

DePaul University Athletics Media Conference

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DePaul University Men's Basketball Head Coach

Press Conference



GREG GREENWELL: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Wintrust Arena. Before we get started, when you ask your questions, please go to the mics on the side and introduce yourself and what outlet you're with so Coach Stubs can put some names with faces, and also DeWayne, because he's going to be meeting people for the first time in person and not on Zoom.

For opening remarks we'll start with Dr. Esteban, then DeWayne Peevy and then Coach Stubs. Thank you.

GABRIEL ESTEBAN: Thank you. Good morning. Thank you for joining us today. At DePaul, our goal is to be among the top Catholic urban universities in the nation. We are known for delivering an excellent education to a diverse community of learners. We have big dreams and even bigger hearts.

St. Vincent DePaul said, "It is not enough to do good; it must be done well." Today we continue to hold ourselves to that standard.

DePaul student-athletes know all about dreaming big and pushing themselves to go the extra mile. They are determined to succeed, and they never give up. As a result, they excel in the classroom, in our communities, and in competition.

Their achievements shine a spotlight to DePaul that benefits our entire University. At DePaul, our student-athletes and coaches are ambassadors for the University, and today, I am happy to welcome to our rostrum of ambassadors by welcoming coach Tony Stubblefield to the Blue Demon family. With more than 20 years of coaching experience at the college level, he knows what it takes for our student-athletes to excel in the

classroom, in competition, and in service to our communities.

He will be an excellent mentor and leader for the men's basketball program, and I look forward to supporting him for many successful seasons as a Blue Demon.

My wife Jo and I can't wait to cheer on the men's and women's basketball teams next season. Now it is my distinct pleasure to introduce DePaul's director of athletics, DeWayne Peevy. DeWayne?

DEWAYNE PEEVY: Good morning, Blue Demons. Before we get started, I want to start off by thanking Dr. Esteban for his continued counsel and support throughout this entire process. I also want to thank chief of staff Steve Stoute, trustees Peter Argianas and Mike Scudder, and Glenn Sugiyama and his DHR team, as well as my entire athletics staff and our campus partners. Without their help, we wouldn't be here today.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Allison and my two kids, Kaitlyn and Braden, for their patience and understanding throughout this entire process.

It's an exciting day for DePaul athletics, in our men's basketball program especially. Today we're here to officially welcome Tony Stubblefield as DePaul's new men's basketball head coach.

When we spoke last, I asked you to give me 30 days to undergo an extensive national search for our next head coach, and we did just that. It was a comprehensive process, and in all, we interviewed over 30 coaches in a two-week period. We knew we had to find the right person for where our program is right now.

Knowing that, we were steadfast in finding someone that exhibited a number of specific qualities, qualities that I know from my experience are required for us to build a championship-level program. First we wanted someone who understood the Big East and the Chicago recruiting footprint, someone who has proven success as a recruiter and extensive relationships throughout college basketball.



We wanted someone that had experience rebuilding programs and was not afraid to roll up their sleeves and get to work from day one. We wanted someone that understood the importance of academics, would support our Vincentian mission, and value the role as a mentor on and off the court.

Finally, we needed a partner, someone willing to dream big with us, someone that was ready to play games on the biggest stages in the nation, and someone who embraced the limitless potential we have here in Chicago and the work ethic to capitalize on it.

Make no mistake, the path forward is not going to be an easy one. We won't make excuses or lower any of our expectations. Instead we will get to work to return this program to national prominence. I want that for our student-athletes. I want that for our alumni and our fans. I want that for our University.

As we stand here 22 days after we last spoke, I'm proud to welcome Coach Tony Stubblefield, Stephanie and Maddux to our Blue Demon family. Tony began his coaching career starting out with Hall of Fame Coach Lou Henson, and went on to learn from two of the best tacticians in all of college basketball in UCLA's Mick Cronin and Oregon's Dana Altman.

With his 28 years of coaching experience at the Division I level, Tony knows the game well. He also knows where we are as a program. He knows what it takes to move us forward to succeed, and Coach Stubblefield inherited, at Cincinnati and Oregon both, programs that were struggling, and he was able to help return them to the national conversation. Most recently as associate head coach, he helped lead Oregon to eight NCAA Tournament appearances, including two Sweet 16s, an Elite 8 and a Final Four.

