

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Oklahoma State Cowboys

Coach Steve Lutz

Media Day Press Conference



STEVE LUTZ: My first general comment is I'm really disappointed Pistol Pete did not come up with me on the stage. That really hurt my feelings.

Happy to be here. Thanks for sticking around. I anticipated an empty galley as I got here, as it's towards the end of the day. But really excited to be here. Really excited to be a part of Big 12.

Obviously I've been doing this for a long time and to be able to compete against some of the guys who are in this league who obviously are the best coaches in the country is really, really exciting to me. And restoring Cowboy basketball to where it once was is really, really exciting for me and for our staff.

Q. You've been known as a guy who obviously turned around a Texas A&M Corpus Christi and then what you did last year at Western Kentucky. How much of that early success would you attribute to the amount of time you spent as an assistant coach early in your career?

STEVE LUTZ: Well, I'd attribute a lot of that to being an assistant coach. Obviously I was an assistant coach for 25 years and I worked for some really good coaches and some really good programs, so I've seen it done at a high level with a lot of success, done it and done different ways.

Obviously each guy that I worked with played a little bit differently, both offensively and defensively. I was fortunate to be able to work for those guys and pick their brains and see what fit for me as the head coach because not everything that Matt Doherty or Greg McDermott or whoever does fits me.

I was really lucky and fortunate in that regard.

Q. I'm curious about your process and your strategy for roster construction this year. Many times when coaches change out rosters change out these days,

and yours had a high amount of turnover. How did you conceptualize what you wanted to do with the roster when you got there?

STEVE LUTZ: Well, as a head coach you have an idea of the way you want to play. Obviously at A&M Corpus and especially at Western Kentucky we played a fast-paced offense.

So as you head into that, you try to get guys that can fit into the way that you want to play. And then on the flipside of the ball we want physical, aggressive, tough defenders. As you envision your team and you build your team, that's what you have in mind.

But then you have the component now where you have NIL involved, right, so you may not be able to go always get everybody that you want that fits what you want because you may not quite frankly have the money for it.

Now you've got to -- it's almost like having a budget and having to prioritize who you want. We just try to turn over every rock and every stone that we can to find the right fit because even though I have this vision of what I want offensively and defensively, I'm not going to sacrifice the character portion of it. So they've got to be good people and fit into our locker room and into our culture.

Q. Do you feel like with the new transfer portal and NIL, do you feel it's harder to build a team or easier?

STEVE LUTZ: Well, I was never the head coach before the transfer portal and NIL began, so I have a hard time answering that fully for you.

What I would tell you is that there's absolutely a lot more players available with the transfer portal age. I think that goes without saying.

But having players available and having to evaluate them, having to recruit them in a very short window makes it really, really difficult. No more difficult for anyone else in the Big 12 or across the country, but it just changes things.

It's almost a little bit more like speed dating, whereas when

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I started in this business in 1995, man, you were out recruiting for the entire month of July. You were really building relationships. You were getting to know people and you had so much more time to make a decision.

You don't have nearly as much time to make a decision these days.

Q. With the portal and how important that has become to the game, how do you evaluate incoming freshmen and whether or not they can fit into your system and contribute right away?

STEVE LUTZ: I think you obviously have a lot more time to evaluate freshmen. When you're evaluating portal guys, you're spending your entire time in Synergy or watching game film. So with high school kids you get to evaluate Synergy just like anywhere else with the portal, but you also get to go see them live in May and June and July and also with the fall recruiting period.

So it gives you more opportunity to know what you're actually getting. That's the down side of the portal, is that sometimes you think you know what you're getting, and when they get there, they may not be exactly what you want. Hopefully it's for the better but sometimes it's not.

That's to me the tricky part about the portal and what we're doing these days.

Q. I'm curious with a new roster, a new program, new place for you, what was your strategy for non-conference scheduling this year?

STEVE LUTZ: Yeah, a lot of our non-conference scheduling was completed prior to my arrival. Obviously we have the Bedlam Series already built in there, back end of a contract on Tulsa, back end of a contract with Southern Illinois Carbondale. The Charleston Classic was already done prior to my arrival. So really I did not have a whole lot of opportunity to put the schedule together.

I got a couple guarantee games in there and added a couple scrimmages or charity games, those sorts of things. Really I didn't have much to do there. With the Big 12 being as many games as it is, when you walk into a job and they've already got contracts, you just don't have much to do.

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