

# Pac-12 Conference Basketball Media Day

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

San Francisco, California, USA

**Arizona State Sun Devils**

**Coach Bobby Hurley**

**Desmond Cambridge, Jr.**

**D.J. Horne**

Men's Head Coach



JESSE HOOKER: Welcome to the stage Arizona State head coach Bobby Hurley and student-athletes Desmond Cambridge Jr. and D.J. Horne.

BOBBY HURLEY: We're excited to be here. I would like to acknowledge D.J. Horne and Desmond Cambridge, who came with me today. Guys are working extremely hard. We're a couple of weeks out. Really excited for the season to start. Ready for any questions.

**Q. Coach, obviously chemistry is a big issue, and it seemed like last year you guys got on a roll at the end of the year and chemistry took a little longer in coming. What have you seen in practice that hopefully leads you believe maybe this year things will kind of gel a little faster?**

BOBBY HURLEY: Great competition in practice, Michelle. We got a deep team, deep roster. Each unit are battling pretty hard. We've been staying pretty healthy, relatively healthy, so that's a positive sign.

I think the guys are probably ready to get a different opponent; tired of seeing each other every day in practice. We've been going at it really hard. I think the group has demonstrated unselfishness in their energy defensively. I think we've got a chance potentially to be really good at that on that end of the floor with our depth and athleticism and our rim protectors and on-the-ball defense.

And then we're sharing the ball. I think there's a level of trust that's been built between the players that we can move the basketball and get a good shot on offense.

**Q. D.J., you were part of the team last year. How does this year compare to last year? Do you see it coming together faster?**

D.J. HORNE: Yeah, I do. I feel like this year we have a lot of guys on the same page. I ultimately want to win. When you have a lot of guys like that surrounding you, it makes you excited. So I'm excited for this year and to play well with my new teammates.

**Q. Coach and then for the players after, but you have Texas Southern on the schedule. You're going to be one of the three Pac-12 teams making the trip to a SWAC school this year. Your thoughts on being part of the Pac-12/SWAC Legacy Series, what you guys have planned there? And for D.J. and Desmond, what it's like for you guys to play in a game of this importance?**

BOBBY HURLEY: I think it's a great initiative. Certainly social justice is in the forefront now, and for our players to get educated. And we'll have some opportunities on campus before we go on that trip for our players to learn more about the HBCUs. Then we'll have an event prior to that game.

So we're still working on the final details, but it's a great opportunity. It will be three nonconference road games for us at SMU and at San Francisco. So we'll be working on traveling quite a bit prior to Pac-12, and with three neutral site games as well.

We're excited for that opportunity, and I'll let the players speak on it.

D.J. HORNE: Me personally, I'm happy just to be a part of it. It's good to see that things are being done to try to fix this social injustice and educate us.

So I feel like it will be a good experience. I feel like we'll take a lot from it. At the end of the day, it will be a new opponent for us, different environment, I feel like, so it will be good for us.

DESMOND CAMBRIDGE JR: And I'm excited about the initiative. I just feel like, looking for the other perspective is just great for HBCUs just to get that -- just being able to play against Pac-12 opponents and showing, shedding



light on the social injustice and giving that team a different platform.

So I'm excited to play in it.

**Q. This is a question for all you guys. What were you working on or improving in the off-season as individual players? Also, Bobby, I'm always curious from a coach's perspective -- we talk about how players are improving and working on their game. What do coaches do in the off-season to help them better their craft?**

BOBBY HURLEY: I think with us I've had to shift gears. In the summer I've been all player development and guys trying to get better, skill work and working with the guys in smaller groups. We've done a lot more, I think, team-related workouts, putting in drills that we'll use in practice, installing some offense.

Because with the transfer portal now and the turnover year to year with players movement, you have to do more team related things.

We didn't start the season well last year, and I'm not making that the singular reason that we weren't prepared enough with the change we had on our roster, but I think we've focused on doing more of that and hopefully that's putting us in a better position to play well early in the season.

