

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

**RYAN ANDERSON
OLIVIER HANLAN**

JEFF FISCHER: I'm joined by Boston College, the guys here helping the program.

Start with how you feel about this year. Ryan, you've seen this team building over the last couple years. Where do you feel you are heading into the season?

RYAN ANDERSON: I think we have competent guys. I think we've really, especially my class, grown from a 9-21 season, coming into this season with a lot of high expectations. I think we've really grown as a team and ready to take the next step and be a real contender in this league.

JEFF FISCHER: Olivier?

OLIVIER HANLAN: Like Ryan said, everybody is a lot more mature and older. We finished the season well off last year. Hopefully we can keep the momentum going.

JEFF FISCHER: Haven't forgotten about 41 points?

OLIVIER HANLAN: That was a pretty good game. We'll keep the momentum going as a team.

JEFF FISCHER: Questions for Ryan or Olivier.

Q. Olivia, talk about what it's like to play for Coach Donahue?

OLIVIER HANLAN: It's been great so far. I really got a chance to improve a lot last year, just play through our mistakes. Yeah, always had extreme confidence with me during the summer before I came to BC. Got a chance to become a better basketball player.

RYAN ANDERSON: He's a really good guy. He cares about us, not just as players, but as people.

Even if we have a bad game, he cares about how we're doing in the classroom, how our families are doing. Even though he's a great strategic coach, he's a really good guy. It's great to play for him.

JEFF FISCHER: Unique to have five returning starters. How does that help your team to have that kind of continuity?

RYAN ANDERSON: It means everything. Not only do we bring some of our starters, we bring back some role starters as well.

We got a transfer from Notre Dame and some freshmen that can come in and play right away. Just gelling and know how everybody plays already, as Olivia says, is going to help us build off the momentum.

JEFF FISCHER: Olivier, you recognize everybody on the court.

OLIVIER HANLAN: I feel like it will be better for the freshmen coming in, Garland Owens, Billy, to gel with us. Like you said, everybody is coming back, used to the plays. However Coach D coaches us, it will be a lot better.

JEFF FISCHER: To give you a sense of how much this team is back from last year, 96% of the scoring, 88% of the rebounding. It is a team that is experienced.

Give me a sense of the battles down low, who you enjoy going up against, who you hate going up against?

RYAN ANDERSON: Going against the Plumlees is difficult. There's a lot of big, big guys. Mitchell, McAdoo, big men in this conference. It's going to be fun going up against some of the best players in the country.

JEFF FISCHER: Olivier, which guards do you like going up against in the ACC?

OLIVIER HANLAN: Last year I liked going against Shane Larkin and Erick Green from Virginia Tech.

JEFF FISCHER: What are the team goals coach has laid out for you this season?

RYAN ANDERSON: I think Coach D,

since the day I came on campus, was to improve as a player and team. As long as we keep improving, that's a big goal for us, just to continue to improve. If we continue to improve, we'll win a lot of game, and hopefully be still improving as we get late into the season.

Q. Ryan, what is it like having Syracuse as a rival in the conference?

RYAN ANDERSON: Growing up, Syracuse has been a powerhouse in the country. They're always pulling out NBA guys. They always have a great team, led by a great coach.

Any time you bring a team like, that you get to play against them, it's an honor, great chance to get a win against a great team. I think it's a great challenge. Everybody likes competing against the best teams. When you bring one of the best, it makes it better.

JEFF FISCHER: Olivier, going against Syracuse?

OLIVIER HANLAN: I feel it's more a competition for the ACC. I love competition. I love going up against the best. Having Syracuse, Notre Dame and Pittsburgh, going to make me happy.

JEFF FISCHER: The conference got bigger with three great programs.

Q. Ryan, how do you make the next step to being a better team in the ACC?

RYAN ANDERSON: I think it's just our habits on our everyday lifestyle, what are we doing on an everyday basis to become a better team.

You can say a lot of different things, say you want to be up against some of the great players, great teams, you have to do stuff on a daily basis that prepares you for those players and teams.

I think we've done that. Our habits have improved tremendously from last year. I think that's going to pay off when things go and get tough for us this year, we're going to be ready for it based on our preparation.

