

Pac-12 Conference Basketball Media Day

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

San Francisco, California, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Jerod Haase

Harrison Ingram

Spencer Jones

Men's Head Coach



JESSE HOOKER: Welcome to the stage Stanford head coach Jerod Haase and student-athletes Spencer Jones and Harrison Ingram.

JEROD HAASE: Certainly excited to be here, excited about the season. Last year was a year I think we can build off of. Culturally we did some really nice things and on the court we did some nice things. We were pretty young last year, and having said all that, I think it builds into this year.

Generally we're a year older. These two guys next to me coming back is going to be a big deal for us. We have an extremely difficult schedule but also an opportunity to make some noise in the nonconference schedule.

With these guys here, as you'll see and you probably already know, they're really the definition of scholar-athletes. I'm proud of everything we're doing and proud of what they're doing. Hopefully on the court we can build on that as well and have a successful year.

Q. How confident are you this year, with everyone you have returning and the stuff you were able to build off of last year, this is an NCAA caliber team? You guys are picked to finish fifth, so you figure to be right in that race.

JEROD HAASE: I would say our confidence level is we're building something every day in practice. I know that's a little bit cliché, but while we do have big dreams and goals, including the NCAA tournament, our focus really is on improvements.

I do think there's a lot of optimism within the program and within the team, but also an understanding that we still have a ton of work to do.

SPENCER JONES: Yeah, I'm very confident. This is my fourth year. In my four years, this is the first time it's like an older team, so it's being with guys who I've been through and have built chemistry with and guys who have endured a long season, know what the grit and all the effort that it takes.

No, I'm very confident that we have the talent and now we have the experience. Yeah, it's done.

HARRISON INGRAM: To add onto what they said, in the locker room the spirits are high. These last few practices, we didn't know who was starting, who's playing competitive. We're going to have a very, very deep team. We have all the expectations to make the March Madness.

Q. First for Harrison and then Spencer and Coach, if you could give your reactions to it. Harrison, what made you decide to -- I know because you went into the -- looking into the draft and then came back to Stanford. What was the reasoning for it? And then afterwards, Spencer and Coach, when you heard Harrison was coming back, what was your reaction?

HARRISON INGRAM: Definitely just my conversations with Coach Haase and just seeing the bigger picture. My dream is the NBA, but another dream is making March Madness, and I feel like we have a great chance to do it this year. I trust Coach, trust Spencer, trust my teammates to get it done.

SPENCER JONES: I was certainly ecstatic coming back. I feel like our play styles feed off each other well, him being an excellent passer and playmaker and me being an excellent shooter.

Yeah, I felt like we had some unfinished business end of the year, definitely knowing we could do better, and now we have the chance to do it.

JEROD HAASE: I agree. We were certainly thrilled, and I do want to really give Harrison credit; the way he handled the process was really impressive. Obviously we expect that from him, but he handled it the right way.

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Communication was awesome throughout. Hopefully he felt the same way from our side to try and gather as much information.

No question about it, we're thrilled he came back and excited for what we can do this year.

Q. Coach, you've been here for a while. What's your impressions when you look across the league of just where this league is at going into the year?

JEROD HAASE: I think the league is really on an uptick right now. Obviously there were some good things last year, some really high level teams, especially at the top. I think there will be great balance in the league. I think there's going to be talent from top to bottom. I think it's a nice mixture of returning players, many all league type guys, and transfers into the league.

So I think between the coaching and the overall talent, I think it has a chance to be a league that can do some nice things.

Q. I want to get reactions from both coaches as well as players, just on Michael Jones and what he's brought to the program so far as a graduate transfer, just what his experience -- he's been in the tournament before. Just what his experience and guard play is going to mean to the team this year.

SPENCER JONES: That's one thing he's absolutely brought, as you said, is his experience. He's honestly been a perfect fit. He's the kind of guy, after you're playing four years, you know what you can do. You know where you'll fit in, and he does it seamlessly. He knows where to be, always in the right spots.

Then, yeah, he provides that little extra information about how you get to the tournament, what it takes, what his team did that we aren't necessarily doing or what we do that his team didn't do, and it just helps from a leadership perspective and a culture building perspective. He's been great.

HARRISON INGRAM: Definitely, even the little things on defense, he knows when to switch, just the nonverbal stuff he does on offense, defense, always cutting in the right place.

Adding him, Spencer, Brandon Angel, I can go down the list of just top shooters, in my opinion, the best shooters I've seen in college basketball, on one team is going to be amazing.

JEROD HAASE: One of the greatest days I've had since

I've been the coach at Stanford was in the middle of the summer I went in, and about half the guys before practice looked like they needed to shave. I was real excited because, since I've been there, we've been so young that nobody really had to do that.

With Michael, we have somebody who's a little bit more experienced, a little older, and the reality is there's a difference. There's a big difference between a 19-year-old and a 21-year-old, 22-, 23-year-old. Not only is he a great player, but he has that experience as well.

Again, joined with these guys who are a little bit more mature, which I think is providing some excitement.

Q. As you said, student-athletes, I'm always interested to find out what are you guys studying and what's your major? And what are you finding out through your major that helps you on your team and on the court?

HARRISON INGRAM: For me at Stanford, we don't major until junior year. I'm still a sophomore, so I don't quite know yet. I've probably taken most economic classes and a few psych classes, so I'm not quite sure what I'm doing yet.

Just knowing that there's a balance on and off the court, I went to a pretty prestigious high school for academics. That's important to me and my family, and just knowing that I get that at Stanford is amazing.

SPENCER JONES: My major is management science and engineering. It's kind of like the study and analysis of management systems. That's actually been pretty helpful. Currently I'm in a class called Leadership in Action, it's kind of just how to be a better corporate leader.

