

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

UCF Knights

Coach Johnny Dawkins

Media Day Press Conference



JOHNNY DAWKINS: First, I'd like to just welcome everyone here this morning. Thanks for coming out. For us, we're excited about this being our second year in the Big 12. We're looking forward to continuing to get better as we go through the process.

I thought last year, our first year in the conference, was a year that we really competed well as far as on a nightly basis, having to face these opponents in these amazing arenas, these amazing coaches, and a lot of talented teams.

I was really proud of our guys' overall effort, the way we were able to go out and compete, and we want to continue to build on that.

I think being where we are in Orlando, we have a chance to really continue to grow and get better as we go forward, and we're excited about the future of our program, and we're excited, of course, to be in the Big 12.

Q. You have a stretch where New Year's Eve you go to Lubbock to play Texas Tech, you come back, host Kansas and Colorado, and then you go 2,000 miles to play Arizona and Arizona State. How much have you thought about the impact of travel with the expansion of this league?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Well, definitely, it's going to impact everyone. We all are going to have to play schedules in which we travel to different time zones, and we have to get used to that.

For me, having played in the NBA early in my career, I'm kind of used to that, being able to make that transition. Although it's very difficult, we have to understand, we have to prepare ourselves properly before we go on those trips, and when we return, it's going to be all about resting, proper nutrition, all the things to take care of your body

when you're traveling and playing games in different time zones.

That's what we want to have that discussion with our guys, and we will, and try to make sure we're as prepared as possible to be as competitive as we possibly can be.

Q. Just wanted to follow up on Jaylin from the injury the other night. How is he doing? Do you guys have a prognosis or timeline on when he might come back?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Not at the moment, there's no timeline. No prognosis as far as where he is at this stage. But he's home. He's resting. We'll see what happens.

We're taking it day by day, but the young man is a terrific young man. It was tough what happened during our exhibition game. But he's in good spirits, and he's moving forward.

Q. What was the evaluation process for you as you brought on Mikey, and what were those conversations like?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Well, when we brought Mikey in, of course we met. We do our due diligence. We want to see if the young man is the right fit for our program, like we would do with any young player. We do that for every single player that we admit into our university. When we do our due diligence and we go through everything, then we make a decision.

Fortunately I have a university that trusts me and my evaluation process, and I think they did an amazing job at taking in information and making a decision to enroll him.

He's been terrific in every sense of the word. He's been terrific on and off the court. Every day he's been a joy to coach. That's what it's about, giving young people second chances.

This young man is a teenager, and things happen, unfortunately, in our lives. If we were in a world where no one got second chances, I don't know where any of us would be right now. I'm just really proud of our university

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for taking that type of stand, and the young man has been terrific every day that he's been with us.

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