

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Darian DeVries

Press Conference



Q. First of all, what have been the most productive or beneficial things of having these extra practices, not only as you get ready for Puerto Rico but a new group getting things going?

DARIAN DEVRIES: I think it's been awesome timing for us just having the ability -- you get 10 practices over the summer, so we've kind of spread them out, like, one a week. But it gives you almost a whole day that you can work on, whether it be defensive install, offensive install, terminology things that when you have basically a brand-new roster, there's so many things you have to cover.

For the timing for us to have it this first summer, I thought it's been a tremendous benefit for us.

And getting to play the three games in Puerto Rico, you know, you don't treat them like you would a regular season game, but it's still an opportunity to get out and play and get a feel for how guys react to opponents that aren't in the same jerseys we've been going against for eight straight weeks. It's been really a nice luxury for us to have.

Q. Tucker said this, kind of followed you throughout the career and he's been at your practices obviously as a player, but way before that, too, but the energy level, getting student managers, the clapping and the chants and sort of trying to develop those organically, why has that been a focus? What do you think is important about that? And why has that been an emphasis of yours, obviously, throughout your career?

DARIAN DEVRIES: We just think that from June all the way until the end of the season, it's a long year. We think you've got to approach it every day with some energy and enthusiasm. And that allows guys -- guys are going to get tired -- it allows other guys to pick you up on those days.

So we put a huge emphasis on that. I think creating that type of talk and energy on a daily basis leads to productivity on the floor, too. And then the pace that we

practice, we try to really kind of simulate how we want to play out on the game day floor. So everything we do, there's not a lot of downtime, not a lot of extra talking. We want to play fast, play aggressive and keep things moving.

We don't typically, like, even now we're a little restricted on hours in the summer even with our practice time, but as it gets into the fall even we'll try to make it really efficient in what we do in utilizing our time.

Q. When we talked last month, you mentioned rebounding and turnovers as kind of the staples of what you want to do. Now that you've had, I think, six, seven, eight weeks working with these guys, what kind of progress do you have in those areas in terms of buy-in and execution?

DARIAN DEVRIES: The turnover part, that's come along better than the rebounding part so far. I think a lot of it -- and we'll touch on this maybe later, too -- when you have multiple guys that are all coming from different programs and they've all been taught different ways to do things, because there are a lot of different ways to do things.

So you're trying to get everybody to re-learn how we want to do it. And that just takes time. There's a process that is involved there.

Turnovers, though, I think the guys have done a really good job. Like yesterday, we chart all of our live 5-on-5 stuff, and we had 18 assists to two turnovers. I'd like to replicate that every day, but that's something that, in June, it maybe would have been flip-flopped.

They've done a really nice job with that, learning how to play off two feet, making the extra pass, those type of things.

And the rebounding thing, again, it's creating habits, making sure we make contact on every shot that goes up and have some physicality to what we do there. Again, just creating those habits on a daily basis.

We still have time to do that and we're going to continue to focus on that. That's going to be a huge priority for us, and

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we know we need to be a good defensive rebounding team to win games.

Q. Watching that practice, you could see that the energy level, doesn't matter if it's offense or defense, is locked in. How did you get them to that level that fast and that successfully? I know it's not perfect, but they look pretty good on offense at times.

DARIAN DEVRIES: I think the guys have really picked up. I think we're further along on the offensive end than the defensive end, and I think part of that is because you have some guys maybe were up the line denying and other guys were way back in a drop coverage or up in hedging. Just a lot of different things. So those are things we're working through.

But I think the guys have been awesome to work with this summer. They've done a great job of just being receptive to coaching. They're all trying to do what we ask, and that's all we ask of them.

They're not going to be perfect. We don't expect them to be perfect. But the progress they've made from June until now has been really good. I've been really happy with it. I think they're going to continue to do that because I think they want to.

They've got great togetherness, they've got great energy and enthusiasm, as you saw today. They really share the ball well. We have the ability to make shots from a lot of different places.

Q. On culture, you kind of said a lot that you really emphasize just trying to create that brand here. Are you pleased with what you've gotten out of that roster here as far as culture and all that type of stuff?

DARIAN DEVRIES: Like I said, I think this group has been great. We're two months into it, but they've been terrific in terms of their approach every day. They come with a smile on their face. They bring great energy.

