

Big Ten Basketball Media Days

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Penn State Nittany Lions

Men's Head Coach

Micah Shrewsberry



MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Thank you, Commissioner Warren. Thank you for welcoming me to the league. Thank you for what you're doing for our league.

Also thank the media for coming out today. Being able to be here in front of you, being able to have you guys back out. I know it's been a long time. We're starting to get back to normal and it feels like normal again.

Also thank you to the other coaches who have been welcoming to me. As I'm getting started in this league, answering questions, sending out thank yous, it's almost like, hey, I don't really need it now, I'd love for them to be more welcoming in January and February, but we'll see how that goes.

I'm excited to be here. I'm honored to stand here before you as the head coach at Penn State University. I'm honored to represent our great university. But I'm also honored to be a head coach in the Big Ten.

As an Indiana kid, this is my home. Indianapolis is my home. To be able to stand here in front of you and represent Penn State University is a proud moment for me.

I'm excited about our team, right? There's no outside expectations that I really care about except for the expectations I put on myself, and the expectations we have in our locker room.

Just like everybody else that's come up here, everybody else in college basketball, everybody in college basketball is old, right? There's a lot of guys that have come back. There's a lot of players that have played a bunch of games and they're back in college basketball.

I can say with a fact that we're one of the oldest, I believe we're the third oldest team in the country. We have seven seniors this year, with four of those being senior pluses. Then we have two juniors outside of that.

To have your top nine guys be juniors and senior, that's something you can build off of. I was thrilled when I got

here to have a guy like a Myles Dread tell me that he's coming back and telling me he's staying. A guy like Sam Sessoms to tell me that he's staying. Then to get the fortunate opportunity to get John Harrar and coach him, have him back and be a part of our team. Get Seth Lundy back and be a part of our team.

That's thrilling for me as a first-year head coach because I have a building block of guys that have been in the Big Ten, guys that have played in these arenas, not necessarily empty, they've played in the full arenas and they know what it's like to win in this league, they know what it takes to win in this league.

We add some talented newcomers. We have some good players in our mix that we have. I'm excited about the talent that we have. Jalen Pickett is a really good guard, a transfer from Siena. He's going to be able to help us tremendously.

Greg Lee is a transfer from Western Michigan who is also a senior plus. He's a guy that's going to match the energy that John Harrar brings every single night. When you start putting guys together like that, older guys that have played basketball, you have an opportunity to play the right way. You have an opportunity to have guys that aren't scared to go into different venues, they played a lot of college basketball. They also know what winning basketball looks like.

I'll open it up to any questions.

Q. You were an assistant coach with great coaches. Talk about the challenges, the shock of moving across 12 inches on the bench. What has been the most surprising thing to you about becoming a head coach and having that responsibility?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Good question.

Like really everything right away. You go with this plan as an assistant coach, you go through all of these strategy sessions, you write down what you're going to do as a head coach. This is what 30 days is going to look like. This is what 60 days is going to look like.



I took the job, and there's no manual. I'm flipping through the pages. There's no manual for the transfer portal. There's no manual for COVID. You're trying to navigate all of that. Like I said, I've had the opportunity to work for some really good coaches, like Division III coaches, Division II, and obviously Brad Stevens and Matt Painter are two of the best. I've said it before, I called Coach Painter five straight days, and he picked up every single time, right? To have a guy like that be able to be there for you, to answer questions, to help you along the way, it's been tremendous.

As good of a person as it gets, to be able to have him in your own league answer questions like that. Everything that comes at you at one time is a tough challenge, it's a tough transition. But I'm learning each and every day. I'm learning with these guys back here what practice looks like. I change practice in the middle of practice based on how they feel.

The best advice Brad and Coach Painter have given me is just be yourself and you'll do great.

Q. Coming over from Purdue and seeing your guys previously as someone who was coaching against them, how have they met or exceeded your expectations?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: It's helped me. To be in this league, to see these guys, to prepare for them, it's really helped. I have a frame of reference to talk to them about because I've seen 'em, I've seen their stats, I've studied them. I've tried to game plan against them. So it's helped me.

You do have to get up close and personal to see what it really is. Like having the summer to work with these guys, to see what they can do, now we build off of that here in the fall.

We're trying to get as cohesive a team as possible right now. We have a lot of new guys from a lot of different areas. Even though we're experienced, everybody is a freshman because they're playing for me for the first time. How we do things could be completely different. If you played five years of college basketball, I can be teaching you something in a completely different way.

But to see how they're learning, how they're picking it up. I keep pointing to John because he's there, but the progress that he's made in the time that I've been there, and we've been able to be on the court together, you're starting to see it. That's growth for me every single day. That gives me encouragement every day that what we're teaching is

getting through.

Now you take the blueprint of winning basketball, how you win being in the Big Ten. Being in the Big Ten, I understand what it takes to win in this league. Now you take that blueprint and bring it over here to these guys. They've played extremely hard, right? Hats off to the coaches that were there before me. We played hard every single night and gave themselves a chance every single night. Now let's do it with more discipline, let's do it in a different way, let's go out here and fight and compete every single night.

Q. We've all been in Mackey Arena, we know what that's like. Have you given any thought about walking back in there and seeing Matt Painter on the other side of the court?

MICAH SHREWSBERRY: Yeah, that was -- you have these small moments as a head coach. Like you remember the first time things happen. I had that small moment when the schedule came out. It was like you only got to play Purdue once and you don't have to go there. I was thrilled. I was actually really thrilled for Grady Eifert who is on our staff with me. We have knowledgeable fans. At Purdue they're knowledgeable fans. They're going to cheer, it's as tough an environment as possible. But I was like, Grady, I can't wait for that Paint crew to turn on you and give you everything they got.

I don't have to think about it right now because I got a full year before I do have to go there. Like, being on the same sideline and going against Coach Painter this year, I don't know if it will be a fun experience. It will be an experience.

I know I better bring my best because I've been with him. I've seen him prepare. I know how hard that team's going to play. We're going to compete with the same spirit. We're going to get after people this year. I'm looking forward to it.

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