

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Darian DeVries

Press Conference



Q. Just curious, I was looking through kind of your coaching profile on KenPom, and offensive rebounding percentage kind of caught my eye. Midway through your tenure at Drake you had some years where I think you guys were top third in the country in offensive rebounding percentage, and then the last three years kind of in the bottom third. Just curious your philosophy on that, how kind of you view the risk-reward of crashing the offensive glass and how much is based on the personnel you have?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, we would love to be a great offensive rebounding team. That's something that if you can get extra opportunities, obviously that's a big advantage.

A lot of that has been based on a little bit of our personnel of the type of lineups we had out there. What we thought and prioritized for our team every year was a little bit different.

So I would say on the pecking order we prioritize a couple other things more than offensive rebounding. But, again, it's mostly just based on our personnel and what we think we can be good at and can play off that.

Q. Last time we saw ya'll in live action was obviously against Mega, handful of -- it was like, what August 11, 12. In that time span where have you seen ya'll grow and just what are you expecting us to kind of see and learn that's maybe improved the last handful of months?

DARIAN DeVRIES: The biggest thing is just defensively I think we've gotten a lot more connected from our trip to Puerto Rico. You can just see it in the way we are a lot more aggressive, a lot more attacking as we understand positioning and where we're supposed to be a little bit better so we're not half a count late maybe to stuff like we were in the summertime.

I think that part has been really good. And then ball movement and the crispness there has been good. The

other day we were charting live five-on-five, and I think we had a day like this early in the summer, but yesterday we had 31 assists and three turnovers in our practice.

That just tells you a little bit about what we're doing on the offensive end in terms of the way we move the ball and things.

So kind of excited about where we made progress at both ends of the floor. Those are the two main areas.

Q. I want to ask you about Nick Dorn. Curious if he was able to make it back to five-on-five and what your expectations are for him for the games coming up?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, starting to work his way back into some action. Don't anticipate him playing any tomorrow night. The Baylor game I would probably say doubtful as well. We'll see where that leads.

But we're certainly getting closer to getting him to full practice type stuff, but we still got a little bit of time to go there yet.

Q. Coach, last couple years you've gone through similar rebuilds with having to replace a lot of players. Is there something you learned in the last couple years for how to structure kind of the preseason practices? I know your plan is the plan. Anything you have to emphasize versus earlier in your career when you maybe didn't have the kind of turnover you had?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I think the hardest part you is got to get into summer. You have to let kind of the roles play out a little bit. You don't want to limit guys. You want everybody to kind of figure out what they're good at from a coaching staff standpoint, too.

How can we best utilize this group and maximize all the individual potentials along with us as a group and working off that.

But I think the biggest thing is just getting your guys connected on both ends of the floor so they're just learning how to play off one another. So we do a little bit more



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five-on-five in the summertime than maybe a lot of schools do.

We've been lucky that we have had trips on the years where we've had lot of new guys. So that's allowed us more practice time and freedom to do installs and things like that too. You're able to catch up with an entirely new group a little bit.

Q. Just get your thoughts, what are the main things you want to see on Friday? What would be a successful exhibition? What are things you look at and say I want us to do A, B, C on Friday?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Play as hard as we can. That's number one. That's number one every single night that we go out there. Are we maxing out at both ends of the floor in terms of our effort and communication.

And then B, just especially on the offensive end, just the unselfishness and the ball movement. That's going to be a big key for us to be effective as a unit. We don't have a lot of one-on-one guys, so we really rely on kind of that type of movement and actions and cutting and those type -- and screening to kind of generate some of those paint touches. Those will be critical for us on the offensive side.

Q. Hey, Coach, what makes it special and unique to coach your son? And do you envision him years from now hopefully being a coach as well?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I think what makes it so special is just you get to spend all that time or even see all the time he puts into getting ready for a practice, getting ready for a game. That's the type of work that you see a lot of our guys, but when you get to see your own son do it and recognize how much he cares and how passionate he is about the sport and wanting to be good, and to see that work pay off for him on the game floor, that's one of those unique and special things.

Then I think you always talk about guys when they retire from sports the thing they miss the most is the locker room. For me, getting to be a part of that with him, whether it's road trips or and meals and those things, in addition to all the game day experiences we get to do.

And then, yeah, I know he wants to coach when he's done. I think that's one of the things that makes him kind of special as a player. Everybody talks about his shooting, but his feel and IQ for the game, you know, he just grew up around tournament. He's been chasing our teams around for a long, long time, so he gets it and understands it probably at a different level just because he's been almost force fed it for his entire of life.

So I know that's something he certainly has an interest in whenever he's done playing.

Q. You're heading into the exhibition game with a whole new group. How much of your offense and defense do you have installed at this point, and how does it compare to your first season obviously at West Virginia and Drake?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, for the most part we have everything in. The offensive and stuff we'll constantly add throughout the year, especially as we start to play games and see how guys or other teams will play us and guard us, and then try to make adjustments off that.

Defensively for the most part have everything in. Special situations is probably the thing we're cleaning up the most now as we lead into the last couple weeks. But outside of that, like I said on the defensive end we don't get overcomplicated. We just want our guys to play fast, play physical, and then give in-game or pregame type adjustments, game planning type things.

But outside of that it's all in. Now it's just getting better at it as we go along.

Q. Sorry to kind of jump in with another injury question. Especially kind of from a point guard perspective, sort of where Aleksa and Jason are, if either one is maybe a little bit closer and how you balance that position while maybe a couple of guys that you might look to to at least sort of absorb some of those minutes are out?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, unfortunately both those guys are probably going to be out for a little while yet. Certainly not going to have them for the start of the season and probably a few weeks into it for sure, which does make it challenging.

Those are two guys that we're counting on to hopefully give us some minutes and some depth, and so we got to be a little creative until one or two of those guys get back and give us a little more flexibility with our lineups.

Q. Just wondering, it's still early obviously, but at this point how good of an idea do you have now about what your rotation will look like on a night-to-night basis? How many guys do you see playing in a typical game? I guess what's the philosophy as far as how far into the season do you try to trim that down?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, it's going to be challenging early just with Nick making his way back, how quickly he can get



back into that game conditioning, and then also for us to get a little feel for where to best utilize him and plug him in.

The other two guys, they're going to be a while, so then how quickly can they just get thrown in there and find their roles and be able to fit. So those are things that we don't know yet; because of injuries we're going to be a little bit limited on our depth right now.

I anticipate it being 7 to 8 guys here early and then as those guys start to come back and get more in the 8, 9 being maybe 10 on certain nights from a depth standpoint.

Q. I wanted to ask about Tayton. We saw in Puerto Rico and over the summer how he kind of wrecked the game and was able to turn defense into offense. How vital is he for the success of the offense as the season progresses?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, he's really critical for us, especially on the offensive end. He's that one guy we have that can break the defense down. He has elite speed, able to get in and get by people and then create for himself at the rim. We need him out there. We need him to be aggressive and making plays for us. He is one of those guys that can free up some of those shooters, and that's going to be a big part of our offense.

Q. When you talk about your rotations, especially with the injuries right now, how much do you anticipate or want to experiment in these two exhibition games knowing you can get right to it with the second game, being the Marquette game?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, we'll experiment some. We been doing a lot of it in practice. For exhibition games you're probably not, especially on the offensive end, not going to show a lot. Even though we want to win the games, we also understand that the regular season games are more of a priority to us.

So these preseason games it's going to be on the offensive end more about us just functioning some of our motion. Defensively we will be able to do some things, try some different things. We can also experiment with some lineups. We are a little shorthanded, so it's almost going to force us to look at some things like we been doing in practice.

I've liked some of the things we been forced to look at, so maybe it opened our eyes to couple different types of lineups we can utilize as the season starts to get into November and December.

Q. How much freedom do you want to give your

bigger guys like Reid, Sam, Trent, to push the ball in transition after missed baskets and off defensive rebounds versus getting that to a guard and having them push the tempo?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, both those guys have the freedom to do that. I think Reid is really, really one of those guys that we want to take advantage of his skillset. We want him bringing the ball in transition and just create such mismatch opportunities for us.

When you got a center bringing the ball up the court it's just not common for defenses to have to get matched up that way. A lot of times you'll see is now the point guard may take him and now everybody is off in terms of, hey, I was supposed to guard him and they got to figure it out.

What we would love to happen is before they figure it out we got something at the rim or a three going up the air. We want those guys to grab it off the rim and push as much as possible, especially Reid.

Q. Coach, a little bit of an off-the-wall question. The football team has become a national story in what they've achieved this year and last year. In your time you've been there, have you seen or learned figure from Coach Cignetti in what he does that is something that other coaches can hone in on?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, we haven't been able to be like in the locker room or any of that, or at practices per se. But when you listen to their team and how they talk, you can tell they're very engaged and prioritizing what they know is important.

They don't turn the ball over. They prioritize that. They are very tough, very physical, very disciplined. All the things that translate to really in ever sport they're elite at.

That's something we talk to our guys about and we've used football as a reference. This is why they're good. Part of the reason is, and here is what we see. We're not football coaches, but this is why you win games in football and this is why you in games in basketball. We got to be just as good in those areas no matter what the sport is.

But we want to be elite in not turning the ball over, elite in our discipline, elite in our toughness. If we can do those things, then you're going to have a chance to win on most nights.

Q. ... play a little bit more together, and specifically now that they've had more time on the floor, what do they provide from an offensive standpoint being able to play off each other for you guys?

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DARIAN DeVRIES: I missed the first part.

Q. Sam and Reid, what have they been like spending more time on the floor and what do they provide you guys offensively?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, they have been actually really good. We've done a lot more. We did it in Puerto Rico, and I liked that lineup. We just weren't able to do it a lot in the summertime in practice-wise because we didn't have the depth there. Unfortunately we lost one of our other bigs, so it's been a little hard in practice sometimes to do it as much as we would like.

It's also going to limit us a little bit during the year potentially on how much we can utilize the two of them together just because of lack of depth. I do like that lineup. We want to utilize it a decent amount because I think it gives us some extra size to take advantage of.

Reid is so versatile in what he can do and he's so smart and moves and can play of the bounce. He's got good athleticism and speed.

It's something we're going to use and try to use as much as we can whenever those opportunities come.

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