What you saw today has been every day these last couple of months. They come with that type of energy, enthusiasm. Their voices are heard. We want a loud gym. And that's something I think they've done a great job of responding to and bringing every day.

I like the potential of this group and they'll continue to work, which they have. I think there's certainly some possibilities there on what this group can achieve.

Q. Ryan Horn has been for you a while. What makes him a good fit for your program? What does he bring

that you like?

DARIAN DEVRIES: What I love about Coach Horn, he relates well with the guy. He's another guy that brings great energy and enthusiasm. He's a huge extension of our coaching staff. And he spends a lot of time with our guys, and our guys respect him and they trust him, so they want to work for him. I think that's what makes him one of the best out there.

And he knows how to build basketball players. And that's what I really enjoy is, like, he understands that we want them very functional; we want to train them in a way that allows them to be out on the floor, feeling good, feeling like they can move and function.

And we have a great working relationship of, when I need to back off or when he needs to back off because he understands what we just did on the floor the day before. I love the way we're able to work together in that regard.

Q. How impactful has Lamar been on and off the floor and in and out of practice?

DARIAN DEVRIES: I love Lamar. Lamar comes with great energy, brings a smile on his face every day. And that type of enthusiasm is contagious, and he's one of those guys, too, he understands this is his last year. I think he's approached every day at a very high level.

And he's one of those guys that can be a game-changer in terms of his ability to really score the basketball. I just like all the other things, though, that he's brought. You can see on film his shot-making, but all the other intangible things he's brought have been really good for our team.

Q. I want to ask you, how much are you looking forward to next week with your group of guys to go play against somebody else besides themselves when you think about it, and also a chance to build a bond, not just on the court but off the court as well?

DARIAN DEVRIES: I'm probably most excited about that because you get a chance -- because the summertime can get away from you in a hurry -- but for us to be able to go on a trip like this and have it be just us for the most part and them just being able to hang with each other and spend some different type of time outside of the basketball court, you get guys that come in, they're all at different stages of their lives.

A lot of them are older guys. They don't go out as much anymore and those type of things. For them to be all in a group together in one setting is going to be great for us, and then to get to play those three games on top of it. It



should be an awesome trip, fun experience for all of us, and we're looking forward to it.

Q. For Puerto Rico, with the new international guys and maybe guys dealing with minor bumps and bruises types of things, do you have a sense for how many guys are going to be available starting next week?

DARIAN DEVRIES: Not completely yet. I wish I had a more clear-cut answer for you. We'll kind of let that play out as we get closer. We are pretty close. But we still have a few more days here. We'll see what the availability is of everybody.

Q. You talked about you feel confident in this team's ability to shoot the ball, but I guess in the same breath, its ability to space the floor, understand how to use space, the relationship between ball screens and sort of creating shots. With a really experienced team and a lot of guys that probably had to do a lot of that at previous stops wherever they were, do you feel this team is farther ahead in not just being able to hit shots but understanding where to find them?

DARIAN DEVRIES: What I like, the guys seem like they've played together for a lot longer than they have these two months. When you watch the practice tape, it looks like a group that's been together for two or three years, the way they've really been moving it and sharing it.

I think we've got a group that really understands offense as well. They understand screening and finding windows to get opportunities to find and locate those shots.

Like I said, they've done a really good job to this point of being unselfish, moving the ball, sharing the ball, taking care of the ball. And guys have taken advantage of those opportunities when they've gotten them.

I do like the fact that we do have some versatility from a shot-making perspective.

Q. How nice is it to have Conor's familiarity with your style of play and the way you run your program?

DARIAN DEVRIES: Conor's been a great addition for us. He's just one of those guys that I think fans are going to love to watch him play. He plays so hard. He plays with a fire. And defensively he really is one of those guys that takes pride in it.

Offensively, he'll do whatever it takes to win. I know when I had recruited him out of high school, I went and saw him play in a summer game. He had zero points and

dominated the game. He was diving on the floor, taking charges, making everybody on the other team mad; he's just one of those guys.

He's just a joy to have in practice every day because he brings that energy, and he's full-out. He doesn't know another way. I think people are really going to enjoy watching him play.

