

Pac-12 Conference Basketball Media Day

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

San Francisco, California, USA

Oregon State Beavers

Coach Wayne Tinkle

Dexter Akanno

Glenn Taylor, Jr.

Men's Head Coach



JESSE HOOKER: Welcome Oregon State head coach Wayne Tinkle and student-athletes Dexter Akanno and Glenn Taylor Jr. Coach, we'll turn it over to you for a few opening remarks and go to questions.

WAYNE TINKLE: Happy to be here. We're excited for the 22/23 season, new group for the Beavers. These two guys are a couple we're really leaning on for a lot of leadership in a lot of different areas, and they've done a great job to this point.

Obviously we've tried to squash the past year as much as we can, and we're really focused on getting our culture back, which we feel we've done. And the energy and the work that this group has put in has been super to this point. So we're excited about what's in front of us.

Q. For you, Coach, first and then Glenn, a question for you as well. The conference returns all five of its Pac-12 all freshmen team members, and of course you have one of them in Glenn. Just kind of in this day and age when maybe guys who are all freshmen, at least one or two you'd expect to make a jump to professional basketball. But kind of the returning level of sophomores you're seeing around the conference this year. Then, Glenn, what steps do you see as being kind of necessary for you to make in your sophomore season?

WAYNE TINKLE: I think it's a testament to the strength of our conference. Guys being a little more patient and listening to the people they entrusted to go to college and play for when their time is right. We've seen sad stories of folks leaving a little too early and leaving an incredible opportunity to be on a college campus, working towards that degree, honing their skills.

So it's going to make for a very exciting season for our conference. And I know for Glenn, when we recruited Glenn, there weren't a lot of schools at our level recruiting him. He bought into being patient. The assistant that recruited him said don't plan on playing a lot as a freshman, and we told him once he got there, but you need to compete every day like you want a starting spot, and he earned one once we got through games early.

Excited for his prospects, and to see his development now that he'll be one of the guys at the top of the scouting report.

GLENN TAYLOR JR.: I'm going based on what Coach said. I'm trying to be a leader. We've got a lot of freshmen, I know what they're going through. We've got a lot of talented freshmen. I know they can step up big and be what I am or even better. Taking that day by day.

Q. You're talking about leadership and the freshmen. What kind of things do you guys do to help them come along and get into the whole college -- first of all, they're coming into college, that's one big thing, right? Next you want to have a chemistry, and so it's all these new players. What kind of things do you guys do as a team to gel and get along and become teammates?

GLENN TAYLOR JR.: Not to cut you off. First we started our season off with the Italy trip, so that was very fun to get to know them guys off the court and stuff like that.

Just around the campus -- like I said, I was a freshman. I know where the dorms are at, the cool places to eat on campus.

WAYNE TINKLE: The classrooms.

GLENN TAYLOR JR.: The classrooms. I use their campus card sometimes maybe.

Yeah, we just bond. We play one sometimes. We're in the gym late nights. It's all fun. I know where they're coming from. I'm still their same age. We're all the same age. I enjoy being that big bro to people the same age as me



really.

DEXTER AKANNO: Yeah, I'd probably say the same thing, just kind of bouncing off what Glenn said. On the court, just being able to instruct them and tell them where to be at different spots and being on time in different places. Just helping them kind of find the ropes and kind of going about their daily life as well.

Then just off the court, being able to bond with them and talk with them, and then earlier we kind of had -- me and Glenn kind of set up a little dinner at my place, a little barbecue at my place. Just little stuff like that, I think goes a long way in kind of helping adapt and implement this culture that Coach has brought in.

Q. Wayne just alluded to this, that college basketball is pretty old with the COVID holdovers. You've got nine listed freshmen, most of them are first-year guys. How do the 18-year-olds deal with 22- and 23-year-olds? Because there's going to be a lot you run into this year.

