

Big Ten Basketball Media Days

Monday, October 9, 2023

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Illinois Fighting Illini

Women's Head Coach

Coach Shauna Green



SHAUNA GREEN: Good morning. It's great to be back. One year has made a big difference in where we're at as a program, so really excited to start year two.

Obviously last year we made some strides in our program. Definitely not where we want to get to, but a great start, and it's very nice to have our returning five starters back and added some depth this year with two freshmen and two turnovers where we really needed depth last year. We just were not deep enough.

So addressed some spots where we knew that we needed to get better at through the transfer portal, and like I said, with freshmen, so practices are going really well. Super excited to get going.

We have a scrimmage actually next Sunday, so it's coming, and then ready to get rolling on November 7th with our opening game and our schedule, as well, non-conference, we upped it from last year, which was needed, and we'll continue to hopefully add to that in terms of the competition level that we have.

But excited about this group, and again, it's nice to have now a year under our belt with returners coming back that understand expectations, our standards, our system, and our style.

It'll hopefully be a great year, and excited about this league. I think the league is so deep this year. It's going to be another really tough battle every single night with every single team in this conference.

Q. You said that the players have learned a lot from last year, but what have you learned as a coach about your team?

SHAUNA GREEN: I don't have enough time up here to talk about that. But just what they're made of. I think last year was just a year of firsts for everything with our team. The first time -- every single night was a first.

I've just learned how they respond. I've learned what

makes them really tick, how to motivate them.

One thing last year, I learned throughout the season, we never lost two games in a row besides unfortunately the time it mattered most, in the NCAA obviously we lost in the Big Ten and then in the NCAA tournament, but I think that that shows the toughness and the resiliency of our group.

Every day they teach me something new, and I just love, again, the work ethic, the resiliency, the togetherness, and really last year just also learned how quickly they bought in and believed, which isn't always the case when you take over a program and have a new group.

Again, it's a learning process every single day.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk about what you as a coach learned in your first trip through the Big Ten, and maybe what advice you'd have for the two new coaches in this conference that are about to experience what you went through last year.

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, you know that the Big Ten -- it's why I left Dayton to come here, because you want to play against the best and you want to compete against the best coaches in the country, the best players in the country, so you know it's ultra competitive, but then it's different when you feel it and you go through it.

Every single night, it's just an absolute battle. And again, every program has different schemes and different types of things that you have to prepare for.

So I think you know, but again, you don't really know until you go through it a year.

I probably -- only one year and I still don't know everything. I'll learn a ton again this year.

I've talked to a couple of them; literally I really believe -- it's how I approach it still, you've got to take one day at a time. You can never get too far ahead of yourself and can never get too high, too low, because it's all about how do you prepare today, how do you be the best that you can be today, and then whatever happens in that game you've got



to turn it quickly.

But you can't really -- again, you've got to stay pretty even keel in this league.

Q. I just want to know from your perspective now that you've got the year under your belt, a couple of surprises from you on your team this year, from a newcomer and from a vet.

SHAUNA GREEN: That's a good question. From a newcomer, I would say, as a freshman, Gretchen Dolan has been really, really good. I knew she was a good player, but just seeing how quickly she's transitioned and caught on to stuff, she's ahead of the game for a freshman.

I think that she's really going to help us.

Then from our transfer, I think just Camille Hobby from NC state, she comes in as a fifth year, and what she's been able to bring with experience and just her ability to be able to make an impact right away has really been helpful for us.

Then from our veterans, I think that our core group and even the three that are here today in KB and Makira and Jen, their leadership has taken to another level, and I think that's a big thing as we go forward in what our culture is about is how are they going to lead, how are they going to bring our team along.

I think they've taken a whole other step in terms of their leadership, which I firmly believe is going to pay off on the court.

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