

Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Media Day

Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Jerod Haase

Spencer Jones

Brandon Angel



THE MODERATOR: It is Pac-12 Media Day from Las Vegas, the second half of the day - as we continue here, six more programs to go in alphabetical order. Stanford head coach Jerod Haase. Coach, great to see you.

COACH HAASE: Thanks for having me.

Q. Give us a sense of how you feel about your team here in the final month before the season begins?

COACH HAASE: I'm excited. We had a foreign tour this year. Went to France and Greece and had a little bit of increased practice time this summer.

We also have an older team, which I haven't normally had at Stanford, and that's been great. I feel like we're pretty far ahead in terms of where maybe a lot of team are right now because of that experience in the foreign tour.

I'm excited. We have talent, depth, and a group that is hungry.

Q. Finally, Jerod, I don't know how many conversations you and I have had at shoot-around around getting older, and now you are. Expand on that why it's so important to get older in college basketball?

COACH HAASE: I mean, just No. 1 is physical. There is a big difference between an 18- and 23-year-old but maybe more importantly is the experience factor. The travel piece of it, the being in close games, getting through practices, the whole experience when you've gone through it four or five times, not a lot fazes older guys. Having that as nucleus will be important.

Q. I think it's cool when you go on international trips and you see family along the way. Maxime Raynaud's family. Peja's wife, Andrej's mom, her family is at

Greece. What did that add to the trip?

COACH HAASE: I just put one of my favorite pictures on my desk at work of the entire team at Maxime's house. His mom created an unbelievable lunch for us and did the whole. And we have a great picture of that.

It really added a different dynamic, a real personal element to the trip. And we're thrilled to be able to do that.

Q. How important is that to get those extra practices too? Coaches talk about that all the time. It's great. The trip is an unbelievable experience for the players and the coaches. But the extra practices seem to really be a big deal.

COACH HAASE: No question. Overseas we did play three games. The games are great. We didn't practice when we were over there. We wanted the experience to trump the basketball piece of it.

But the summer, the extra practice time and getting out there, that part was invaluable and had a great time getting to know the guys, trying to put the pieces together. And the practice time is probably the most important foreign tour from a baseball perspective.

Q. One thing that's different this year, not that you haven't had any teams, but this one seems to be even more, is shooting. Like you guys at the end of last year really came on shooting the basketball. It seems like with the addition of Stojakovic and some other guys, you have a chance to be not only the best shooting team in the league but maybe in the country.

COACH HAASE: I agree. Part of that needs to be our ability to get the clean looks and being able to get downhill, get to the paint to try to collapse defenses. And schematically with plays we can do it. We have them playing a touch faster, so hopefully we can get breakdown situations in transition.

But I think we really, for most of the game, we're going to have five guys out there that we feel comfortable shooting the basketball and probably three or four that could be

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

labeled elite shooters.

Q. You were able to get another transfer this year, an important one, a point guard, Jared Bynum, transfer from Providence, another experienced guy that's played in the tournament. Talk about him and what he brings to the table from that position.

COACH HAASE: We talked about experience but I think the idea of being able to get downhill, handling pressure, getting to the paint, if we can get some paint touches either post feeds, or especially point guard like you mentioned, Jared, that will be advantageous for us because we have so much shooting around him.

He's been there, been to the NCAA Tournament, been in tough games. I think he's going to add a new element. And a dynamic point guard is going to be really fun for the guys also.

Q. Spencer Jones coming back for a fifth year. Think back to his freshman year, I remember the season start his freshman year, he took whatever the number was, 24 -- his first 24 shots were 3s or something, he wasn't going in the paint. Obviously that's all changed, becomes one of the best defenders in the league. Is there another level then to his development coming into year five where have you seen him?

COACH HAASE: I think so. We want him to be a real focal point of what we do. You talked about defensively he's become a star defender. We know he can shoot the basketball, but he's becoming more and more proficient in the post.

He can put the ball on the ground. We'll try to do some things where we can isolate him from the elbows or do some different things to get him going downhill. With his size and his improved ball handling, that will be part of his game as well.

We want him to be as well rounded as possible, knowing that the 3-point shooting is a huge piece.

Q. Based on what we saw last year, Jerod, and you saw a lot more flashes from him, but I'm expecting without knowing anything, I've not been to your practices or seen you play, but my guess is Maxime Raynaud will make a giant jump this year.