All those tendencies, all those attributes really help me to be a better leader on this court.

JEROD HAASE: If you don't mind, I'll add to that too. As a coach, I'm extremely proud of the team that we have. The team's GPA has been hovering about a 3.5. The diversity in majors, we have everything from computer science to mathematics to econ, but it's completely diversified across the university.

We do believe in the scholar-athlete. We think we've done a great job of recruiting to what fits Stanford. These two are fabulous examples, but the cool thing is we have a locker room full of that as well.

Q. Coach, you bring in some -- you've always done a good job of recruiting at Stanford. You bring in some more high level guys. What are you expecting from



guys like Ryan, Jaylen, and Benny this year?

JEROD HAASE: All three freshmen are coming in and will provide depth, number one. All of them have some strengths that I think can add value right away from Jaylen, his athleticism, and defensively I think he'll be a really high level contributor right away.

Ryan Agarwal shoots it at a really, high, high level as well.

Benny can shoot it and provide leadership from the point guard spot.

But it adds depth. One thing we have this year, we keep talking about being a little bit older, and those guys I think are going to have great opportunities, but also fit into kind of the greater good of what we have going on.

Q. Not telling any tales out of school, the past couple years you guys have started the season pretty darn well and haven't ended with quite so well. Why will this season be different in that regard?

JEROD HAASE: Hopefully I think being healthy overall will be important. I think I do a good job, and I think these guys would agree, keeping a pulse on our bodies and making sure we're feeling good and healthy down the stretch.

I would argue we were playing our best basketball at the end of last season. We played at Arizona and at Arizona State in two hard-fought games and beat Arizona State in the tournament, took Arizona down to the wire. So I think we were playing our best basketball.

Before that, I want to say we had 15 games in 40 days, which was a brutal, brutal schedule with a team that was generally young. But I do have confidence that we're going to be able to continue to build and grow down the stretch.

In the last couple years also, we tend to start at home, which means you end the season with 4 of 6 or 5 of 7 games on the road, which does obviously impact things as well.

But big picture, I do think there's a real relief in what we're doing and not understanding of making sure that to be able to play our best basketball towards the end of the year, we need the guys to feel healthy, and we need to manage that as coaches and understand and listen to the players.

Q. Jerod, just kind of looking at your schedule, it really does feel like it's a schedule that's designed, particularly nonconference portion, to boost your net and boost your NCAA rating, tough schedule. Would you agree with that, that kind of conscientiously you

guys were trying to create a schedule to help improve your tournament chances?

JEROD HAASE: The reality is I had a friend in the business call and say what the heck are we doing? The reality is we do think we have a team that's capable and ready. We put together a schedule that is extremely challenging. Our guys understand that and understand the work that's going to be required.

We're looking at it holistically as well, but we're trying to challenge ourselves as much as possible and do it in a way we think we can achieve some success throughout.

It was very intentional about how we put the schedule together.

Q. Jerod, a nostalgic question first and then a legit question. How much do you miss Kaiser Permanente?

JEROD HAASE: So much so we're going to go play a game there in December. We actually have taken the team down to practice this year already, and the time in Santa Cruz -- and Spencer, we actually had this conversation -- it's powerful in a lot of ways.

We went through so many emotions there from the highs of the high to the lows of the low. The COVID experience for everyone was challenging, but also very rewarding for us. But we're going to go back there and give it a go again.

Q. I was struck by your comments after the intersquad. You said you had willing passers and willing cutters, and I'd love Spencer to talk about that also, but very much so in relation to your last couple teams, or just these guys are taking it to another level this deep?

JEROD HAASE: Yeah, it's not a comparison statement. It's just kind of a statement about this team. I do think it starts in a lot of ways with Harrison. The ball is in his hands a lot, and he is an extremely willing passer.

I also think, they've mentioned to it a little bit already, is that we have very capable shooters around. I think the guys are seeing the more we share the basketball and move the basketball and have proper cutting and spacing, that's how we can be really good offensively.

They've seen it some in practice. We have a defensive segment, and we're really playing hard and playing well, and offensively when we do have the cutting and passing, good things tend to happen on the offensive end.

SPENCER JONES: I definitely second that. Part of it is



when you have the shooters, you don't care who gets the shot. You're looking for the best possible shot you can get with the shooters, because if everyone takes it, we've got 30 percent guys, 40 percent guys all out on the perimeter, so you're just trying to look for the best shot possible. That's how I see it.

Q. Spencer and Harrison, what have you seen from Isa and Maxime? They had some really impressive moments their freshman year. How do you see them improve as they get ready for their sophomore seasons?

SPENCER JONES: For Isa, it was just handling the pressure and the physicality of being a college point guard. It's definitely testing, especially for a freshman. You get a bunch of guys who are going to really try to get up in your grill. He's definitely learned from that, definitely handling it a lot better.

Similar to Maxime with the physicality, he's a European big, so they like a little more style. James is really teaching him how to be a brutal force in the paint. On top of his touch and skill that he already has, he's going to be dangerous.

HARRISON INGRAM: Them being in my class, both sophomores, I'm really close with them. From a different perspective, I've seen them kind of mature in their mentality, getting to the gym more and more careful about their body, stretching and stuff before.

For Isa, as Spencer said, just handling pressure better and being more of like a vocal leader and keeping everybody together.

And then for Maxime, he's one of the most talented bigs I've seen. His is just having a motor and going about as hard as you can see -- like James Keith. He goes as hard as anybody I've ever seen. Diving on the floor every practice, elbowing people, throwing people around. Just Maxime kind of getting that nastiness to him.

JESSE HOOKER: That's all we have time here. Appreciate you guys being here. Best of luck this season.

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