Q. The two later international additions to the roster, first, what's the timeline for getting them here with the program? And I guess what are you expecting from those guys when they get here? How do they fit with what you're trying to do here?

DARIAN DEVRIES: They're going to be tired when they get here. We should have for sure one of them, hopefully, in the next day or two. That's our hope. Then we'll get him acclimated as quickly as possible. If that means he gets the opportunity to play in Puerto Rico great. If we can't get him close enough there, the last thing we want to do is put him in a position where he's just not ready.

But I'm excited for that. It's just going to add to our depth, getting more guys as we get into the fall, hopefully healthy. Hopefully we can get through Puerto Rico in a good state and get some more bodies in here and continue to develop that depth is going to be important for us.

Q. You talked about defensive rebounding being a major key for you guys. What are some of the other ones on the defensive end that will make you guys successful on the defensive end this year?

DARIAN DEVRIES: I really think we have the ability to be a good defensive team. I think we have some guys that we can be pretty versatile with on the defensive end. We have a ways to go there, and we understand that, and our team understands that.

But the rebounding piece is going to be huge, as you said. But I think the second piece is always, high ball-screen coverage. That's going to be critical to us, figuring out for our team, as a coaching staff and as players, how to best utilize our personnel and what is going to be most effective for us. And some of that might mean or will mean changing it up some.

But those are things right now as you go through the course of the summer you experiment a little bit with different types of ball-screen coverages and things that as you get into the fall and now you really lock into what's best for us.

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defensive rebound, you will give yourself a chance every night.

Q. Quick follow-up on injuries, Jason and Nick, neither of them are long-term? You expect them back some time in the summer, just not on the trip?

DARIAN DEVRIES: The timeline on both of them is a little up in the air, I guess. We'll see where that leads. We're obviously hopeful that both of them will be back in a relatively good timeline.

But I don't anticipate -- with Nick, especially, that would be something more in the fall. So we'll see how that shakes out as we move forward.

Q. Obviously you have so many of these guys out here that have so many years of experience, and you have Trent who is coming in here as a freshman. How far along is he on his development curve? And how impressed are you of his early college career?

DARIAN DEVRIES: Trent's done a great job. The first couple of weeks he was really impressive. He wasn't one of those guys that came in and looked like a freshman. I think he's learned very quickly.

I don't know if that's just being around a lot of older guys that he's been able to do that, because in the summertime, everything is like it's going in warp speed. We don't wait much. We kind of throw a lot at them, and that way they kind of have everything and we'll work our way backwards almost, which is, for Trent, your head can be spinning a little bit.

But I think he's done a really good job of coming in, figuring out the college game and the speed of it. He's adjusted well, and I'm really excited about what he's doing.

Q. I know Tayton was someone you were really excited to get him into the program, watching his energy. Talking to him, gauging personality, has he acclimated to the program and the system how you expected? And what's it been like coaching him the last couple of months?

DARIAN DEVRIES: He's done some really good things in practice, and he's a little unique, and he may be one of the most creative guys with the ball in terms of the way he delivers passes. It's very unconventional. He's one of those guys, I told the coaching staff, like, you have to let him just go a little bit.

To his credit, though, a lot of times you open up the stat sheet after end of practice, it will be six assists/one

turnover type stuff. It's almost impressive that he's able to kind of do it the way he does it and not turn the ball over.

He's almost sometimes, I think, bored with the simple play. He likes a little razzle dazzle with it. But he's really talented at both ends of the floor. He's really gifted. I think for us offensively letting him kind of playmake, the way he knows how to playmake, and defensively he's really got quick hands. He has the ability to create steals, turnovers for us. I'm excited about what he can continue to grow into for this team.

Q. What kind of attracted y'all to him and just what has he kind of shown here so far?

DARIAN DEVRIES: I think Sam gives us a real physical presence. He has the ability, too, to play inside/out. He's long. Even though he's not necessarily tall, he's long and plays above kind of his size.

In talking to other people that knew him well and coaches that have coached him before, they've all spoke about those same qualities. He's done a really good job this summer as well because we're asking him to kind of continue to expand not only his interior game, but a lot of things on the perimeter as well, where he's got to have the ball in his hands and be able to make passes, make reads, and stretch the floor a little bit. He's done a nice job in those areas for us.

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