Q. You have to believe you're as good as anybody in the league.

OLIVIER HANLAN: I think we stack up pretty well this year. Like I said earlier, we finished the season off pretty well, had some pretty good momentum. Everybody is older, more mature. They all know how to play the game of basketball.

JEFF FISCHER: Number of wins or a specific goal you have in mind?

OLIVIER HANLAN: I think obviously everybody's goal is to make it to March Madness, try to win as many games as you can. We're trying to get a 20-plus win season this year.

JEFF FISCHER: Give me a sense of what coach likes. We know he's an organized guy. Ryan, what is he like?

RYAN ANDERSON: I mean, he's a high-energy guy. Any time I see coach, you ask him how he's doing, he says something like, Tremendous, splendid. He's so energetic all the time. He's a caring guy.

If you meet him, he genuinely wants to know about you, how your day is going. He cares about you. He's a high-energy guy. I think a lot of people see how much energy he brings to the court when he's coaching, but he brings that to everything he does.

JEFF FISCHER: What does coach say about social media?

OLIVIER HANLAN: He's not a big fan of that at all. This year we're not using Twitter, Instagram. We're trying to stay focused on basketball.

JEFF FISCHER: Is that a good idea?

RYAN ANDERSON: Yeah. I think you can get caught up a lot of times in social media, but it's good to stay focused.

JEFF FISCHER: Good luck to Boston College, guys.

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An interview with:

**JORDAN ROPER
K.J. McDANIELS**

JEFF FISCHER: Time to talk Clemson Tigers.

Guys, let's talk about where you start this year. K.J., 13-18 last year. What are the goals for this team?

K.J. McDANIELS: We have a few goals. We have to be a tough team and be there for each other, be more defensive-minded. I feel like our defense will lead to our offense.

We want to be one of those teams to make it to the NCAA tournament.

JORDAN ROPER: Like he said, be a tough-minded team, be mentally tough, just playing in March with a chance to advance.

JEFF FISCHER: Talk about turning defense into offense. Is that a focus of coach?

K.J. McDANIELS: He's a strict coach. We go out for 35 seconds, try to get out on a break and score.

JORDAN ROPER: Coach wants to instill in us defensive-minded presence, have that part of our identity as a team. Like K.J. said, it translates into offense, just to be able to get out and run in transition.

JEFF FISCHER: Questions.

Q. We saw your football team up at the dome a few weeks ago. Can you draw anything off of what they're doing, any inspiration from the season they're having this fall?

JORDAN ROPER: Yeah, definitely. Just knowing those guys personally, knowing Tajh and Sammy, knowing the dedication and hard work they've put themselves in this position, to see their success.

Drawing from that, we can put ourselves in that position also by working hard, believing we can be there. That's where it started, they believed they could be there.

K.J. McDANIELS: I agree with Jordan. The football team, they work extremely hard. I feel like that helps us carry over onto the basketball court. We try to put ourselves behind them, just feed off what they've been doing. I believe it will help us out in the future.

Q. Life without seniors, what has it been like in the early practices? Strange situation?

K.J. McDANIELS: Life without seniors has been a challenge for us because us as younger guys, we have no one really to look up to. We go to each other for advice. We all just help each other out, try to be there for each other.

We have different leaders on the team, I believe. I believe it will help us as a team and build more chemistry.

JORDAN ROPER: Like K.J. said, we don't have, per se, someone to look up to that's been in situations before. We have a lot of guys on the team that have some experience, like myself and K.J. and Rod Hall. Everybody has a stake in leadership.

Just the trip to Italy, us building a closer bond, that will help us all together through tough times.

JEFF FISCHER: You have Devin Booker, Milton Jennings. That can be tough to replace.

JORDAN ROPER: Yeah, it can be tough to replace. We have a new focus. We have a renewed focus. We're not worried about last year. We have to take last year's experiences and learn from them, have it translate on the court this year.

JEFF FISCHER: K.J., what is it like knowing you have to step up more down low?

K.J. McDANIELS: It's a motivation for me. People say it's pressure, but I don't see any pressure at all. I have extreme confidence in my

teammates. I believe, like, we'll all put in great work and be able to do great things.

JEFF FISCHER: You led the ACC in blocked shots last year. Not bad for a guy who is 6'6".

K.J. McDANIELS: It was an honor to do that. I think that just shows how hard I like to go out there and play, just have my teammates' back. Being there for them is the most important part. Leading the team by example, that's a great way to start it.

