

# Big Ten Basketball Media Days

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

## Maryland Terrapins

Maryland Head Coach

## Kevin Willard



KEVIN WARREN: Our next coach is our new men's basketball coach at the University of Maryland, coach Kevin Willard. He's joined our Big Ten family after 12 years at Seton Hall University. He's going to bring a lot of energy to our conference. He's very active with working with students, especially primarily children who have severe illnesses, has done a lot with Special Olympics in Maryland.

Welcome to the stage head basketball coach Kevin Willard from the University of Maryland.

KEVIN WILLARD: It's an honor to be here and be part of this conference, to represent the University of Maryland. Such a great basketball conference. Looking forward to the year. That's really all I got to say. If anyone has any questions...

**Q. A lot of coaches make the transition to a new job. What has it been like with the transfer portal, name, image and likeness making that transition?**

KEVIN WILLARD: Yeah, the transfer portal makes it a little bit easier. You don't have to wait on guys for a year. You can kind of transition a little bit quicker with the transfer portal, as long as you do it in a way.

We made sure the guys we had returning, that stayed, that we complemented them, we didn't come and bring someone in their position. It was very important to me that the balance, to get off to a really good start with the former players.

But it does make it easier when you have the transfer portal because you really have a way of starting your culture, starting your season with guys that you can come in and kind of bridge your roster much quicker than you have in the past.

NIL, I think it's phenomenal for the student-athletes. It's an ever-changing game for coaches.

**Q. Obviously Maryland is so known as a basketball**

**state. You guys got two kids in the portal from the state of Maryland. Can you speak to the importance of building a wall around that state, what you've done so far to be able to have that success.**

KEVIN WILLARD: We're not trying to build a wall. You're never going to keep all your local kids home. Fan bases love saying that. If you keep everyone home, then you're not going to be able to play everybody and everyone is going to get mad at you anyways.

For us the biggest thing was recognizing who we wanted to represent our program. We got two great kids early, Jahmir Young, a DeMatha kid, first time in 20 years, a tremendous young man. Noah Batchelor, right up the road from the University of Maryland.

Two great kids that we're going to not only get the fan base excited but at the same time let all the young high school kids understand that, hey, it's cool to come to the University of Maryland.

That's what we focused on the '23 class, too, recognizing kids that fit our culture, what we wanted to build around.

You can't keep all kids home. They're all going to transfer eventually anyways with the transfer portal. We're trying to build the right type of kids. It's a great area. High school basketball, AAU basketball in the DMV is by far second to none. It's kind of cool being there because you get first dibs on a lot of kids that obviously we couldn't get before.

**Q. When you took the job, you talked about the pedigree of the program, the identity of Maryland basketball, and the tradition of the Terrapins. Now that you're in it every day, what is something that you've learned more about Maryland that maybe you didn't know?**

KEVIN WILLARD: You got to know how to eat crab cakes. I'm learning how to crack crabs and eat crabs. It's a new thing for me. Very hard (laughter). You got to split the middle, take the legs off, go through the whole process.

There is an enormous sense of pride within the state of



Maryland, within the fan base, within the residents,  
Baltimore County, city of Baltimore.

I knew the tradition, Coach Williams has been great helping me get around all the places, but the sense of pride that they have for their program is really cool. It's been something I think that's helped us recruiting, it's helped us with this team this year. It's been great.

Thank you.

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