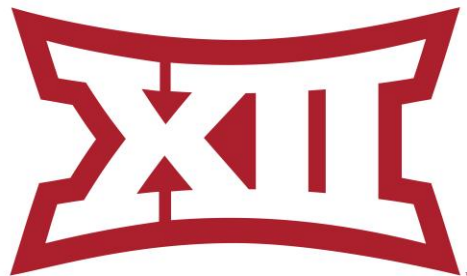


October 15, 2014



An Interview With:

COACH TUBBY SMITH

COACH SMITH: Good morning. It's good to be back here in Kansas City. I know it's a special time with the baseball playoffs. So with the Orioles in town, the team from my home state, but I know they're in a little bit of trouble.

But it's always great to be a part of another basketball season. This is my 39th year. So we're real excited to get started.

Q. Good morning, Coach. I'm just wondering how all of your new players have adjusted during the first week of practice.

COACH SMITH: It's been good. I've been very pleasantly pleased with our progress, especially with seven new faces, five freshmen. So we're a young team that's -- the good thing about it, we've had opportunities in the fall with the individual workouts to develop some individual skills, but I've been impressed with their coachability and their willingness to learn and accept teaching and coaching. So that's a big start.

Q. Tubby, can you just go down the conference and give us your overview on what's going on here.

COACH SMITH: It's, again, as balanced as it has ever been. I know we lost some very talented players last year out of the league, but the Big 12 is a conference that year in and year out you're going to be -- you're going to find a lot of talent. Certainly, the teams that have been picked to be at the top, Texas and Kansas, Kansas State, Oklahoma, they're teams that are really returning solid programs -- Iowa State. I think all the teams that went to postseason play are teams that can make it back to postseason play.

Having seven, eight teams in a ten-league conference go is quite a feat. So we know it will be

a very challenging league, once again, if not the best league again in the country.

There's a lot of new and bright stars that have been recruited at the upper echelon programs. So we know we've got to be able to -- if we're going to try to make a dent, even though it's a work in progress, even though we're a young team. And we were competitive in most games last year. This year we're going to have to find a different way to be competitive.

But the league, top to bottom, is as balanced as it's ever been.

Q. Tubby, how do you go from competitive to turning that into W's?

COACH SMITH: That's something we all are challenged with, especially in our coaching staff and at Texas Tech, having had such -- we've had a tough time over the last few years. So changing that culture, which I think we've turned the corner. We've lost a lot of close games. So finding a way to win close games, that boils down to execution and talent. As a coaching staff, we've put people in the right spots at the right time.

So Toddrick Gotcher and Rob Turner, two young men that we have with us for media day. Those are two returning starters that will have to carry a big load for us this year in leadership. I think that's where you first start, within your team.

But we have added some depth in the backcourt so that should help in the execution of the offense and trying to finalize games, where we can win some close games. We lost about four or five games last year, where we thought we had opportunities to close out. That's always tough for a team that's had trouble winning.

Q. Coach, after your first year in Lubbock, what's been the hardest part about changing the culture there?

COACH SMITH: I don't know that it's -- it's always a challenge wherever you are, year in and year out, to try to -- I think -- you know, keeping players believing. We lost some talented players

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through graduation and to transfers. So getting those guys to understand that you've got to trust in the coaching staff, trust that we're going to get things done, trust in the administration and the things that we're doing, that we're making the necessary changes or improving the areas that we need to improve on to recruit the talented players.

The biggest challenge is to get everybody on the same page, from fans right on down to -- up to the administration.

Q. Tubby, just look at the recent coaching history of Texas Tech, just the fact of having some continuity there. How important do you see that from the standpoint of your players?

COACH SMITH: Consistency and continuity is the key to any program that has had long tradition and built tradition and success over a long period of time. You'll find that a coach has been in place for a long period of time, and they've been able to grow their program.

So those things are going to be critical. I guess this is the first time in five years the coaches will have been there for two years in a row. So we'll see how it goes.

Again, there are a lot of things that take place, and you can pinpoint whether it's in basketball or any sport where there's a lot of transition from coaches to players. It's hard to get that consistency and that continuity. So it is critical that we continue as people want to -- they want to focus on what's happening at the time, especially with players. They're the ones that have to adapt and adjust to a new system and a new style.

But with another year under our belt, hopefully, our guys -- and I can see it already. We have a lot of new faces. The returning players and the veteran players understand the drills and what we want done, and they're able to communicate that to the other players.

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