Q. K.J., the inside guys are untested. How much of a rebounding burden do you think you'll feel early on?

K.J. McDANIELS: I feel like our new guys there, they're learning. We just tell them to go out there and play as hard as they can, do what they're good at.

I feel like they take that and they learn. They do it every day consistently. I think it will carry over into the game. It won't be as much of a burden.

Q. Jordan, you guys are growing. The ACC brings in Syracuse, Pitt, Notre Dame. Do they just want to pile on more hardship? What challenge do these new faces present to your team?

JEFF FISCHER: K.J., start talking about how much tougher the ACC is.

K.J. McDANIELS: I feel like those teams are going to bring a great toughness to the ACC. It's an honor to have them in there. We're excited to play all of them.

JORDAN ROPER: It brings a new challenge to the season. Just those different styles of team, different styles of play, it will be a new challenge. We have a renewed focus. We're looking to gain experience from what we learned last year in the games this year.

We're ready to compete. We don't believe we can't compete. We don't show up not to compete. We're ready to come play. We're not afraid to play against those teams.

JEFF FISCHER: You could be traveling to Syracuse, Pitt, Notre Dame. Is there a particular place you'd like to check out?

JORDAN ROPER: I think it would be cool to go to Syracuse, the Carrier Dome. History with Carmelo Anthony.

K.J. McDANIELS: I'm looking forward to going to Syracuse, it will be fun to go there.

JEFF FISCHER: Has coach given you a specific goal with wins?

K.J. McDANIELS: We just have to go out there and play for each other, be there for each other. I feel like our Italy trip helped us out a lot.

He hasn't given us a particular how many wins. We just know we're going to go out there and play as hard as we can and do what we have to do for each other, just go timeout there and play our hearts out.

JEFF FISCHER: Jordan, what was your favorite part of going to Italy?

JORDAN ROPER: I loved Rome. Rome had several sites. The site I loved the most was the Vatican, all the art inside.

K.J. McDANIELS: I liked Rome. I liked the Coliseum, seeing different movies, 300, Gladiator. It was amazing to be in that stadium.

JEFF FISCHER: Good luck this season. Thank you.

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An interview with:

TYLER THORNTON RODNEY HOOD

JEFF FISCHER: Time to talk about Duke basketball.

Rodney, now that you've settled into the starts lineup for Duke, give me your impressions of what it's like playing for Duke basketball.

RODNEY HOOD: It's a tremendous honor to be able to put that uniform on. The tradition has been laid down for the program. Just to be able to help keep that going is a tremendous honor.

JEFF FISCHER: Tyler, what have the years been like for you at Duke?

TYLER THORNTON: Like he said, it's been a tremendous honor, like the best feeling in the world to be able to wake up in the morning and say, I play for Coach K. To see the history, trying to write your own history at the same time. It's like living a dream day in, day out.

JEFF FISCHER: Yes, sir.

Q. Rodney, you're a team captain without having played a minute for Duke. That is a position that is revered. What does that say about what you accomplished during your year on the sidelines?

RODNEY HOOD: It was a great feeling to be named team captain. It just goes to the respect that the teammates and the coaching staff have for me.

It's a big responsibility, especially at Duke. I'm looking forward to that challenge.

JEFF FISCHER: Tyler, what has it been like seeing Rodney get in the lineup?

TYLER THORNTON: Last year in practice, on the scout team, whatever, he was by far the best player on the scouting team. He really helped us get ready for our opponents.

He set his foundation. He earned his respect at that moment.

When the season finished last year, he just cranked it up when we were in open gym and workouts. The guys just respect him. The game speaks for itself.

Q. Syracuse coming into the conference. Obviously you know your coach is number one on the wins list, Syracuse is number two. They never like to play each other. Now they have to. Talk about the excitement of that game.

TYLER THORNTON: Those are two of the best college coaches of all time. It's going to be a historical moment. Definitely looking forward to playing the newcomers into the ACC, to have a fresh feeling.

But you would have never thought that we would have a home and away with Syracuse in a million years. For it to happen is going to be amazing.

RODNEY HOOD: Like Tyler said, it's going to be an amazing feeling. Of course, they got Coach Boeheim, who is very respected, one of the best coaches of all times. Two historical gyms. I think they're trying to set a record when we go there, which is going to be great.

