

**October 19, 2011**



An Interview With:

## **KANSAS COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON**

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Coach Bonnie Henrickson from Kansas. Coach, your opening thoughts and about the upcoming season.

COACH HENRICKSON: Excited to be here. Good to see everyone. Really excited about the group that we've got returning with as much experience we have with my Aishah Sutherland being a senior and the three juniors we have here today with Carolyn Davis, Angel Goodrich, and Monica Engelman, and excited about where we start with some five freshmen in the group and ladies that can have an impact in our program.

As excited as I've been, when you go back to when we were picked second in the league and Danielle McCray is the Preseason Player of the Year in the league, you go back to that kind of bounce that we all had in the fall.

And just proud of the work they put in the summer and excited -- practices have been really, really good, very competitive. That's how you get better every day.

Where we are right now, we still have a lot of work to do. Don't misunderstand me. Defensively we've got to get better and grow, and in that area first and foremost, and then put the rest of the pieces together.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. Is Carolyn Davis maybe the best player in the country that a lot of people don't know about, and will this year be maybe the year they recognize that?**

COACH HENRICKSON: That would be hard to argue. I think that's good. It's a young lady who keeps it simple, who certainly relies on -- you know, one of the most talented point guards in the

country and play-making point guards that recognizes the who, what, and where of a point guard, not where Carolyn needs it and when she needs it.

But absolutely. And I think the more success we have, the more we're on television, the more people get an opportunity to see her play. And for a young lady who puts up big, big numbers in a really quiet way.

If you look at her numbers and look at shot attempts, you'd think she's twice as much as anybody else in the program. And she averaged 10. Monica Engelman actually averaged more shots, put up almost 13 a night; Carolyn, 10; Aishah Sutherland, 8; and Angel right underneath that at 8.

But if you look at her numbers, you'd think she must get twice as many shots as anybody else, but when you shoot it as well as she does, it doesn't take as many to put up big numbers for her.

**Q. We obviously have no idea what's going to come out later this week or into the future. If there is a change at the University of Missouri, can you talk about what that rivalry between Missouri and Kansas, your thoughts on that rivalry, and how much of a loss would it be if those schools aren't playing any longer?**

COACH HENRICKSON: I think from someone who -- originally I'm from the Midwest, I'm from Minnesota, but had worked for a long time on the East Coast, and it didn't take me long to realize when I took the job -- because I didn't know it coming in that that's -- whether it was tiddlywinks or whatever it was, you just hated Missouri and that's just the way it was. I didn't know it coming in, but it didn't take me very long to figure it out.

And to enjoy and be a part of that and part of those contests, whether we're involved or whether we're going to watch one of our other teams play against Missouri. I would echo our athletic director. I think the rivalry belongs in the Big 12. I would say that. And I don't have a problem saying that. Where we go and Robin's not

making the decision and I'm not making the decision, but we are -- even though just her being there a year, and her and I knew each other being at Illinois State prior to being at Missouri, I think it's been good for us. It's been good for them. Moving forward we'd like for it to be what it is.

But like I said, and Gary said it right, it's about TV and football and ego. And I'm not sure ego is third.

**Q. Bill Self said he would not schedule Missouri if they go to the Southeastern Conference.**

COACH HENRICKSON: He's won a lot more games than I have. He can do stuff like that.

**Q. How would you feel about that? Would you -- if it were up to you, would you schedule Missouri if they're not in the Big 12?**

COACH HENRICKSON: Our rivalry belongs in the Big 12. It should be in the Big 12.

**Q. That's a no?**

COACH HENRICKSON: It should be in the Big 12. Institutionally, I think we all feel the same way.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about Angel. You talked about how smart she is about getting the ball -- this is a kid who has been through so much physically. How is she physically right now? And is she ready to have the kind of season that you want her to have this year?**

COACH HENRICKSON: She is. I think where she grows and takes her game to the next level because she had an awfully good year last year, led the league in assists, broke the Allen Fieldhouse assist record, men and women. And that building has been around a long time and some awfully talented players have played in that building, and she broke that record last year, and that helps when you're throwing it to Carolyn Davis, that, you know, she's smart enough to do that a lot, and she did it a lot that night.

I think just for her offensively, her to step up and take shots and think ahead, think -- that's a young lady who sees a lot more than most of us do when we have the ball in our hand -- most players do when they have the ball in their hand, certainly me, clearly more than I would, but most players that have the ball in their hands.

But then my challenge to her has been -- then there are oftentimes she passes up a shot

and she doesn't make a bad pass, but she might just kick it out and it turns anything where the play would really be for her to take an uncontested shot or a shot in rhythm and a high percentage shot.

So I think that's where -- and in practice right now, last week she led us in shot attempts on the perimeter. And she's starting to recognize, hey, I am open and let me get into a rhythm jumper and get my feet down and get my feet right.

And I think that's where she grows her game and it certainly grows our team and makes us harder to guard, when she has that mindset in addition to the play-making ability she already brings to the table.

And she's healthy. She looks great. She feels great. She's a little bit lighter than she's been the last couple of years. And we're okay with that. She feels really good at the weight she's at. It's not a lot. But when you're that little sometimes it doesn't take much. But she looks really good.

**Q. Could this be the year that KU finally breaks through and makes it to the NCAA Tournament, and what do you see different about this year's team?**

COACH HENRICKSON: I think from a maturity standpoint and experience standpoint. It's been said many, many times today and will be from anyone else who gets on this mic, in the best women's basketball conference in the country, we started two, three -- most nights three sophomores and two freshmen last year.

And as much as well and to spin the hands of time and gain experience and grow, we fought through some of that last year from a consistency standpoint, from a toughness standpoint. And that feels different to me now being in the gym with them.

We had an opportunity to go to Italy this summer and practice and play and that experience, and that has put us ahead, especially being able to take your freshmen now.

There are no nights off and you've got to play as well on the road to win as you do at home. And that's where there are no bad teams in this league. There's great coaches and great players and tremendous fan support. And that's what makes our league unique. There isn't another place in the country that happens; that you'll go play in front of 8-, 9-, 10-, 11,000 people in the middle of winter in the middle of nowhere. And that happens in this league.

So with that, you have to show up every night. We didn't do that last year. We didn't perform at a high level every single night. And you've got to do that to give yourself a chance. And we do that and we go where we should go.

**Q. Really ever since the conference started there's been the talk of the South, usually complaints, you know, they have the tougher schedule with playing the South teams, and, frankly, statistically it's often proved true. But does playing the round-robin, the double round-robin actually maybe work towards the North's advantage in that maybe it helps to go to those schools every year and maybe will end up being an elevation for some of the North programs?**

COACH HENRICKSON: I think from a rivalry standpoint, it does. If you look at our roster, seven of our 12 are from Texas. It helps us in recruiting to get back down in Texas more. It adds games, and we have done that from a non-conference schedule. We've taken those kids back, and certainly a big pitch for us in our program in recruiting is how much we play in the state of Texas. Now we've doubled our exposure in the league in the state of Texas.

But I think from competitive -- you play someone once a year, that you have more of a natural rivalry when you play someone twice a year, whether it's at home and away.

But certainly it's a challenge for all of us in the league to play home and away. But I would agree with you, I think it has an opportunity to help all of us in the North.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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