

# Big Ten Basketball Media Days

Monday, October 9, 2023

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

## Iowa Hawkeyes

Women's Head Coach

## Coach Lisa Bluder



LISA BLUDER: Thank you. Darn, it feels pretty good to be back in this building. I have to be honest. Good vibes in here.

Think back six months ago, we turned this place into black and gold Carver north. Pretty fun. Hope it'll be a fun time in six more months for sure.

We're excited about the season like everybody else, and this kind of kicks it all off for us.

I was kind of surprised, actually, to see the rankings. This conference is so good. There's going to be so many surprises.

It's loaded. This conference is loaded, definitely.

We lost 40 percent of our starting lineup, some really experienced players that were four-year starters for us. It's tough to replace those two.

But we do have this young girl coming, maybe you know her, Caitlin I think something. She's pretty good, too.

We'll obviously build around her. We do return Gabbie Marshall, Kate Martin, as well, in the starting lineup, and I think Molly Davis is playing really well, I think Hannah Stuelke is playing really well for us.

We have a really good schedule, a very challenging non-conference schedule, and you have to have that to prepare yourself for the grueling Big Ten conference.

We're going to challenge ourselves for sure. 11 of our games on our schedule right now are against top-25 opponents, so we will be challenging ourselves.

But when they come into Carver, it's going to be one hostile environment. We have sold out every single game, every single ticket, so we're excited about having -- we want to get that national attendance record. We will be hosting in six days in Kinnick Stadium. We've sold about 48,000 tickets to play in Kinnick Stadium.

That will be the first televised women's basketball game of the year, and we want to kick it off in a good fashion.

**Q. Every year I come in and I talk with Caitlin about her commitment to Special Olympics, and for the last few years it's been Monika and her commitment to DEI. What was the secret sauce for a winning team who does so well academically, on the court, and in the community?**

LISA BLUDER: You know, it goes back to recruiting, right? It goes to recruiting young women that want to win, also want to graduate, and they want to be good role models.

You have to want all those things to be a successful student-athlete at the University of Iowa.

I'm proud of the women. This year we've already done a Habitat For Humanity women's build. We've done numerous visits to the children's hospital, which by the way, all the proceeds from our game next week will be benefiting the children's hospital, and we're really excited to do the wave at the end of the first quarter to all the kids in the hospital just like they do at the football games.

**Q. What were your takeaways from the Nebraska volleyball match in the stadium, and how excited are you for your match just knowing what Nebraska could do with theirs?**

LISA BLUDER: Yeah, I could tell you watched the volleyball game when you calls theirs a match. We're very excited. I obviously watched the match at Lincoln. It was amazing.

Probably one of the best women's sporting events we've ever had, and elevated all women's sports. That was thrilling.

We had planned this before we knew that they were going to be doing that at Nebraska, and I'm just thrilled that we had a staff, administration, that backed us in this, because as you may know, there's a lot of extra work that goes into putting a basketball court in a football field, and I'm just so



proud of our administration that they've been behind us 100 percent with this.

But yeah, what they did at Nebraska was phenomenal.

**Q. Several of the coaches that preceded you this morning talked about being kept up at night by that Clark individual on your roster. To you, which teams and/or players in the Big Ten are giving you concern as we start the season?**

LISA BLUDER: I mean, there's so many. I look at Ohio State's roster, it is just loaded. I've always been a big Jacy fan. She is just tremendous. I look at Indiana's roster. I got to spend some time with Mackenzie Holmes at the Wooden Awards this year. She is spectacular.

You could go on and on.

I think every team has a secret weapon that they're going to build their team around that are just so good.

But yeah, it's an amazing conference.

**Q. Everyone talks about the cadence and fluidity on the floor, and you said you're missing 40 percent of your starters, but when you really boil everything down, it comes down to mentality. How much of last year's success carries over to this year, and how do you kind of gauge how to just look forward and not necessarily look back?**

LISA BLUDER: Yeah, we've turned the page. But I want my players to understand what we accomplished last year. I mean, that championship game was the most watched television audience ever in women's basketball, and I want them to relish in that. I want them to know it's possible, because if you don't know it's possible, it's hard to accomplish it.

I want them to know it's possible, but absolutely, we've turned the page. We're moving on. We know this is a whole different basketball team.

But we did have our foreign tour this year, and allowed us to have the 10 extra practices, and by the way, if you've never been to Croatia, I highly recommend it. Put it on your bucket list. It was tremendous.

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