

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Thursday, October 10, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Syracuse Orange

Coach Adrian Autry

Chris Bell

J.J. Starling

Men's Press Conference



ADRIAN AUTRY: You know, you do take time to reflect. I think everyone does. In that time of reflection, I really was just thankful for the group of guys that we had last year, that team last year, being one of the youngest teams in the country, playing in one of the toughest conferences in the country, and me being a first-year coach. A lot of people don't want to talk about that, but that was a lot. It was a lot of first years.

I was very proud of the players and that team for my first year.

THE MODERATOR: We've got Syracuse with us to get things started. Questions for Coach, please.

Q. In these days of college basketball, Coach, it's hard to keep experience due to the transfer portal and one and done, but you've managed to do that. How have you been able to maintain your players? What are you preaching, and what culture?

ADRIAN AUTRY: You know, I think the one thing about what I think I've done, and you can actually ask these guys, is that we've evaluated really well, and I think all these guys that come here, we always talk about the process.

I think for us, my staff, we have great relationship-building. Not just on the court, but off the court. We coach our guys hard, but we also spend time with them.

I think that's contributed to it, and they believe in what we're doing, and we believe in them. I think when you have that type of connection, it makes it a little bit easier to kind of build your roster and have that transition and carry-over.

It was huge for these two guys right here to return for the program to believe in what we're doing and being able to step into the roles that they've been thrust into this year. I think if you asked them, I think they would probably say the same thing as well. The relationship-building is a big piece of it.

THE MODERATOR: Last year of coaching victories, you had the fifth most coaching victories among first-year head coaches. Do you take time to reflect? Is there a moment of pride in your quiet moments that you think about the job that you are doing?

Q. Just what can you say about there has been turnover with this team, and we're going to see a lot of new faces this season? What can you say about those new faces coming in, be it the transfer portal as well as true freshmen?

ADRIAN AUTRY: I think what I've been able to see from the time that we've got together in July and I think what people will see is a lot of experience, skill. You know, we've addressed some of the things.

Last year these two guys were our top perimeter guys. I think we've had an addition of adding some guys that can also shoot the ball with low-post presence. I think you'll see a rounded-out group.

The one thing that sticks out with this group right now is the way they've gelled on and off the court, and you're starting to see that as we get closer to the season of that connection.

Q. Working under Jim Boeheim, what was one piece of advice that really stuck with you before he retired in all your years of working with him?

ADRIAN AUTRY: That's a lot of years working and playing for him, so a lot of things. I think the one thing that I would say... and I think most of the coaches that have coached under him, the things that they've taken from him is the consistency. The consistency, being able to go in every day no matter what, good or bad, and being able to push your guys and push your team to keep getting better.

I think that's the one thing I've always taken from him. No matter what the record is, you go out and prepare for the next game and prepare for the next week. I think that's the biggest thing that I've taken from him.

Q. Two questions, totally different. Year one for you as a head coach, I know you've waited a long time. You and I were sitting in I think Borio's restaurant talking about you being a head coach someday years ago. Just what can you say about what you have taken away wisdom and knowledge in year one? And then separate from that, Chance Westry, we've waited a long time to see him. Just what do you expect from him?

ADRIAN AUTRY: The first question, what have I taken from the first year? I think the one thing is you get more convicted in your whys, whatever that may be, you know, why I've chose to do this or why I recruited this person or why I've done that.

I think the first year coming away I've been more convicted in my whys and understanding a little bit more of what I want to do and how I want to do it.

The second question, you know, Chance, he was getting back into shape, and at the end of the summer I think he really started hitting his stride. We expect Chance to be a guy that can come in and play multiple positions.

As of right now, Chance has had an illness. We expect him back soon really, in a couple of weeks. He's a guy that can play on the ball and off the ball. He gives you versatility. He's a guy that can play one, two, and three for us.

We're just excited. He's had a really good summer. Now a little bump in the road, and now we're waiting for him to get back, but he'll be back. Nothing serious.

THE MODERATOR: Given the amount of transition with the roster, how long does it take for a team to coalesce, to actually gel? When do you actually know that, okay, now they're all working together in the program that we're looking for?

ADRIAN AUTRY: Still to be determined. You know, what I do see is I see carry-over in the way we practice. I see them trying to make plays for each other, talk to each other. Obviously we do some stuff off the court, but you really don't know until you get into that ring, until you get -- when you are down five or when you are up big. Do we lose ourselves? Do we stay together? Do we stay connected?

That's still to be determined, but I think so far what I've seen with this group of guys and this team is that they have really gelled together and have a good camaraderie as of right now.

Q. Coach, you've got two of your guys here with you that you spend a lot of time with in J.J. and Chris. How do you think they would describe you if you weren't in the room right now? How do you feel like they would describe you?

ADRIAN AUTRY: I don't think we can say that out here. No, you know, I don't know.

I think they would probably say that I push them, I challenge them. I think they would say that on the court I'm going to push and challenge, and off the court we can talk and have a conversation, and I'm there for them. I help them any way possible. That's what I hope they would say. Not sure, though.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you. You can switch places with Chris.