WAYNE TINKLE: Sure, we'll be up against it from an experience standpoint. What we've been harping with our group is we can mature quickly by really developing good habits and discipline, and that's going to be the balance to the lack of maturity.

Easy to say when you've got -- even Glenn's in his second year, and we're looking to him for veteran leadership. It's going to be a challenge, but we chose that route to get back to our winning ways at Oregon State.

We didn't think going the route of veteran guys out of the portal to sell to our program what's really important, the tradition, the pride. We wanted to do it with a younger group, much like we started it with that 2015 class.

We know there will be some road blocks along the way, but we've got a group that will be able to dust itself off, get up, learn from it, and move forward.

When we have guys that will be able to take coaching, play hard, play together, we've had a good amount of success at Oregon State, and we expect to get right back there quicker than most people think.

Q. Question for Coach. You guys were picked last in the Pac-12 this year. I think last time you were picked last, you made a deep Elite Eight run.

WAYNE TINKLE: You want to see that again?

Q. Yes. Do you see any parallels between this team

and that team as well? And just also talk about your experience molding teams and have them go beyond what they're projected to do and how you do that?

WAYNE TINKLE: Sure. I have thought of that, and the one thing I remember sitting here a couple years ago, a lot of you folks didn't know much about our guys. We had a lot of new guys coming in. So it's -- we didn't fault anybody because we had a lot of question marks.

I think that's the same case this year, but we're very confident in the guys that we have and the people we have to do it with. We'll build our team to peak at the right time.

I mentioned it before, having kind of cut my teeth at the mid-major level, where everything kind of depended on winning that conference tournament to get to the NCAAs. It's obviously different for a lot of reasons at this level, but we've done really good at building our teams to get better and improve each and every week and play your best basketball in March when it's most important.

Q. Obviously you have a lot of youth on this team. With the transfer portal being what it is, how much room is left in college basketball for the freshman that needs a year or two to develop?

WAYNE TINKLE: That's a great question, and it's becoming more difficult. And then the patience of that young player to buy into waiting a year or two to develop, that window is really closing.

We fell into that situation after the Elite Eight run, we had several players leave that were guys when we recruited them, we said stay patient, we're going to coach you up, and then your junior and senior years you're going to really flourish for us.

They got a little impatient with that and wanted to go to a level where they could play right away, and we were kind of stuck during COVID where we couldn't recruit on or off campus to fill out our roster.

It's becoming a challenge, but we try to target with our recruitment, and you hear these guys talking about the way we do things at Oregon State that we feel is going to lead to success. But we've got to coach them every day. We've got to recruit them every day. And that's a challenge, but it's a fight that our staff's worth -- we think it's worth fighting.

But we know even with NIL and people recruiting off of rosters, it's going to be a challenge, but it is what it is. We've either got to adapt and continue to improve or you're not going to exist. I feel like we've got the right people in

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

place to really move forward and continue to do the things we've done over our time at Oregon State.

Q. You know I'm biased, Coach Tinkle. You've got to talk to me more about the summer trip to Italy and hopefully how it benefited the team.

WAYNE TINKLE: Well, it was great. These guys were asked on the Pac-12 studio interview their favorite food, and they said pasta. We didn't go into depth, but there were some great restaurants.

The neat thing was we flew into Milan and took a day trip, a boat trip on Lake Como, had lunch at Bellagio, saw Da Vinci's Last Supper. We ended the trip in Rome toward the Vatican, the Roman Colosseum. Just an unbelievable cultural and educational experience.

I learned about Brunellos and Barolos, but also the opportunity it gave us to practice with a bunch of guys and then play some competitions, learn about each other, them learning the system. It really bread great chemistry.

Dexter talked about meals at his house. We had guys at our house. This is a different group. Roxie mentioned it earlier, the energy when he was at practice a couple weeks ago. The best part of my day is when I go down the stairs to hit the court, and I'm not sure we could say that about some years in the past.

So it's going to lead to good things, and I think that experience really helped kick it forward for us.

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