

Big Ten Basketball Media Days

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Iowa Hawkeyes

Women's Head Coach

Lisa Bluder



KEVIN WARREN: Our next coach to the podium will be the head basketball coach at the University of Iowa, Lisa Bluder. She works closely with the Iowa City area chapter for Habitat for Humanity to make the lives of those less fortunate livable.

Lisa Bluder, as you know, is an iconic coach, but even more so an iconic person who has done a fantastic job. We are so incredibly blessed to have her in our conference. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, for her to have passed the 800-win mark last year is just magnificent.

Again, welcome to the stage the head basketball coach at the University of Iowa, Lisa Bluder.

LISA BLUDER: That song gets my juices flowing (smiling).

Today is a great start to the season. I always feel like a Big Ten Media Day, it's the start to the season. Here we are in the Target Center.

Everyone has a goal of being here on March 5th, having the opportunity to play for that championship. At Iowa we're coming off an historic year. First time ever in the history of our program that we won both the Big Ten regular season and the Big Ten tournament. So it was an historic year.

We have every reason to have high expectations for this upcoming season. We return, in my opinion, the best point guard in the country. Caitlin Clark not only led the United States in points per game, but also led the United States in assists. First time that's ever been done in the history of women's basketball.

Obviously a Naismith finalist, the MVP pre-season and last year pick from the Big Ten.

We also have one of the best centers in the country. When you think of Monika Czinano has led the United States in field goal percentage shooting at 68% for the last two years, that's an amazing accomplishment.

I always felt if you have a really good point guard and a really good center that you have the opportunity to have a really good year.

Not only with those two women, but we have all the people around her. We have Gabbie Marshall, who is lethal from three-point range. We have Kate Martin, who I honestly believe can just contribute in so many areas. She's a great captain, the glue to our team. We have McKenna Warnock at the power four position. Return all five starters from last year.

We have some newcomers. I think Molly Davis is somebody that you're really going to hear a lot about. Molly Davis transferred from Central Michigan. She has two years of eligibility left. She is going to give us depth at the point guard, which we did not have last year. We're extremely excited to have Molly join our team.

We also have Hannah Stuelke, who is a freshman from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Ranked as one of the top 50 players in the country, Miss Iowa Basketball. We also have Miss Nebraska basketball join our team with Taylor McCabe who is the best three-point shooter ever in Nebraska girls basketball history.

We have experience, offense, a great schedule, and we have a great fan base. It's going to be a fun year for the Iowa Hawkeyes.

Q. Caitlin Clark is one of five athletes signing an NIL deal with Nike yesterday. How is she handling not only being a star of your team but in a lot of ways the face of college basketball this season?

LISA BLUDER: I haven't noticed a lot of difference with Caitlin. If you know Caitlin off the court, she's probably one of the goofiest individuals I've ever been around. She's humble, she's fun. You enjoy being around her.

I think in her situation, it's going to be hard to handle that. I mean, you are getting all these NIL deals, but at the same time Caitlin is the perfect person to handle it.



There's no jealousy there because her teammates know she has worked hard for it. They consider her one of the best players in the country. She deserves to reap the benefits of that.

Q. Your opponents are going to be focused on Caitlin. What is your message to the supporting cast?

LISA BLUDER: Yeah, I think that everybody on our team feels valued. Yes, we all know that Caitlin and Monika are Pre-Season All-Big Ten selections, but at the same time I think everybody on our team understands their role and understands they're valuable, that everybody matters.

You're right, Caitlin could have an off night. Who is going to step up? I feel like we have got a lot of other weapons.

Q. I think your top four or top five, top six, some of the early rankings nationally, a little bit of new territory I would say over the last few years. How does this team handle it? How do you handle it?

LISA BLUDER: Not think about it too much. Honestly, I think if you think about it all the time, you're going to strangle it. We don't want to do that. We want to enjoy it.

I told the team the other day when we were picked as the No. 1 team in the pre-season in the Big Ten that that can be a lot of pressure, but it can also be something that's really enjoyable. You've earned this.

I had the opportunity to meet Billie Jean King one time. She told me, Lisa, pressure is a privilege, a quote she's used often. She wrote it on a piece of paper, signed it, it's in our locker room. I want our team to remember that pressure is a privilege, enjoy it.

Q. Caitlin Clark, University of Iowa. I play point guard for you (laughter). What makes this team unique? What makes you see excited about this team. Obviously you're one of the best coaches of all time, you're the G.O.A.T. You've coached a lot of great teams. What about this team gets you so excited?

LISA BLUDER: I love going to work every day because of this, right? I love this team. These are incredible women that I would want my children to be around. Every day is something new with these guys. I always feel like being around them keeps you young.

So thanks, Miss Clark (smiling).

Q. I wanted to ask you about the unselfishness of your teammates, alongside Caitlin and Monika Czinano, because it takes a special individual to put their own

accolades aside. How have they been able to do that, and how does that enhance your team?

LISA BLUDER: Every one of the women on our team were All-State, All-American, whatever. They're all great players. That can be an issue. You come to college, all of a sudden you're not the star. Every freshman in every Division I program goes through that mostly.

I go from high school being the best player to coming to college and maybe not even playing much my first year. I think the experience that we've had, my staff and I have had, we've learned how to deal with that, we've learned how to make everybody feel important again, to let them understand your time is coming.

I just feel like it's something all of us coaches have to deal with every year when freshmen come in.

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