Them coming to us, see what the tradition is like, we can't wait for it.

JEFF FISCHER: Rodney, what do you think of playing in front of who knows how many people at the Carrier Dome?

RODNEY HOOD: It will be the most I ever played in front of in my short basketball career. It's going to be exciting. That's why you come to big schools like Duke. You want to play in front of those type of crowds, Final Four-type atmosphere. I'm looking forward to it.

JEFF FISCHER: Tyler, dealing with your intimate setting as well.

TYLER THORNTON: Big games are always the most fun no matter where you're

playing. Their home gym, be that size, the atmosphere, I couldn't ask for anything better.

Then on the flipside, for them coming to us, they'll feel when the game gets really hyped, the gym actually starts shaking, it's going to be a different feeling than what they're used to.

Q. Can you talk about what Jabari Parker is adding to the equation for you guys? I know a lot of is expected out of him this year.

TYLER THORNTON: He's definitely a very versatile player. There's a mental adjustment for all freshmen they all have to make. He's in the process of doing that. He's doing a great job with accepting that.

But his skill set is something you can't teach. His quickness, his athleticism, he has a great feel for the game. He really understands the things we're trying to do. He's going to get better every day.

RODNEY HOOD: Like Tyler said, he has a great skill set, very talented, very mobile for a guy his side. Long wingspan. Can really play versatile, unselfish guy.

Like Tyler said, he's going through a learning curve right now which is good. Rather him go through it right now than once the season is going to be cranked up. I think he's ready to make a big impact this year.

Q. We're used to seeing Duke and North Carolina in this conference every year. With the newcomers coming in, Syracuse, Notre Dame, discuss the challenge of trying to stay at the top of the conference and the extra motivation to show these newcomers that this is our conference.

RODNEY HOOD: Like I said, it's going to be fun just from a competitive standpoint. Syracuse, UConn are rivals, them coming here, we want to create the same type of game, legendary games. Hopefully we going to win.

It's going to be fun playing against those guys. It's going to be a challenge for both teams, for all teams coming into the ACC, and teams that have already been here.

TYLER THORNTON: ACC, regardless of the new teams, all those games have a bigger impact and bigger importance. Those games are always amped up way more than the non-conference schedule.

But it's going to be fun having those teams. Each win is going to be that much sweeter and that much more important to add to your

résumé in trying to win a regular-season ACC championship, then turn around and try to put it together for three or four big games to win the ACC tournament championship.

Q. I read where guys that graduated spent their entire careers in the top 10 on the national rankings. Talk about that remarkable consistency, any kind of pressure it puts on the next class to make sure you don't slip out.

TYLER THORNTON: No, I don't think there's any pressure. The coaches do a great job of keeping us in the moment. We thrive in situations where it's a big game, a big matchup. Coach has won so many of those games, he knows how to prepare his teams for those games.

Because of that history, because of his knowledge for the game, we're able to win in those big situations. Ultimately it keeps us in the top-10 ranking.

RODNEY HOOD: Like Tyler says, it keeps us in the moment. That's the biggest thing coach preaches for us. Different kind of teams have arisen from Duke, the '91, '92 teams, the 2010 national championship team, they're all different. We're a different team. We got to stay in our moment and do the best we can to hold the Duke tradition up.

Q. Coach has made it clear that Rodney and Jabari are the two guys that you and the rest of the team need to mold yourselves around. What does that mean to you as a guy that's been there for a while? Why is he so confident in guys we have yet to see play?

TYLER THORNTON: The feeling in our locker room, we only go as far as those two take us. We have 12 guys that can really play, but those two are by far our best.

They set the ceiling. Once they push through that ceiling, it allows everybody else just to follow up and bring what they can to the table. It just makes us that much better of a team.

JEFF FISCHER: Rodney, you got to go to New York. What was that experience like?

RODNEY HOOD: It was easily one of the best experiences of my life. Especially me being from down south where you only see the World Trade Center, the Empire State Building from the television set. To be able to go to the 105th floor, looking down at New York City, I was a little

scared, but at the same time it was a great experience.

Going to Motown, Broadway, Rutgers Park, one of the most historical basketball courts ever made, it was just an eye-opening experience. It was a great team-bonding experience.

JEFF FISCHER: Good luck to Duke this season. Thank you.

