

# Big Ten Basketball Media Days

Friday, October 8, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Minnesota Golden Gophers

Men's Head Coach

### Ben Johnson



**BEN JOHNSON:** I want to thank everybody that's here today from the Big Ten that puts this on. I know a lot of work goes into this.

This is awesome for me. Anytime I can go somewhere and talk Big Ten basketball, University of Minnesota basketball, it's a good thing.

I know I'm new to this, but I'm a kid that grew up watching it. Know the tradition of the league. I understand the tradition of the league, the coaches that have come through here, the players that have played here, the venues, the atmosphere, the whole nine. I couldn't be more excited to be in the position that I am.

I got a different team, but a team that I love. A team that every day comes ready to work with the right attitude, the right mindset. We all kind of have that chip on our shoulder. I know we all want to do things that I'm sure a lot of people don't think we can do, and that's okay. It's our job, like I said, every day to come in with the working mindset to do whatever it takes necessary to get better each and every day.

I know the guys in that locker room are going to be competitors, look forward to doing that. I got a great staff that's going to help me along the way.

With that being said, if anybody has any questions, I'll be happy to answer.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about being a former player and also an assistant. Have you talked to other coaches in the league about that dynamic?**

**BEN JOHNSON:** Yeah, I know my story's different. Being able to kind of see it from every angle, as a kid growing up, going to The Barn, obviously as a student-athlete, as an assistant coach, now has a head coach, kind of coming full circle. I understand the special place that Minnesota is. I have a really good feeling and understanding of what we need to do every single day to keep elevating the bar, to get us to a point where we're able to talk about a Big Ten

championship, we're able to talk about consistently being in the framework of the NCAA tournament.

It's a special place. We're going to build it each and every day and take really good care of what we have. I love the guys that I work with. They give me that passion, that energy and that drive to take this places I know it can go.

**Q. Last year Minnesota was a very formidable team at home. How do you change the mindset to translate that into more wins on the road?**

**BEN JOHNSON:** I think the first thing, the fans will help. I know our fan base, I'll take them with any fan base in the country, especially our league. I think that will help.

I think having a roster full of new energy will help. A lot of guys that are trying to prove themselves. I just think that college basketball is ready to be back. I know for our guys, we're itching to get out there and get competing.

I know Williams Arena will be packed. I know our fan base is ready. And now it's our job to bring the juice and bring the energy and give them something to cheer for.

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