

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

BYU Cougars

Coach Kevin Young

Media Day Press Conference



KEVIN YOUNG: First of all, glad to be here, glad to be a part of this. My first time going through this. I've enjoyed the experience thus far.

As far as our team goes, excited about the group that we've put together. I feel like we've got a good blend of guys coming back that were in the Big 12 last year. That was a major point of emphasis when I took this job was to get some of those key pieces to come back and in short order were able to do that.

I feel good about the blend of young guys that we added as incoming freshmen as well as some of our -- we were able to get some transfers out of the portal, as well. Feel good about the blend of talent that we have and feel like it's starting to come together.

But most importantly, just excited to get underway. I appreciate you guys, and we'll open it up.

Q. When looking at your roster, one player in particular who caught my eye was Egor Demin. Obviously coming over from Real Madrid. Can you tell all of us who haven't had the chance to watch him in person and even on television who we're going to expect from him this year?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, he's a great kid, number one. He fits really well into what we're doing at BYU. But on the court super unique. I think for people who have never seen him play will be super intrigued with his style. You don't see a lot of 6'8", 6'9" guys that handle and pass the way he does.

Very unique from that standpoint. He shot it well here early on in practice. But just his overall feel for the game is impressive. Guys like playing with him because he passes the ball, and we'll kind of use him all over the court.

I think he'll be somebody that people really grow to enjoy watching play.

Q. You're coming in from the NBA, and I'm just wondering how that experience at that level has shaped how you view the name, image, and likeness conversation at this level?

KEVIN YOUNG: You know, when I decided to take this move, leaving the NBA to do this, there was a lot of things I was nervous about just in terms of the unknown. What I've found is there's a lot of similarities that I wasn't necessarily accounting for. The NIL space, it's just a different word for kind of how things operate in the NBA. I find a lot of similarities there.

Quite frankly it's been a real comfortable space for me to be in, so I think we've got good people at BYU that have helped manage that, navigate that, but it's been more like the NBA than I thought it would be.

Q. What are your thoughts and impressions of the Big 12? How would you describe it?

KEVIN YOUNG: Extremely competitive. It feels like the entire league is in the top 25. I just heard -- I think Coach boil mentioned it; you can sell the Big 12 when you're out recruiting.

Even for me, I've had my eye in the back of my mind, BYU in the back of my mind, at some point maybe thought this was something that could happen, but once they made the move to the Big 12, for me personally it became a lot more attractive because of how good the league is and you're playing against the best players and the best coaches every night.

I think what I'm expecting is just an absolute gauntlet of a schedule, and look forward to competing against the best coaches and players.

Q. You've talked a lot about just the differences on the court in the NBA game with the college game, even down to when the media time-outs are. Have you leaned on anybody outside of like Chris Burgess who came from a college program, or have you leaned on anybody outside the program to kind of go through



those nuances with you?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, I've got three guys, really four guys on my staff who are super well versed in the college game. Actually probably even more than that. I've definitely leaned on people internally.

I think I've mentioned Billy Lang before. We were on staff together with the 76ers. He's the head coach at Saint Joseph's University in Philly so he's a guy that I've talked to a lot about different nuances of the college game versus the NBA game.

He's been extremely helpful in that sense, but obviously I've relied mainly on my in-house guys who have been doing this for a long time.

Q. Speaking of that, what is maybe the biggest eye opener or shocker, if you will, of going from the NBA to the college game? Is there anything that's really taken you by surprise?

KEVIN YOUNG: I don't know if anything has taken me by surprise, but I think the thing that's become evident, I think coming into it, obviously the recruiting is something that you don't obviously have to do in the NBA world, so navigating that -- I have a great staff that's helped me navigate that. But I think the biggest thing is the amount of practice time.

I've been talking to some of the coaches here today, we've been going since way back in the summer. In the NBA everyone talks about NBA training camp. It's like four practices and then you're off to your preseason schedule, which is basically like the regular season.

Just navigating the amount of practice time we have, trying not to grind the guys too much. You just kind of get tired of competing against the same guys every day. So that honestly to date has been the biggest difference from what I was doing before to what I'm doing now.

Q. Back to the NIL conversation, how important was it for you before you took this job to know that there would be support in the NIL space?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, massively important. I think when BYU decided to make the move to the Big 12, in my mind that was them just saying that they wanted to compete with the best. Just trying to get a better understanding of what that looked like on the NIL space and just wanting to be able to compete with the best programs in the country in that area, and there's a lot of -- BYU has an unbelievable fan base, an unbelievable amount of support, and so being able to see what that translated to from the NIL space has

been something I tried to do my homework on quite a bit before taking the job.

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