thing and that's winning and doing whatever it takes to win.

I think our chemistry is really good. It starts in the summer. I have always been a big believer that especially in the college level, you start building that camaraderie and that chemistry in the summer once you get guys on campus.

And then when you start your preseason

conditioning or whatever you do, we do preseason conditioning, it was probably as tough as it's been since I have been here this preseason, and those are things that can sometimes bring your team together and I think it certainly did our guys. Our guys probably did the best job we've done since I have been here at OU or of any team I have had. And I think that has helped us bring us closer together.

Now we are in the process of practice. Usually your first week, two weeks of practice are the most difficult on the players because it's -- you are going every day, you are getting hit as they cut, as they run, as they bang, ball screens. Now you are trying to pay attention to detail with certain things. And so you get some bumps and bruises during this time.

Again, I have been very impressed with our guys, with how they have come to work every day and excitement every day about being a part of what we're doing and about trying to become better.

Q. How do you feel about eliminating the July recruiting period, which has been, I guess, recommended by some groups?

COACH CAPEL: I think it is a bad move. I don't think we need to eliminate the period. I would be in favor of cutting the period back some, but you are starting to see every year -- I think this year was another record number of transfers. And kids are transferring for various reasons.

A lot of kids now want things to happen very quickly, and if they don't, they want to leave and go somewhere else.

Not very many people enjoy the process anymore of becoming better. We are in such a "everything has to happen fast," "everything has to happen quickly." You see coaches getting fired now at a quicker pace.

And I think if you eliminate July, you will see more mistakes in recruiting, which is going to lead to transfers becoming even greater. I don't think we should do that. I think it should be scaled back a little bit. I think we are on for 20 days in the month of July. If they cut it to 14 days, I think that would be good. But I don't think the period needs to be eliminated.

I think we should be able to have a couple weekends in April as well so we can be able to evaluate more and to have a little bit more access to players.

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