

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Baylor Bears

Coach Scott Drew

Media Day Press Conference

SCOTT DREW: Well, first and foremost, it's a great day. Today is my birthday. I was born in Kansas City. My dad coached at Lee's Summit High School back in the day. Extremely blessed to be a part of the best conference in college basketball the last four years, highest NET average rating, two of the last four national champions, and most importantly, you look at this year, we had four schools and great coaches, programs, traditions.

Really excited about making the Big 12 even better and going into the season with five in the top 10 in the AP poll. That's a record.

Each and every night, what's made the Big 12 so special is that every game is a war. It's a tournament game, tournament atmosphere, and excited for the new teams being a part of that, and excited for our team.

We only return one starter, so a lot of players to blend and get used to. But so far, so good, and every coach is real happy right now because no one has lost a game yet.

Q. What do you get when you add a guy like Jeremy with the experience that he has? And also, how impressed have you been by V.J. from what you've seen so far?

SCOTT DREW: Well, when you bring in two transfers that have been in the Final Four already in Norchad and Jeremy and been in great programs under great coaches, they bring not only great experience, confidence and talent, but a lot of knowledge.

Any offensive, defensive concepts they grasp, and they are coaches out there. They help our younger guys with that.

They help V.J. And you asked about V.J. In practice, it's great when you can go to practice and every couple days see a SportsCenter top 10 nominee, and V.J. provides that.



I know in the first practice of the Pelicans, I got a clip from the GM of Yves with the SportsCenter top 10 nominee dunk, and I was like, I miss that. But the great thing is each and every day with V.J. and some guys on the team, you have chances to witness and be a part of that, as well.

Q. Curious, when you're balancing grad transfers in from winning programs and five-star recruits, is that the vision for the future of how you want to build the roster? What came together this spring?

SCOTT DREW: Great question. I think with the changing landscapes, with the COVID year this year, really everybody is trying to do things year to year. I don't think anybody has a long-term plan until we really know what the long-term rules will be.

Right now, obviously a lot of teams got fifth year, sixth year guys. If you have all freshmen, it really puts you at a disadvantage, so you have to have a good blend.

We feel we have that this year, and a lot of programs have that, as well, especially in the Big 12, and that's why you have so many ranked to start the season.

Q. I wanted to ask about Langston. Sounds like he got cleared. How close is he to being able to contribute and what are you hoping for him as far as his role this year?

SCOTT DREW: Yeah, so Langston, extremely excited to have him back in practice. He's still not doing everything in practice, but he's doing most of it now. He's somebody that your heart goes out to. He's overcome a lot from an ACL to an eye injury to an ankle surgery, but he's had a great attitude, great work ethic, and it'll take him still a couple weeks to get caught up to speed, but hopefully by conference he'll be used to everything.

Why I say that is he's doing well, but it takes time to blend him with the new players that have been playing together since the summertime already and have developed some chemistry.

Q. We don't have a lot of active National

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Championship winning coaches. You're one of them. Another one of them retired last week at the age of 55. Tony Bennett more or less has stated that he'd just grown uncomfortable with where the sport had gone as it pertains to name, image, and likeness and unlimited transfer waivers. I wondered what you thought when you saw somebody relatively young walk away from college basketball.

We preach seven, eight hours of sleep, and you're not going to get that. That's the reality.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

SCOTT DREW: Well, Tony is a longtime family friend. When he played at Wisconsin Green Bay and my dad coached at Valparaiso University, we got to know the Bennetts really well and been great friends ever since.

Tony is a great coach, and being a coach in this profession, you hate losing great coaches. Why I say that is because you know what an impact he makes, not only for the college basketball game itself but for all the young people he's coached.

He helped set them up for life and life after basketball because he's a great mentor of life and a great role model for them.

At the same time, I mean, in any profession, there's always going to be change. We've just had an enormous amount in the last couple years. I think human nature is we all prefer more certainty than uncertainty. You want to know what rules are, what to do, and how to do your job, and I think that would be across the board in any profession, and I think we're still going through transition right now.

It's probably going to take a little time until everything does settle, and you hate losing good coaches in the process.

Q. With realignment a lot of coaches are preparing for additional travel. Have you had any concerns about that with the expansion this league has seen?

SCOTT DREW: Yeah, that's another great question. I think we're all learning a little bit from football and just how hard it is to win in other time zones, and in basketball when you're playing two games a week, that makes it even tougher.

I think again this year we'll all try to go in with what we think will work and then we'll probably all make adjustments, and next year when you ask this question, we'll have some better information to give you.

But we're blessed because a lot of us travel by charter, and that makes it obviously easier, but I don't care what age you are, getting back at 4:00 a.m. is not easy, especially if you want student-athletes to get up and go to class and you get up and go to work.

