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An Interview With:

BAYLOR COACH SCOTT DREW

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach Scott Drew from Baylor. Welcome.

COACH DREW: Excited to be here. Excited to have a stability in the Big 12. Excited about the potential of our team this year. We had five new players which give us a lot more options and depth. Practice has been competitive so far. Knock on wood. No serious injuries to report.

And ready to get going with the season.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Your front court looks loaded and the back court you're near the bottom of the standings in assist/turnover ratio, turnovers alike, how does the back court look so far in terms of improving those totals?

COACH DREW: Well, first thing is we definitely do need to incorporate some passing drills this year more, I guess.

But I think we really like the options we have. We just don't have experience. And A.J. Walton is the only back court person to actually put on a Baylor jersey. In college basketball your back court is so important.

Guard play is an extension of the court. So I like what we have. It's just going to take a little time to get them experience. The front court, like you said, on paper is one of the best in the country. Very excited about what we have there.

But I know we have more options than we had last year, which is exciting.

Q. Let's talk about Pierre Jackson a little bit and what kind of impact he can for you guys this year?

COACH DREW: I think first of all you look at Pierre and somebody with his speed and quickness makes it very tough to press him, to keep him from getting where he wants to go. And I

think a lot of teams play pressure man to man and having somebody like that who can break down the defense and create for other people really adds to our team.

So excited about that. Defensively, he can get after it as well. So I think he's going to have a big impact on our team. I think the big question will be just how long that experience takes to kick in, though, from the standpoint junior college basketball is good but it's not Big 12 basketball.

So there will be some adjustment period. But as he gains experience he'll definitely contribute.

Q. Scott, could you talk about Perry's decision to come back? Did that surprise you, given where he could have been drafted and his family situation? Or what does that say about him?

COACH DREW: Well, I think, first of all, everybody is excited to have Perry back because he's a good player, but even more excited because he's a great teammate and person. Every day you just love being around the guy. He never has a bad day. Always makes people feel better. Great teammate.

But I think when you have people like Perry Jones come back to school, it's a great compliment for Baylor university but it's a great compliment for college basketball. I think the atmosphere, the crowds, just the excitement of being in college.

And hopefully the trend continues, because at the end of the day they only have one chance to be in college, and sometimes it's not bad to spend a couple of extra years and socially develop, spiritually, academically, as well as basketball, before you go into the professional ranks.

Q. Kim Mulkey told us yesterday in very emphatic terms that she's not interested in scheduling A&M. So naturally the spotlight shifts now to you. Do you feel the same way?

COACH DREW: Well, I think right now it's

too early to call from the standpoint -- I think what our administration feels and maybe the Big 12 feels, we'll take all that into consideration before we make a decision like that.

I do know from a coach, definitely going to miss playing that game because it's a great rivalry for Baylor. And I know both fan bases really enjoy that kind of competition.

But right now I know we don't see anything on the horizon, at least.

Q. Can you talk about the expectations that you have for Quincy Miller and Deuce Bello this season?

COACH DREW: I think when you talk about those two, you talk about great potential. Deuce Bello's is as good an athlete as you'll find in college basketball. And I know college fans are going to be excited watching him play.

Right now, like any freshman, he's trying to develop his skills and talents in the back court and get used to playing with that added length and speed quickness.

Quincy Miller provides a skill set that's rare for a person his size. We've had some success with players like that at Ekpe Udoh, Perry Jones, people that have been -- Anthony Jones -- bigger, can handle the ball and shoot it. I know he's fit in well in practices and I think he's recovered well from his surgery, and I think people are going to be excited to watch him this year and will enjoy watching him.

Q. You mentioned with Perry coming back he's got an opportunity to improve in a lot of areas on the court, what has he added to his game? What do you expect him to add to get better, take advantage of this year?

COACH DREW: Well, most coaches will tell you the best thing about freshmen is they become sophomores. And that experience, just how hard you have to compete in practice, how you have to get yourself ready mentally, you have a lot more inconsistencies normally with a freshman than you do with a sophomore.

So I think just a natural maturation and experience that he's garnered from playing a year in the Big 12 is the biggest difference. Every day he approaches practice in a different manner. And I think he's really picked up the leadership.

As far as physically, he's gotten bigger, stronger, faster.

Q. Is this the most talented team you've had at Baylor? And obviously there's an awful lot of gifted players out there. As a coach, does that put any more pressure on you when you have that deep a roster?

COACH DREW: I think coaches put pressure on themselves just like athletes do every day to perform. But I think definitely going into the season I feel it's the deepest team we've had.

Sometimes that depth changes quickly with injuries, illnesses, things like that. So that's yet to be determined. But as far as going into the season we really feel good with all the options we have and really anyone that steps on the floor, how they can contribute.

Q. A couple of years ago you guys had some expectation coming off a good season and probably didn't handle it as well as you like. Did you learn from that experience? And how do you use that going into this year?

COACH DREW: That's the great thing about having some seniors and juniors on the roster. They've been through where we've been picked low and went to the Elite Eight. Picked high. Last year we didn't go to postseason. So I think they realize that expectations and people talking positive about us is a compliment. But it doesn't guarantee anything or mean anything. It's what's decided on the floor.

So I think the experience from the upperclassmen feeling the exciting of being successful when not picked high and just how it turned out -- last year I think that will all go into helping our team. And again building a program, you have to get used to a lot of different scenarios. Baylor wasn't picked high a lot of times in the past. Now I think we're getting more and more used to it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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