

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Arizona Wildcats

Coach Tommy Lloyd

Media Day Press Conference



TOMMY LLOYD: Well, it's great to see everybody. Obviously a little different coming to Kansas City, but our program and our university are excited to be part of the Big 12. I mean, it's obviously going to be an incredible challenge, and we look forward to proving we belong.

I'll basically take some questions from here.

Q. Caleb Love obviously comes in with a lot of preseason buzz. What are your expectations for him and what are some things he's been working on to add to his game?

TOMMY LLOYD: The main thing is I want him to be excited to play his fifth year in college basketball. He feels like he's probably been there for a minute, and his enthusiasm and his day-to-day work have been great. That's the main thing I've really talked to him about.

Then on the court, I think if you come back for that extra year you should really challenge yourself to grow in other areas, and those have been the conversations we've had with him maybe reshaping the way he plays a little bit. He's been an incredible participant in that process. I'm looking forward to seeing it show on the court.

As far as specifics, the conversation Caleb and I have is I want people to notice a difference. I don't want to talk about a difference. I'm excited for him to be able to showcase that. Obviously we have a great schedule to start off with and we're going to be playing in a lot of high profile games and hopefully people see a Caleb Love that's committed to a growth process and maybe doing a few different things out on the court.

Q. Joining a new conference, there's a lot that goes into that, including learning 12 new teams. I'm curious what process --

TOMMY LLOYD: 12? I thought there were 16.

Q. Well, new teams to you.

TOMMY LLOYD: Oh, okay, okay. Thank you. You're right.

Q. What work did you and your staff put in this summer to get prepared for these new teams?

TOMMY LLOYD: I think the first thing you have to do is focus on yourself. You have to onboard your new players and kind of figure out the steps you want your veterans to take.

The majority of our focus has been on ourselves and the things we need to feel like we need to do to be a team that's competitive nationally. I think if you're competitive nationally, I think you're probably competitive within even the Big 12 conference, which is obviously very strong.

We spent a little time looking at some of the programs to see if there's some general themes on either side of the ball that we needed to focus on and maybe spend more time in those areas than maybe we had when we played in the Pac-12 where we were pretty familiar with all of our opponents, but to be honest with you, I think the main focus was just making sure our new guys were comfortable with the identity we want to play with and being able to showcase that on a nightly basis.

Q. What do you think the big differences are between Pac-12 play and Big 12 play? Are there differences in the style of basketball or is it just basketball?

TOMMY LLOYD: I think the low-hanging fruit is people are probably going to talk about the physicality. I think one of the other things is it sounds to me just from knowing college basketball the way I do that most of these road games, it's going to be a sold-out, excited crowd.

To be honest with you, we didn't get that on a nightly basis in the Pac-12. There are some nights in the Pac-12 we'd go and the gym wouldn't be completely full and over half the fans would be from Arizona.

I'm sure the road games are going to be incredibly

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challenging, but we're a program that's tried to compare ourselves on a national level to other programs. These top programs in the Big 12 are obviously great, and we're excited to be a part of it, and we're excited to prove that we belong.

Q. I think you're 49. Tony Bennett is 55 and just said these changes were a bit much, decided to walk away from the game. What do you think when you see something like that, someone who's dealing with these monumental changes in college basketball in real time?

TOMMY LLOYD: Thanks for announcing my age. I appreciate that. (Smiling).

Every situation is different. Tony Bennett is obviously a great coach, and I know him some, and he's a great man. I take him at his word; when he didn't feel like he could give his team what it needed on a daily basis, and when you're a coach who cares the way a lot of us coaches do, and if you don't feel like you can serve your team the way it needs to be served, it really eats at you.

I commend him for the decision he made that was best for himself.

I've never been one that's really gotten caught up in all these changing times because I think you can let that dominate your bandwidth. It's another thing you do, and you're just looking for everything that's changed and sitting around wanting to complain about it.

That's not how I'm wired. You tell me how the game is going to be played and we'll figure out a way to play that game because I love coaching and teaching basketball. I have the opportunity of a lifetime at the University of Arizona, and I'm not going to let some outside distractions or changes in the game knock me off my path. That's how I've approached it.

Q. I was wondering, you kind of addressed it a little bit, but does this building seem a little like T-Mobile in Las Vegas? And with everything being so different coming ahead for you as far as fan environment, do you expect --

TOMMY LLOYD: First off, I thought you were suspended from questions today because you missed our exhibition game Monday night. Bruce is our beat writer and he actually came out here Monday night, so we didn't get our weekly press conference that we cherish. (Laughter).

Listen, this is a great building. I played here years ago when I was an assistant at Gonzaga. We played in a

tournament out here, and I know my age is showing - thanks Myron - because I can only remember one of the teams we played.

We played one of Frank Martin's really good Kansas State teams and it was a knock-down, drag-out and we lost. I remember it was an incredible atmosphere, and I haven't got a feel for the venue but I've seen it enough times on TV and I know this place is going to come rocking.

Our fans are excited. Traditionally we've had -- you know, a lot of our fans really love to travel and they've come to support us in our conference tournament over the years and even before I got there. I'm sure there's going to be a lot of Arizona red and blue in the building, as well.

Q. With revenue sharing, do you have a number in mind within that 22 million that you need dedicated to basketball to make it work?

TOMMY LLOYD: You know, our athletic department I think is doing a great job trying to be on the forefront of this stuff. This is what I know: Behind the scenes, when you talk to every coach, every one of us coaches has different information.

I don't even know where to start. What you're going to be allowed to do, what it's going to look like. I'm trusting our people are doing a great job because I think they are, and I think they're on it.

Of course we've had those conversations on how things look, but I don't think it's anything that we're going to share publicly or we're going to wait -- honestly, I'm a little bit more maybe pragmatic. I'm going to wait until I know what it's supposed to look like and then we can try to figure it out from there rather than trying to guess because there's so many changes right now.

Again, I told you earlier I'm not going to get caught up in it. You know what I need to worry about? Having a good practice tomorrow. That's the most important thing I can do for Arizona basketball right now is having a good practice tomorrow, so that's where my focus is going to be.

Q. Coach, when you talk about those road matchups, do you think there's any road matchups that your team is really, really jazzed up to go and play?

TOMMY LLOYD: I know where you're trying to get me to go, and we play at Wisconsin the third game of the year. I'm assuming that's where you're trying to get me to go. We're fired up to play at Wisconsin the third game of the year.

We got Point Loma coming in on Monday, and you know what, Point Loma is a great Division II program, and I had heard they just beat a Division I team in a scrimmage.

So we're going to be geared up for that. It's no lack of respect for anybody. Guys, I'm simple. What's next? What's now? What's next? That's literally what I'm focused on.

I'm not surprised one bit that Arizona is playing on the road at Kansas to finish the regular season in the Big 12 or in their first year.

When it came out, I kind of smiled. There's some senior coaches in this league that to be honest with you are guys I really look up to. I have no problem with those guys calling the shots. We're here to be part of it, and if Arizona has to play Kansas only one time the first year on the road at Kansas, so be it.

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