COACH HAASE: I think that's very possible. Really had a good summer. Played on the Under-20 France team, won a gold medal. He's really developed his confidence more than anything, has taken a big step forward.

The guys have a great deal of confidence in him in the low post. He's becoming very, very effective. And then he does have the ability to get out on the floor, make plays as a passer and then step out and make some 3s as well. I do think he's primed to have a good year.

Q. We're going to talk to Brandon Angel coming up, but that was a guy from the beginning that you really loved him. You loved having him around. What's been the next level for him?

COACH HAASE: Well, I've had, honestly, a bunch of guys that I think are tremendous student-athlete, scholar-athletes and Brandon right at the top of the list. I think he can be the scholar-athlete of the year in college basketball -- 4.0 in econ.

But on the court, his development has been steady. I think our team is a little bit old school, in terms of how we talk about culture and player development. And we understand we'll have a nucleus of guys that stay.

Brandon is the example of that. Spencer could be, too. But Brandon came in as a freshman, played some, but then developed as a sophomore, developed as a junior. I think this year will be in a situation that he can really thrive. And that development piece for us is something we take a lot of pride in.

Q. This has come up a couple times this morning about four-year guys and staying in the same program and developing. Jaquez wins player of the year last year in the league. There's a handful of guys this year. Spencer Jones and Tristan Da Silva, Branden Carlson Utah where I'm just surprised, and not to get you started because you and I have had a lot of conversations too where college basketball is at, but why players don't look at that, that if you stay and develop, you'll end up being better. You'll have a better career and you may get what you want. And I was triple happy that not only Jaquez won player of the year last year but now he's the 18th pick in the draft.

COACH HAASE: Couldn't agree more. I could go on and on about this topic. I am concerned about -- everybody knows the challenges we have with NIL and transfers and agents and the conference realignment, all these different things are really huge topics. The one thing I want to do as time goes on is really educate on the consequences.

Some of them we can predict pretty easily. Graduation rates I think are probably going to start to go down. We can understand some of the consequences. I think there are going to be consequences we don't realize yet.

But one of the positive things about staying with a school and a coach and having stability, is you have consistent development and you learn how to fight through adversity. And, honestly, one of the goals we should have is to prepare guys for life after basketball and life after college. And when you stay at a place and work through the good and the bad, those are the principles and ideas that do help you when you move on to the real world.

Q. You don't want this to be something but it's there. 19 percent of kids that went into the portal last year didn't get a Division I scholarship. And so as much as we don't want that trend to continue, maybe if it does, it will give some of these players some pause about going into the portal, trying to get NIL money and maybe staying. Like we're saying, stay and develop, and then play however you want to play after college. But it's just the way it's set up now, there's kids that go into the portal that -- I've never prepared for a season more in this league where more teams have J.C. transfers. I started thinking why are all these -- are coaches recruiting the J.C.'s more? No it's because all those kids that didn't get a Division I scholarship are going to J.C. now.

COACH HAASE: I'm not anti-NIL, not anti-transfer. There's a lot of positives with a lot of what's going on right now. I'm happy for players having the ability to make money and the ability to have more voice in a lot of what's going on.

But I will say this. I am so excited and so proud of this year's Stanford team. I can say with a great deal of conviction that we have a group of guys that is here at Stanford because they believe in me, they believe in the direction of the program, they believe in bonding as a team and trying to achieve a team goal, they believe in education, they believe in life after basketball and the things that Stanford can do for them.

I genuinely say that and I mean it. I understand that we're moving away from that to a certain degree, but we've got to try to hold on to as much as we can. For this year I'll enjoy that.

Q. We talked about the advanced age of your group in a good way. Let's talk about one of the two highly recruited guys you guys brought in in Andrej Stojakovic. What is he adding to your team so far?

COACH HAASE: He's a dynamic player. He has the ability to create his own shot, kind of score in a variety of ways. I think that's going to be a dynamic that's going to be useful for our teams.

Has great length. Can clearly create shots off the dribble, which not a lot of honestly players in college basketball can effectively do that. He's going to be a really good player. And I think he's in a position where he's going to be able to grow and develop with us, and I think there's some big moments ahead for him.

Q. Do you think that because you have so many experienced players on your team, that helps the development of any freshman but especially a high-level freshman that a lot of eyeballs will be on him?

COACH HAASE: Absolutely. Absolutely. I think he's getting opportunities right now and then he'll continue to get those opportunities.