But quite possibly the most compelling factor that led me to Tony is that he's an elite recruiter with extensive relationships throughout college basketball. He has an impressive knowledge of recruiting in the Chicago area, an area that will be pivotal in our future success. He's served as recruiting coordinator for five classes that ranked among the top 12 nationally and produced numerous NBA Draft picks.

That said, I am confident in his abilities to bring high-caliber talent to DePaul and keep Chicago talent in Chicago.

With that, I officially welcome Tony Stubblefield to DePaul by presenting him a No. 21 jersey, marking the first day of our '21 season. Come on up, Tony.

TONY STUBBLEFIELD: Good morning. Thank you, DeWayne. It's a distinct honor and a privilege to have this opportunity to lead DePaul's men's basketball program. I'll begin by thanking DeWayne, Dr. Esteban, Steve Stoute, as well as everyone involved in the hiring process.

You've provided me with the opportunity of a lifetime, and I thank you for your commitment to the program.

I also want to thank Dana Altman, Phil Knight, Rob Mullens, Mick Cronin, Pat Kilkenny, George Raveling, and my beautiful family that's here with us this morning and friends for their continued support throughout my career. Today would not be possible without each of them and so many others that I don't have time to mention.

For those of you who aren't familiar with me, I'm a Midwest guy. I'm from Clinton, Iowa, right down west off I-88, about 150 miles away from here, so I'm very familiar with the tradition and success of DePaul basketball and the Blue Demons.

I grew up watching WGN Channel 9. My family and I are beyond excited to be moving to this great city of Chicago. We spent Christmas here two years ago as a family in Chicago.

I want everyone to know our history -- I want everyone to know I know our history and I fully understand the expectations of this program.

Leaving Clinton, Iowa, I earned my degree from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, where I played for two years coming from Clinton Junior College. At Nebraska-Omaha I really realized I loved working with young men. During the course of my time in college, I worked camps every summer, and I had a passion for working with young men, and I really knew I wanted to get into coaching immediately after college.

I was provided the opportunity from Tim Carter to go to the University of Texas-San Antonio as a full-time assistant and start my career at the very young age of 23. From there I went to the University of Texas-Arlington. From Texas-Arlington I went to work for the Hall of Fame Coach in Lou Henson, who was very successful at University of Illinois.

From New Mexico State University I went to the University of Cincinnati, which was in a rebuild situation with Mick Cronin, who just came off leading UCLA to the Final Four, who was at the bottom of Conference USA and was transitioning to the Big East. So I'm very, very familiar with the Big East conference from my time spent at the University of Cincinnati from 2006 to 2010.



In 2010 I was afforded the opportunity to go to the University of Oregon and work for Dana Altman, which was again in a situation where it was a rebuild program. We were very fortunate we were able to get that program off the ground and running, but it took some hard work, and we really had to roll up our sleeves, and as DeWayne said, we were fortunate enough to go to eight NCAA tournaments, a Final Four, Sweet 16s, Elite 8, win back-to-back Pac 12 championships.

During that time we had multiple top recruiting classes and numerous NBA picks. We developed a rich tradition at Oregon in those years, but when you consider the education the students can receive here at DePaul, the mission, the city of Chicago as a classroom and the competitive excellence of the Big East conference, coming to DePaul was an easy choice for me.

The opportunities here are limitless. There is no reason -- and I shared this with DeWayne in the interview process -- that DePaul University shouldn't be playing for Big East championships on a year in and year out basis, going to the NCAA Tournament, and making deep runs in the NCAA Tournament. I want DePaul to be a team that other teams fear playing.

I had a chance to meet with a number of the former DePaul players last night on a Zoom. It's really important for me to reconnect alums back to this program. That's something we'll continue to do moving forward. Last night hearing their support and enthusiasm reinforced my decision to become a Blue Demon. I told them a simple message: We can be successful here. We have been successful here, and we will be successful here again. I look forward to the opportunity to do that.

I come to Chicago with three main priorities. Yesterday upon arriving I had a very short time to meet with the team, I met with the team shortly, but in the meantime, in the next couple of days, I do plan on meeting with all of the team members to share my vision, my plan of success, and what I feel like can happen at DePaul University, and hopefully that aligns with them. I understand they have some choices to make in the meantime, and I want kids that want to be here and young men that want to be here to enjoy the best student-athlete experience we can have here at DePaul University.

Secondly, we've got to roll our sleeves up and get to recruiting. Recruiting is the lifeline to every successful college program, so that's very important to me, and that's something I've been starting on and will continue to work tirelessly after to bring the best players to DePaul University so they can have the best student-athlete

experience.

Thirdly, I've got to put the staff together that will work with these young men day in and day out so they can enjoy their experience at DePaul, that will work tirelessly like myself to bring DePaul to the top and bring that national attention back to DePaul University that they so desire and that I so desire.

Through hard work, we will get it done. I can't do this alone, though. It's got to be an all hands on deck situation with me. Whether you show your support with season tickets or yelling at the TV, I need all Blue Demon fans to buy into this program. We may have lost you along the way, and I know talk may be cheap right now, but together we're going to build something special here. We're all proud of being here in Chicago, and we will become Chicago's team again.

Thank you for all of your time today. I'm looking forward to getting to know the media that's here and on Zoom and eager to answer what questions you may have for me.

GREG GREENWELL: We'll get started with questions.

Q. Tony, you mentioned and DeWayne mentioned the idea of Chicago recruiting. Can you talk a little about your experience or ties to the city in that area and how key that will be to rebuilding DePaul?

TONY STUBBLEFIELD: Yes, recruiting Chicago and those ties is very important to me when I looked at this job. I've been in situations where we had recruited Chicago very, very hard. We had a young man Dion Dixon, who came from Crane High School, Paul White who came from Whitney Young High School, so I've coached at universities where we've recruited Chicago very hard, and it's very, very important.

Again, when I look at a job, the one thing I look at is the talent base in that area, and obviously there's great talent in the city of Chicago, the suburbs, the State of Illinois, and I look at DePaul as being a national program where you can recruit nationally.

But again, I think you've got to start at home and got to try to keep the local talent at home, and I've been blessed and fortunate where I have recruited Chicago over the years. Working for Lou Henson at New Mexico State University, obviously his Chicago ties, we recruited Chicago very hard there, as well.

Q. Did you think this opportunity was going to happen for you 20 years as an assistant? You had that cup of coffee as an interim coach as you mentioned, but to



have this realization that you're finally a head coach at a major D-I program, what's it like for you?

TONY STUBBLEFIELD: Well, growing up in Clinton, Iowa, watching DePaul on WGN, I never guessed that this would be an opportunity for me. Obviously I'm blessed and fortunate to be in this situation, but I do feel I've worked very tirelessly over the course of the last 28 years to prepare me for this situation.

I didn't know where it was going to be, but I wanted it to be at a place that aligned with my values and what I believed in and that University's values. So it just was a situation where I knew the interest that I had in DePaul University. I was just hoping along the way that they felt the same about me.

Again, I couldn't have envisioned this 28 years ago, but I've worked hard to get to this point, and I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Coach, could you talk about building this roster for next season, if it's going to be through the transfer portal or through recruiting high school players?

TONY STUBBLEFIELD: You know, great question. We obviously have got to start recruiting and recruit very hard. With the transfer portal being as it is with transfers being able to be eligible immediately, I definitely think we're going to look that route. We're going to look the high school route. So I'm not going to eliminate any options at this time. I'm just looking forward to putting the best roster that we can put together to be very competitive in the Big East next year.

So again, we'll do it with high school guys, we'll do it with transfers, we'll look everywhere we have to look to find the best players to put the most competitive team on that floor next year.

Q. How closely have you maintained the recruiting ties to Chicago since you've been at Oregon for the past decade or so? And how do you go about either reestablishing them or establishing them anew?

TONY STUBBLEFIELD: We've always recruited Chicago, and unfortunately there just wasn't enough talent in the state of Oregon, where we had to recruit nationally. So we had to look all over for the players.

So yes, I have recruited Chicago since I've been at Oregon, and again, it was a national situation when we were at the University of Oregon, and I recruited Chicago when I was at Cincinnati. That's going to be very important to me.

Q. You've worked with so many different coaches, and I'm sure employed different styles. What's your vision for the style that DePaul will play under your leadership?

TONY STUBBLEFIELD: From an offensive standpoint, I really want to be on the attack mode. I want us to push the ball for makes and misses, try to score in transition. With that being said, if we don't, I'd rather get a great shot instead of a good shot. I really want us to play together, play team ball, and make plays for one another.

So I really want to push that ball in transition, and if not, if we're in a half court set, I really want us to play together and make plays for one another, and again, instead of getting a good shot, I want us to make the extra pass and get a great shot.

Defensively we're going to be a solid, hard-nosed man-to-man defense. We're going to get up, and we're going to get after it. We're going to try to create points off of transfers, getting deflections. But at the same time, I'm willing to switch up defenses, go to a 2-3 matchup zone, some three-quarter court press, some full-court press.

So I'll be flexible defensively, and again offensively we want to put the defense on their heels and be in attack mode, but at the same time, I'm really big on playing together, making plays for one another and playing the right way.

Q. When you went into this search process and you eventually hired Coach Stubblefield, could you talk about what was the main draw to bringing him to DePaul and why that decision was made?

DEWAYNE PEEVY: Yes, I think part of it is we went into this search to be very extensive on what would be the best thing for DePaul. I got a chance to call Coach Stubblefield early on on Zoom. Obviously Oregon was in the NCAA Tournament; we couldn't talk to him in person because he was in the bubble. We were talking to, like I said, over 30 coaches. The one thing that resonated with me about Coach Stubblefield is I wanted to talk to him more. We left the call, and I felt like I needed -- he had more to say and I wanted to hear more. There was a few coaches that were like that.

So I made note, there was a short list of people I wanted to have another conversation with and get in front of because I needed more time. Unfortunately Oregon kept winning so I had to wait a little bit and see how -- you know, fate intervened enough. I didn't want Oregon to lose to be the reason that we're here today, but it gave me an opportunity

because say if Oregon got to the Final Four, I've got to be honest, I don't know if we're here today because I don't know if I could have waited enough to not know what the situation was going forward.

But I think right away when he got in front of me and Dr. Esteban and Steve Stoute, the DHR team here in Chicago, I knew that he was the right man for this job. I envisioned myself being in the living room as a parent with my son, and without selling me or being a marketer, just being genuine in who he was, I see why he's a great recruiter. I see why people really like him and he has such great relationships in college basketball.

I've done my homework. I've been involved in college basketball at a high level the last 20 years. I've never met Tony but we have a lot of mutual people that we deal with that I was able to really vet and talk to on the front end before I reached out to him the first time.

Across the board, he's well liked even by his competitors in the Pac-12 or where he was when he was in the Big East. And that says a lot about him in this business because it's a dog-eat-dog business so people will be up front with you talking about coaches. I think that whet my appetite the first time, and then after I had a conversation I was hoping to get another one, and it presented itself, and he took advantage of that opportunity and really made us believe in what we could be at DePaul, and I really wanted to be him to be a part of that.

I just want to say thank you for everybody and the support. The alums, our university campus, staff and athletic department has been tireless in this process because we spent some time on the front end just talking to the constituents that are connected to this program to find out what we needed to look for in the next step, and I had a long list of thoughts, and when I sat down and I was making that decision about what direction we were going in, it was amazing how many boxes this man right here checked. It felt like us: Blue collar, hardworking, relationship based, wanted to be a true partner to everybody who was involved in it, everybody he's worked with at different places. That's hard to do, to go through this business and create those kind of lifelong lessons and relationships, whether that's young men that he recruited or that didn't come to Oregon or Cincinnati or everywhere, and that was one of the things that really resonated.

I needed a partner, as well, because we have things we need to get done on this campus to be a true front porch, to bring more attention to this university that is deserved.

I'm excited to get started. I'm excited for everybody to start buying tickets and get your deposits in. It's time to feel

Wintrust Arena. It's time to get excited about DePaul basketball again, and I can't wait to get started.

We're undefeated until November, Coach, so let's get this going and let's keep it going as long as we can. So thank you everybody for coming out today, and welcome on, Coach.

TONY STUBBLEFIELD: I'm glad to be here.

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