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An interview with:

OKARO WHITE IAN MILLER

JEFF FISCHER: It is time to talk Florida State.

Guys, NIT run last year. What is the feeling heading into this season? What are the goals? What do you expect of yourselves this season?

IAN MILLER: Quite disappointed in the season we had last year. We had some injuries, had some young guys that really didn't understand the system.

But I think we're back to that dog mentality. I think we've worked hard and achieved our goals this summer. We broke down the summer. You can't just make a jump like that without having a productive summer. I think we had one of the best summers since I've been at FSU.

Losing and going to the NIT, I think it helped us. It helped us to mature. Helped our younger guys to grow up faster than they usually would if you're winning because they understand how hard it is, what it's going to take to get back to hold up that ring, win a ring. It's good for us.

JEFF FISCHER: ACC championship one year, last year the NIT. The off-season, a lot of focus and dedication?

OKARO WHITE: Definitely a lot of focus in the off-season. I think we're getting back to our defensive aggressiveness, how we've been in the past. The trip we took to Greece, I think all of us kind of grew as brothers and as a team. I think we've grown up as an overall team.

I think our summer will set us up for a path of success this year.

JEFF FISCHER: You talked about increasing the defensive pressure. Leonard Hamilton, all about defense. What did he see last

year, what has he been talking to you this year about playing defense?

IAN MILLER: Coach Ham is one of the most understanding coaches you can have in college basketball. He puts pressure on you to succeed, but he doesn't overdo it because he knows it's a process. He understands building a tradition at FSU, but he understands he has seven freshmen that didn't grasp how hard it was, what it was going to take.

Now that they understand it, it's a cut-throat circuit, cut-throat system. He pushes us. He's going to get that maximum energy from you every day. We're going to get back to that top five in the country like we're used to being every year that gives us a chance to win the games at the end of the game.

JEFF FISCHER: Okaro, have you seen more defensive aggressiveness from the team?

OKARO WHITE: Yeah. Coach Ham isn't giving anybody any slack this year. That's great because we're growing as a team and we have to understand Coach Ham has been doing this for multiple years, and Stan Jones also. We're all paying attention to them.

If we get back to defense, we'll be all right. In the past, when we had these great teams, there have been a lot of nights our offense didn't look good at all, but our defense is what kept us in the game, kept the games close. If we get back to our defensive ways, the ways we used to be, I think we'll be pretty good.

JEFF FISCHER: The big piece of the puzzle you lose from last year is Michael Snaer. Ian, who takes the game-winning shot now for Florida State?

IAN MILLER: To be honest, of course I want to take those shots. I'm so confident in my teammates to where if I create an open shot, anybody's going to knock it down. It started with me working out at 5:30, the next person was coming in at 7:00, the next morning at 8:00. You see those guys getting repetition after repetition.

When you drive yourself to make those shots, it's great because then you have that confidence. Once you have that confidence, you're going to knock it down every time.

It really doesn't matter who takes the shot at the end of the day.

JEFF FISCHEL: Okaro, you're the team's leading scorer returning. Big expectations of yourself this season?

OKARO WHITE: I definitely have big expectations. At least 99% of every college player's dream is to make it to the big league. But I understand my team's goals come before my individual goals. For me to get to my individual goals, our team has to have success first. That's what matters first and foremost.

JEFF FISCHEL: What has Coach Hamilton said about the fact you have four returning starters? I assume he thinks you now have the experience to be ready to battle against the ACC.

IAN MILLER: Like I said before, he's not letting us slack up. He's keeping our energy high. He's letting it be known that he's not going to accept anything but your best.

Everybody understands that and every day in practice we're pushing each other to hold each other accountable, to keep that drive, to have a great summer, to keep having a good pre-season like we're having, put ourselves in great position to be where we want to be at the end of the year.

JEFF FISCHEL: Okaro, when Coach Ham relaxes, what is he like?

OKARO WHITE: He's actually a fun guy when he's relaxed. A lot of people see him on TV, don't really know him. They see what they call the 'death stare' that he has on his face. They think he's a mean guy.

He's actually a pretty fun guy, caring guy. He puts his players first, which I love about him. He's just a great guy in general. He challenges us to be the best we can be. He wants to see all of his players be successful.

JEFF FISCHEL: You get the death stare once in a while?