As far as like coaches always self-evaluate and you take a look at what you can get better at and what your team needs to do better. Certainly for us is put more points on the board coming off last year's team. We were top 30 in the nation defensive efficiency, and we struggled to score all year.

I think we've addressed that through recruiting and bringing some guys in, like Desmond Cambridge, who are capable of making shots. Hopefully Marcus Bagley is healthy right now and will continue to stay that way and take a little pressure off this guy to my left who really carries a load for us offensively, D.J. Horne.

D.J. HORNE: As an individual, I would say this summer and just getting ready for this season, my biggest thing has just been trying to lead this team. I feel like that's going to be big for us to get to where we want to get to.

Ultimately just trying to like see the court more. Like Coach said, adding guys like Des and everyone else who's new to the team is going to take a lot of the scoring load off, I feel like.

So just doing the little things to help us win and see everybody succeed in that, that's what I'm mainly focused on for this year.

DESMOND CAMBRIDGE JR: Likewise, individually just worked on staying consistent. At the end of the day, we've got to put points on the board, and that's what I feel like I'm here to do. So I definitely want to keep that sharp.

But also, since there are a lot of new guys on the roster, just making sure our chemistry stays up, making sure everyone is on the same page, making sure everyone comes in trying to give their best every day. If we have guys who are committed to that, we've got a chance to beat anybody.

**Q. Bobby, I'm always amazed every time I see you, you still look the same minus a few gray hairs that you did when I played against you in the '80s at Duke. My question, D.J., does Coach Hurley get out there and practice with you guys sometimes?**

D.J. HORNE: Oh, yeah, man. He was just out there with us last practice, man. We were down a couple of guys and he was out there playing the four for us.

**Q. The four?**

BOBBY HURLEY: I used to be a point guard, now I'm a trapping four man.

**Q. Is he shooting up all the balls like he did at Duke?**

D.J. HORNE: I try to get him to shoot, but he was still throwing his dimes, man. When he gets out there with us, it's cool to see that, man, knowing he's from Duke, he did it at the highest level, and he's still trying to teach us. So it's big.

**Q. Tell me how important it is to learn from one of the greatest point guards in college basketball history, and how important was that for you when making your decision to play for Bobby Hurley?**

D.J. HORNE: It was definitely important for me. Being from North Carolina growing up, being a Duke fan, definitely turned my eye so when I got to building my relationship with Coach Hurley and just ultimately weighing out my decisions and everything, I feel like this was the right spot for me.

Just being here and soaking up all the information I can from him has been also a great thing for me because I feel like there's so much to learn. You can learn from anybody all the time. And why not somebody like him with his

resume and everything? It's been good.

Hopefully, you know, we can win a lot of games this year.

**Q. Last couple years have been tough, just with COVID and everything. What's it like to be back to somewhat of normalcy? And just kind of looking back and going through that with all the isolation, online classes and everything, how hard was it, and what did you guys learn from that?**

D.J. HORNE: It definitely was different. For me, it kind of made it seem like I wasn't so much in college. It just kind of felt like I was playing basketball with all the online stuff. Kind of not going to classes anymore and all that.

If guys were getting sick, it would result in a shutdown, and we'd have to stop playing basketball. So it was definitely a learning experience for a lot of us.

I'm just glad that it's starting to fade away more and more as we get closer to the season. Hopefully we can stay healthy and not have to deal with it at all this season.

**Q. Desmond, what's it like for you to be reunited with your brother at Arizona State? And how important was that for you in finding a new school that you and Devan could play together? Then for Coach Hurley, what's it like to have them on the roster, and what are your expectations for them this year?**

DESMOND CAMBRIDGE JR: I'd definitely say it was a dream come true, just being able to play with my brother on a Power 5 level. I definitely wanted to play with him first when he first came out of high school, but the cards didn't just align, so we weren't able to do that.

As soon as we both knew that we were both going into the transfer portal, it was a no brainer. We were going to be a package deal.