But when you see Spencer and Brandon every day, we're going to talk to them in just a second, when he sees how they work how they show up and handle their business, you can't help but learn from that and grow from that. I think he's in a great spot in that regard.

Q. You mentioned those, two we've talked about them a little bit. Now they're in the room and they'll start walking up here and we'll let you leave. What about Spencer and Brandon, why are they here?

COACH HAASE: They're everything you want in scholar-athletes. But on the basketball court, I think they both have a high, high upside. They're going to be leaders on this team. We'll do a lot of different things to have the balls in their hands.

And they fit well into the context of everything we're doing within the team. Very, very smart, as you would expect. Very talented, and I think they're going to be two of the cornerstones that help us do some big things.

Q. You've been together for a while. Spencer, let's talk about you for second. Coming into your fifth year at Stanford. We're just saying to Coach when you first arrived, it was kind of catch and shoot 3s the first few weeks. I didn't think you didn't go into the paint for a week or two. But that's obviously changed in so many ways. What stands out to you about your development?

SPENCER JONES: When I first got here I wasn't highly touted it was just do whatever I could to help the team. What did they need? What was the easiest way to get on the floor? I saw a need for 3-point shooting and I just really got in the gym a lot and just solidified that role and did what I could on defense.

Since then, obviously, with all the guys that played behind Daejon, Bryce, Oscar Da Silva, you learn their little tricks and all the things that they worked on and they got better at. And so when they left, I knew the role was coming. So it was just being ready for it.

Q. We've established with coach that this is an experienced group. You guys have been around. You've been together for a while. And Coach -- I've talked to him a lot about that over the last few years about him wanting to get older. So I guess for you older guys now, what's the message heading into the season? Is it we want to get to the NCAA Tournament? We want to win the Pac-12? What's kind of motivating you guys now?

SPENCER JONES: No, it's definitely NCAA Tournament. I mean, that's the reason I came back. I wouldn't have came back if I didn't have full confidence that we have the talent and we have everything we need to get that done.

For me coming back it was almost purely a basketball decision. I've done my schoolwork and all that. I've still got a little bit of work to do, but it was all basketball. I love the role I have on the team and I knew this was the best chance for me to win and be a better player.

BRANDON ANGEL: I'll echo a lot of what Spencer said. Being old is a positive and something we haven't had my first couple of years I was here, and especially the type of offense we run, knowing where people are, building the rapport with other people on the court is huge.

And obviously as you become more cohesive, we operate more efficiently on both ends of the floor. So hopefully we can use that to our advantage and make a run in the conference, finish out the last year of the pack strong and move into the tournament make a run there as well.

Q. What's it like going into the offseason? You were one of the best players in basketball in February and March. You went into the offseason shooting 70 percent from 3 and 65 percent from the field. You probably did not want the season to end but what level of confidence -- did that add some to you? I don't know that you necessarily needed it, but what did it mean for you to go into the offseason playing that good of basketball?

BRANDON ANGEL: Obviously it's great to end the season playing well. The part you didn't mention was the midseason, I felt like, quite a slump. A lot of frustrating times, knowing how I'm working out, how I'm shooting the ball at night, in the gym alone, and knowing that wasn't

really translating to the court.

So to see it kind of translate toward the end of the year was not -- it was something, honestly, that I expected and believed that in the long run things would balance out and I would get the results that I've been expecting and working toward.

But obviously going into the offseason with that, it does build confidence, and knowing that, okay, here's what I can do now. Let's find consistency and make that not just the last whatever 12, 14 games of the year, but stretch that throughout the course of the season.

Q. Coming into the season, we talked to Jerod about this as well. Your shooting. You guys have a chance to not only be the best shooting team in the conference but maybe one of the best shooting teams in the country. How does that change -- I know it's coaching and he'll put you in spots and you'll run whatever you run, but for you guys, individually, especially you, Spencer, you've been such a good shooter there for so long. Knowing that there's multiple guys now that can make 3s, how does that change each of your mindset during the course of a game?

SPENCER JONES: I mean, I remember my freshman year. It felt like me and Tyrell, like it was if we weren't shooting well, then we had to go inside, stuff like that. So having so many shooters around you it takes a little bit of pressure off.

It allows you to relax more be more free with your shooting and stuff like that. I think that goes with kind of everybody. Everybody can kind of pick that up.

But along with that is it's created a very unselfish team. We know everybody can shoot so we look for the best shot; we don't have to get to a specific shooter every time. You just draw two defenders, swing the ball around, find the best shot available on offense.