Basketball you have played now from coast to coast. Tell us about the different styles of basketball that you have seen, and what you have pulled from those styles that actually have helped your game?

CHRIS BELL: Really, honestly, being from the West Coast and California, describing it from the East Coast, I would say the East Coast is just I would say hoopers. Then on the West Coast you have skill. That's how my trainer put it.

Really that's how I would honestly put it themselves. It's a different style of play on the West Coast than it is on the East Coast. But, I mean, I'll give the East Coast some credit. They've got some dogs.

I had a culture shock when I first got to Syracuse of being the soft Cali kid. Being here for a little bit has shown me how some East Coast players play and made me a little stronger myself.

Q. Last season you and I talked about the mental side of things and how you stay locked in and the energy that you bring to the team. Just what can you say about evolving in that world of the mental side of things as well as what type of energy you're bringing in to practice, bringing into the game? How have you evolved from that essentially?

CHRIS BELL: I think every day since starting the new season, just coming in every day, being a professional, coming in ready to work.

When I take bad shots or when I make bad plays, it's how you respond to that. I think I've done a really good job of just playing basketball at the end of the day and just enjoying it.

I think I would get too frustrated in the game sometimes and things like that, but also not being an energy-consumer. I'm a junior now, and I have to lead by example, those type of things.

I'm not really a loud leader. I'm very quiet in the things I do, but I try to show people by example or talk to them like that. Really just focusing on what the team needs me to do, whether that needs to be a scorer or facilitate for everybody or just be an energy guy on the bench.

Q. You mentioned West Coast/East Coast. What are two of the toughest arenas you have played in and why?

CHRIS BELL: The toughest arenas I have played in? High school or just college in general?

Q. Whatever you want.

CHRIS BELL: College, I want to say my own home gym De La Salle -- I mean high school. And then for college, Virginia Tech is a tough place to play in definitely. Then I would say our house. The Dome is 30,000 every night.

THE MODERATOR: Chris, you can swap places with Mr. Starling. Questions for J.J., please.

Q. We all know that you're a very versatile scorer, you and Bell up there. Is there any other part of the game that people should really look out for on the court?

J.J. STARLING: Yeah, for sure. With me, like you said, I've been a versatile scorer. That's just been my game since high school, but now I'm really getting more into the playmaking role, facilitating. Then, also, buying in on the defensive end.

I'm really honing in on using my length, my speed, and athleticism. So I just want to buy into that this season.

Q. For you as you evolve in the role on this team, what can you say about how you define your leadership going into this season, being one of those returning faces?

J.J. STARLING: Yeah, it definitely is new, especially with the new guys, but it hasn't been a hard acclimation for me. They made it easy. Whether I'm leading verbally or just

leading by example, everybody is buying into the same thing. At the end of the day, we want to win.

Yeah, it's a new role for me, but I'm willing to do it because we all want to win, so...

THE MODERATOR: You're from Syracuse. Just about every game at home is a home game for you. What's that like for you?

J.J. STARLING: Yeah, it's great. Being able to play in front of my family and my friends, I haven't been able to do that since high school. So being able to see my mom and my dad in the stands, you know, whether I'm having a bad game or a good game, they're on me.

It's just good to have that because I know I'm seeing familiar faces, and those other people I'm doing it for, so...

Q. With the guys coming in that are going to be helping in the back court, just how would you describe some of those new faces and gelling together through the summer? Just what that back court looks like that's going to be assisting you.

J.J. STARLING: As Chris said, they're all dogs. We're making plays for each other, and we all can shoot. We can play-make. We can dribble, pass. It's going to be fun.

We really look forward to playing for each other. That's the type of style that Coach Red wants us to play with. We're playing that naturally right now.

It's going to be a fun season just being able to make plays for each other and just win.

THE MODERATOR: A follow-up on the leadership comment. How do you know that your leadership style is taking effect with the rest of your teammates?

J.J. STARLING: I feel like I know because just how we conduct ourselves in practice. You know, say things aren't going well, Red wants us to pick up the effort. Either myself or another teammate, we huddle up and talk to our teammates and get the energy going. I feel like that's how we know. As soon as that happens, that's when practice starts picking up. That's when we start buying in defensively. Everybody, including the managers, just the energy level picks up.

THE MODERATOR: How would you describe your head coach?

J.J. STARLING: On the court or off the court?

THE MODERATOR: I'll leave it to you to decide.

J.J. STARLING: On the court obviously he's a competitor. He played the game, and he's coached the game for many years. He has a lot of knowledge. So he just pushes all of us to be the best versions of ourselves.

That's what you want in a head coach, whether you want to hear the message or not. So he's going to be on you from the moment practice begins all the way until you leave the gym.

Then off the court he's a genuine person, down to earth, and he's somebody that you can talk to, whether it's basketball or related things or just things that's going on outside of basketball.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, that wasn't so bad, was it?

ADRIAN AUTRY: (Off microphone.)

J.J. STARLING: We rehearsed this (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: Syracuse, thank you. Good luck this season.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports