

# Big Ten Basketball Media Days

Monday, October 9, 2023

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

## Nebraska Cornhuskers

Women's Head Coach

### Coach Amy Williams



AMY WILLIAMS: Thank you, and just really, really excited to be back here in Minneapolis today and just an exciting time of year.

I am absolutely loving coaching the team that I'm blessed to coach right now, and we had an outstanding experience traveling internationally this August, so we're incredibly grateful to the University of Nebraska for sending us on that experience.

That trip just showed me a lot about this team. We have an outstanding blend of some really experienced talented players and then a great mix of some newcomers that just bring some attitude and spunk and just complement our returning players very well.

It's just an exciting time. My staff and I love going to practice every day. I think that usually equates to great things.

**Q. With that blend of new players, a new coach, returning coaches, returning players, how do you see y'all's team identity as it stands right now?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, it's a great question. I feel like the extra practices this summer and our trip to Greece have taught us maybe a little more than we would know about our identity up to this point normally.

I just feel like it's a team that is extremely genuinely excited for each other's successes, and so that really bodes well.

One thing I asked our leaders to get with all of their teammates and come up with kind of the four core values that they really wanted this team to be known for and to really lean into heavy, and so they've kind of identified those: Trust, accountability, communication, and consistency were kind of the four things they really wanted to, and we've seen that throughout practice.

They come insistently every day, excited to work, to get better, to kind of push each other, but yet still be excited for each other when they see their teammates experiencing

success.

**Q. With Darian White transferring in, she had a great season last year at Montana State distributing the ball, among other things. How do you see her and Jaz Shelley working together on the court?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, what an absolute treat. Darian has just been a little fire plug for our team. She is amazing, plays hard on both sides of the ball. I think at one point in her career at Montana State being a defensive Player of the Year in the league as well as just multiple-time first-team all-conference.

We know she's been well-coached throughout her career, so we were really excited. But once we actually got her in and saw the way that she pushes pace and really is a great passer and finds people, I think Jaz finds herself the beneficiary of a lot of Darian's penetration and passes, and they play really, really well together. So it's been exciting to watch.

**Q. With Alexis Markowski and this being yet another year for her to build, what have you seen in her that's been a little bit different, or what has she added to her skill set or mentality?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, thanks for asking about Alexis. I'll tell you, this summer she had an opportunity with USA Basketball, and I think that just really sparked another fire kind of underneath her and just instilled a lot of confidence.

I think she was able to go and really train with and against the best players in the country, and I think it taught her a lot about some of the things that she really does well that have put her in a position to be recognized at that level.

But also kind of highlighting some of the things that she really wants to focus on getting better at.

We've seen just a really focused determination for her. She's talked to me specifically personally on a number of occasions about wanting to become more efficient with her field goal percentages and being able to really be able to be depended upon to finish at a high rate in the paint.



I think a player like her that led the Big Ten in double-doubles a year ago, but to see the work she's putting in to improve her footwork and balance, it's paying off with the way she's finishing in practice. We're really excited about what she has in front of her.

**Q. How have you seen the conference overall grow and transform over the years during your tenure, having been a part of the Big Ten?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Thanks for the question. Yeah, I think obviously there's been great players in this league from the day that I came in as a head coach. We noticed all the talented players.

But I feel like just every single program has found ways to just continue to raise the bar with the talent that they're putting up and down rosters.

But I think it's really evident when you start going to sold-out arenas on a regular basis.

Just last year at Nebraska, we experienced the largest attended women's basketball game in our program's history, and we saw 30 percent growth in our attendance at Nebraska. And we've always known Husker Nation is pretty special, but it's not just there, it's everywhere we go it feels like attendance is growing and people are taking a vested interest.

I think that's a testament to the product that we're putting out on the floor. We have beautiful, talented, smart, just creative young women that play in this league, and people are noticing that. They're coming out to watch a very good brand of basketball and great entertainment.

I think for me, that's where I've seen the most growth.

**Q. When you look on the floor, what jersey number do you look to to make sure things are running the right way that you want them to for Cornhusker basketball?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think it comes down to Jaz Shelley. She's a fifth-year player now and is beginning her third year in our program. I think just an incredibly talented player but really balanced with her emotion. She speaks, people listen. That's just how our team really responds to Jaz.

I feel comfortable in situations in practice where I can just say, hey, Jaz, take it and you call the play, and she thinks the game. She's very high IQ. She's had so many experiences, both for Basketball Australia and throughout her collegiate career, that I think that leadership is

something that her -- she works harder than any player on our team.

That's something that her teammates just really respect, so she's earned the right to have that role.

**Q. You were talking about the 30 percent increase in attendance, but then there was also that huge volleyball event there. How do you think that level of momentum will carry into your program this year?**

AMY WILLIAMS: It's really hard to put into words. Just such an incredible event. Our entire team experienced that event, 93,000 people for a women's sporting event at the University of Nebraska. It was really special.

I just got teary-eyed and chills myself being in that environment. Coach Cook and his staff have been very good to me personally and our coaching staff and sharing a lot of ideas, so to watch that happen, we obviously share an athlete with our volleyball team in Maggie Mendelson, and to watch her out there on that court in the middle of Memorial Stadium was a really special night for Nebraska athletics and for every young woman in our state and really across the country.

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