Q. A team with a lot of returners, but your point guard is new. He's experienced, Jared Bynum. What's it for you to learn what he likes and him figuring you guys out?

BRANDON ANGEL: It's been great. As time's gone on we had the summer and foreign tour. Now we're moving into preseason we have more time. He understands what shots we all want to take, and he does a great job of putting us in the best positions to succeed.

With him also comes a lot of experience. He's made the

tournament twice. He knows what that's like, he knows what it takes. Bringing in that knowledge as well as his experience and talent on the court is instrumental for us to be successful this year.

Q. Does he know where to put the ball where you like it, Spencer?

SPENCER JONES: Honestly, did not take long to get that kind of chemistry. The summer foreign trip, couple games where he had multiple assists, one game with 10 assists. He knows how to look for me, how to manipulate the defense to get me a little bit more open. It's been pretty seamless.

Q. Where do you like it, like right here?

SPENCER JONES: Wherever I can get it, honestly.

Q. Brandon, I was going to ask you, but Spencer it fits you also. Really should have asked Jerod when he was up here. Both you guys have established how well you're capable of shooting the ball. Even with your slump last year, Brandon, you were a 50/40 guy basically when the year is over. I don't know if you are willing to say -- if you're not, talk to the guy next to you because he'll say it no problem whatsoever -- do you want more shots this year? As well as you guys have shot the ball, do you want a bigger role this time around, and can you sustain those numbers that you've shown if your role increases you get more shots, you get more minutes?

BRANDON ANGEL: I feel like we all want the role. We're all ready for the moment when it's right. But at the same time, I don't think either of us are going to be the one to force shots.

We're not going to take shots that disrupt the offense, and at the end of the day we're here to win. So if winning takes us taking more shots, then we'll do that. If it means finding the hot hand, we'll also do that.

I think, like Spencer mentioned earlier that's one of the best attributes of this team, sharing the ball, moving the ball, moving off the ball, and when the shots come to us, they'll come to us. Obviously one of my things is being efficient. When the shots are falling, they're falling and when the time is right we'll shoot the ball when it's time to move the ball, move the ball. Doing the best thing for the team is the focus of both of our games.

Q. Sounds like you guys are going to score. So defense is always important, but it sounds like however far you guys go is probably going to be on

the defensive side because you're probably going to score?

SPENCER JONES: Absolutely. That's been a big emphasis this year. Offense was really good last year, but when we got in crunch games, we lost close games because we couldn't get stops. That's been a huge emphasis. Kudos to guys who made the improvements. Maxime is a dominant force in the middle, seven-foot wing span, everything like that.

Newcomers, Kanaan Carlyle, uber athletic, could absolutely affect the defensive end, along with Jared Bynum, getting into guys and really just affecting the game on that end.

Q. What is life as a freshman like at Stanford?

SPENCER JONES: That's hard for him to answer. He came in during COVID. Gosh, it's very intimidating. I remember the first few weeks. You think about all the greatness and everything. It's like you feel almost an immediate pressure to kind of prove yourself.

Q. Academically?

SPENCER JONES: Overall. Everybody is so good at everything. You feel like you have to find something where you stand out in, which is very hard because everybody is so great at everything.

Naturally you find your space. You realize people aren't really that worried about it. No one is really trying to measure up to you as much as you think. Once you get settled in, it's a great environment to be around, great environment to share ideas with people, overall become a much more well-rounded human being.

Q. Coach said you might be the scholar-athlete in all of college basketball this year, what do you think?

BRANDON ANGEL: Academics is something I've taken pride in my whole life. My parents instilled that in me from a pretty young age that if you don't handle business in the classroom, then you're not going to be on the court.

I've taken that to heart. As I've gotten older, I've taken it upon myself. I do pride myself in the classroom. I put work in the classroom as well and it's paid off so far. Hopefully I can keep the success off the court as well.

Q. Time management, I would assume, is big for both of you guys at Stanford.

SPENCER JONES: It's huge. Especially with how hard

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

we work with basketball, how many workouts you want to get in the day. You've got to plan it if you want to get multiple and the measures we're taking. But it's something you've got to learn for the rest of your life. Life only gets a little harder.

Q. Looking at your schedule, Santa Clara and off to the Bahamas. Good year of travel for you guys between the international trip and the Bahamas. Enjoy. Good luck.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