Coach Hurley, as soon as I spoke to him the first time, he was already like, yeah, we want both you and your brother, and that was very important for me. Just knowing that the Coach wanted both of us, because he came from Auburn who was a winning program and I came from Nevada, which was mid-major, so that meant a lot.

Now just being able to play with him now, building that chemistry -- we already have chemistry being brothers, so, yeah, that feeling is amazing. Just being able to say like you made it with your brother. Even though we have a lot to do and we still want to win a lot of games, definitely a dream come true.

BOBBY HURLEY: I would say it's been great having Des and Devan. They just bring a lot of intangibles right away. Played a lot of basketball. Just a positive vibe. Very dependable in practice every day. Des is an explosive scorer, can put points on the board, and that's something that we struggled with last year. So he brings that to the table.

Devan is explosive in the open court. I mean, just really power dunks. Unfortunately his brother, he misses some dunks and layup lines and stuff, so I'm not going to ask him to do a whole lot of that, but his brother Devan will handle that.

Very different, though. Devan brings maybe a lot of what Kimani Lawrence brought for us last year, kind of a lot of glue guy stuff, rebounding, loose balls, good on defense, communicating. So it's good all around player.

Des is a terrific offensive player, and he works at it on the perimeter too. He's been guarding Marcus Bagley quite a bit in our practices. So he wants to accept that challenge on defense. So it's been great having both of those guys.

**Q. I talked about this with Des earlier this month, but, Coach, you want to recount the time you took the boys out for the recruiting dinner and your brother's coaching staff texted him?**

BOBBY HURLEY: Des would know more about it. He shared it briefly with me. I think he was a little bit late, though. That's what I probably told you, right? My brother Dan was -- they slept on you a little bit. It was too late by then, right?

DESMOND CAMBRIDGE JR: Yeah, he had actually texted me while we were out at dinner on the first night. I showed one of the assistant coaches, oh, look, it's the UConn coach. That's what I had his name in as. (Laughter).

It was like Coach Hurley? I said, no, Coach Hurley is right here. What do you mean? He was like, no, he has a brother. That was the first time that I realized that he had a brother who was coaching another team. So that was crazy.

So I told him about it the next morning, and he was like, yeah, I guess I need to call my brother. We're clearly not on the same page. That was a great, great funny thing.

BOBBY HURLEY: Yeah, it's a cutthroat business. Family goes out the window, right?

DESMOND CAMBRIDGE JR: Right.

**Q. How like difficult or different is roster construction these days as opposed to five years ago when you didn't have the transfer portals? It just seems like for old guys like me, teams turn over so much. As a coach, how do you mitigate that? How do you get some continuity? How do you sort of get guys to click?**

BOBBY HURLEY: I'll try to give you the quickest answer I can. My 12-0 year, I had Tra Holder, Shannon Evans, Kodi Justice, Remy Martin was a freshman. Really good team. I had two transfers sitting out. I had Zylan Cheatham, who ended up being first team all Pac-12 the next year, and then Rob Edwards, who was a multi-year starter for us.

Guys who were graduating, you knew you had guys in your program that were sitting out, getting ready to play the next year. Maybe some people thought, hey, ASU, after going to the NCAA Tournament, will take a step back losing what we lost. But you knew as a coach you could build rosters better with the prior rules.

With this in today's world, it's different. You try and build relationships with your players. You hope that they have a great experience. You hope that you coach them well. And you hope they want to come back. And the more you could retain and bring back, the better chance you're going to have for success.

And then you have to be strategic. I think we were able to bring back six guys from our corps this year, and we brought in specific players from the transfer portal that could help us win. Hopefully that translates into a better season for us.

Then you have to figure out freshmen and how do they fit in? Can they impact you right away because now they have a lot of options very quickly. Do you have a plan for them? Have everything that you said to them, are they trusting that in their progression as a player in your program?

So there's a lot of variables. It's complicated, but we're doing the best we can with it.

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