

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball TipOff Media Days

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Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Sean Miller

Men's Media Day Press Conference



the coach here and participating in the SEC.

I also say this. Coming from the Big East, I'm very unapologetic from that perspective because that's a conference that I participated in, I played there. There's nothing like Madison Square Garden. That conference to college basketball means everything.

When I had the opportunity to be back at Xavier in that league, that, too, was just an amazing time in my life. Great example for, for example, UConn, the three years I was in the Big East, they won the national championship twice.

Those are some experiences that I've had in the Big East and Pac-12. You need an experience before you take on a challenge like the one that's in front of us now.

Q. What is it like to be at a school where there's obviously this great love for football? How do you use that for a spotlight on your own program?

SEAN MILLER: The way I would answer that is, look, I watched the Red River Rivalry against Oklahoma like everybody else in Texas, Austin, Texas. Watched every play. Was just thrilled they played the way they did and won that victory.

I've attended every home football game. I've got to know Steve Sarkisian in a quick way. He's a wonderful guy. He has gone out of his way to welcome me.

The one thing you learn very quickly at the University of Texas is, you name the sport, they're trying to win the national championship. I go to watch a women's volleyball game, Jerritt Elliott is the coach, they're right there. They have an amazing team. It's packed, by the way. The pageantry in the gym, watching the women's volleyball team, like something I've never seen before.

In the spring, coach Schloss and the baseball team, number one seed in the NCAA tournament. Place is packed. I watched our women's softball team win the national championship, what that felt like in the city of Austin.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Sean Miller of the University of Texas to the podium.

SEAN MILLER: I'll start my comments off with just, from me, very grateful to be the head basketball coach at the University of Texas. Being a part of the SEC. That wasn't really in my plans. Life changes and circumstances happen. When given this opportunity, it was in my mind a once-in-a-lifetime one.

Super, super excited to be in Austin, a part of the SEC. Look forward to the '25-'26 season, which will be our first year at the University of Texas.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You've talked about the allure of coaching at Texas. How exciting is it for you to be coaching in the SEC? What are some of the factors that go into the excitement with that?

SEAN MILLER: I think the first thing is just the historic season that just happened here. 14 of 16 teams in the tournament. If you just stop there, I don't know if that's ever happened before. If it has, arguably that's the greatest accomplishment ever when you consider that many, 14 of 16.

Watching the tournament unfold like I did as a part of the tournament, you watch seven advance to the Sweet 16, two more get to the Final Four. Florida obviously winning the national championship.

Then when you have the opportunity or you're going to join that group, you know you're against the best. Players, teams, programs, investment, the coaches obviously. I think you have to certainly be excited about the challenge.

To me, that's what I think of when I think about becoming



What I would tell you is we're surrounded by excellence as a basketball program. To grow, to build something that has been good, and can we get to a Final Four, win a national championship. That's the quest. That's something that I think you have to embrace when you're at a place like the University of Texas.

Look, I would rather be surrounded by excellence than anything other than that. That's what we have as part of Texas.

Q. When you started in coaching, when you were at Arizona, seemed like your teams were real methodical, very physical. You came back a little more on, quick. It seems like the roster you put together your first year at Texas is kind of a little bit of both. What went into the change of playing a little more on, quick?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I mean, that's a very good observation and an equally great question.

I think, first, philosophically when I was the coach at Arizona for those 12 years, we wanted to play with pace. We wanted to build an identity through our defense. We wanted to play together. Some teams played faster than others.

I think the constant was trying to be a team that was difficult to score against. Had the opportunity to have a year where I wasn't in charge of any team. It was the best gift that I've received in my career in so many ways.

One of which is it really gave me an opportunity to reflect on what are the styles that I hated to coach against. Who are the coaches you learned to admire the most because they were the toughest to go against and prepare for.

For me, being in the west, a guy in a program that I admired, because of competing for the top prize against them a number of times, is Gonzaga. Not that I just tried to take the playbook of Gonzaga and bring it to me, that wouldn't have worked, but look and study playing at a faster tempo, trying to learn from it.

Ironically Tommy Lloyd, who took over for me at Arizona, was helpful. A lot of things I doubled down on in the year I was away from the game.

To your point, the three years that I coached at Xavier, we played at an entirely different pace on offense. It's one that I've learned to enjoy. I think it's the future. I think that just because, in fact, you're playing at a faster pace doesn't necessarily mean you're going to turn the ball over more or shoot quick every time. It just allows your players to learn

and grow through concepts, to play with pace and force.

I enjoy coaching it. I think fans enjoy watching it. Look, most importantly I think young people that want to choose programs, I think they want to play in a style that allows them to get up and down.

That's something that we certainly are bringing with us to Texas. In a league, by the way, that has that philosophy. There's quite a few coaches that like to push the ball, which I recognize.

I'm excited about competing against them and also bringing that style here to this conference.

Q. I'm sure as a coach you're always considering the resources as you're thinking about a move like this. With NIL, now the new rev share rules, what sort of role did Texas and the resources available have in your ultimate decision?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I try not to really think about that because the one thing that we've all learned over the last 24, 36 months is that what was a year ago is no longer in place. It's flipped upside down two or three times when you start talking about NIL and some of the rule changes.

I try to really focus more on big picture, just talking and thinking in terms of where I am in life and all the experiences that I've gone through.

When you have an opportunity, you want to be able to say I really want to win a national championship, I want to have everything that I can get. That's impossible, by the way.

But to be surrounded by an environment that will allow you to grow, really go for it, and I have no doubt the University of Texas is a place like that. I think that sentiment is shared by a lot of people in a lot of different sports. We just touched on it.

There's a reason, no matter what sport you talk about on our campus, they're trying to get to the top prize. Part of that also is to be this landmark state institution, of the state of Texas, that's a pretty powerful thing by itself. When you look at the players, the talent over the last 20 years that grew up in cities like Austin and Dallas and Houston, where they've gone, it's astonishing.

I think to have that ability to be the state university of our state is also something that I think I looked at.

Q. What's led you to recruit the international players?

SEAN MILLER: Great question.



I think the game of basketball, all you have to do is look at the MVPs of the NBA, start rattling them off in order, you get to three, four years in a row where an international player in the greatest league in the world has won the Most Valuable Player award. It's a global game.

Over my times as the head coach at Arizona, we had great success with Lauri Markkanen, a number of other players towards the end of my time there. They came to the University of Arizona and they became terrific players, had great experiences. It was fun to coach them.

I think at the University of Texas, again, some of the things we've talked about, the city of Austin is a great opportunity for international students and players that want to reach their goals and dreams.

I think recruiting nationally is no longer. It's recruiting the world, recruiting internationally. We want to do that.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Miller, thank you for your time this afternoon.

SEAN MILLER: Thank you.

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