IAN MILLER: Oh, yeah, if I come down and take a crazy shot. I might give it back to him. No, I'm kidding (laughter).

He's a caring guy, like Okaro says. It's up to us whether we're going to be successful or not. He can only just give us the path. We have to drive the car down the road. We're going to do those things we need to do.

JEFF FISCHEL: When you get him away from the court, he's talking about music.

IAN MILLER: He is always trying to sing. He can't sing. Okaro, you know this song? Ian, you know this song? No, that was back in the civil rights movement. We wasn't alive.

You know Coach Ham, he's an easygoing guy. Like Okaro says, he puts his players first. It's up to us to give it all back.

JEFF FISCHEL: Okaro, he's not listening to the same music you are?

OKARO WHITE: Not at all. He has his Al Green, Patti Labelle, Elvis going. He's an old school guy. When we was in Greece, we sat down and talked. He kind of told me why he keeps the collection of music he has. Nowadays, these singers, they get in the studio, they got so many different electronic instruments to enhance their voice. Back in the day, you have those pure singers. They get in the studio and record, they have a live band in there. He appreciates that.

JEFF FISCHEL: He's told me all about the man cave.

You talked about the trip to Greece. What was your favorite part of going to Greece?

OKARO WHITE: Definitely the food. The food was amazing, especially when we first got there, trying out the new food. The last couple days we got a little homesick. We found a burger spot right across the street from the hotel. We went there for about four or five days straight.

The experience of playing with the national Greek team, we took a lot of punches when we first started playing them, but they helped us and we got better playing against them.

JEFF FISCHEL: Your favorite memory, Ian?

IAN MILLER: Had to be seeing all the historic monuments and stuff like that. Was breathtaking. To be able to go to the ocean and stuff like that, see the different things, man, it was amazing and breathtaking.

JEFF FISCHEL: Good luck this season, guys.

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An interview with:

DANIEL MILLER KAMMEON HOLSEY

JEFF FISCHER: Time to talk Georgia Tech, the upcoming season.

Give me a reason where Georgia Tech picks up this season.

DANIEL MILLER: We had an okay season. We got a little better from the year before. We lost a couple games by about two or three points that really could have turned our season around. Thinking we can just build from where we were. We've added some key guys, some new players that can score and really play ball. Hopefully that will put us over the edge.

JEFF FISCHER: You improved five wins last year. How many this year?

KAMMEON HOLSEY: It's going to be more than five. I feel we can improve a whole lot more. With the addition of Trae Golden, brings a lot of depth and experience to our team. A great guard.

I feel like we're going to surprise a lot of people this year.

JEFF FISCHER: We'll take questions.

Q. What kind of impact will Trae have on the team?

DANIEL MILLER: He has a lot of experience. He knows game plays. He knows what play to make, where to be. He's a real good basketball player.

He can really push the ball up the floor. He can get us easy buckets in transition, things like that. He's just a tough guard. He'll be really valuable to us.

JEFF FISCHER: You have Trae coming in. There's a lot of scoring and rebounding on this

team. You must be confident about the fact there's a lot of experience on this team.

KAMMEON HOLSEY: No doubt about that, sir. There's a lot of experience. The addition of Trae, he brings a lot to the program, to the team. He has a great scoring ability, awareness of the court, hard worker. It's going to be exciting to see us play this year.

JEFF FISCHER: Let's talk about Brian Gregory. What is he like a coach?

DANIEL MILLER: He's tough. He means what he says, but he's a really good coach. He wants to get to know us, get to know who we are, coach us according to that. He's not just business. He loves us. He wants the best for us.

KAMMEON HOLSEY: I would say he's a guy with a lot of swagger (smiling). He cares about the team a lot. He cares about what we're doing in the classroom first.

He always said, You take care of what you do in the classroom, off the court, it will transfer back over to the court. It's true. You treat people right, do what you're supposed to do in the classroom...

Q. Can you talk about the youth of this team. Can a young team have success in this league?

DANIEL MILLER: Yes, sir. They helped us out a lot last year. We put a lot on them really for them stepping up like that. Those are the kind of players they are. They're scorers. We expect more out of them this year to really help us. We'll have to score from other places as well, not just from them.

KAMMEON HOLSEY: I agree with Daniel. I mean, they're a great group of guys. Coach put a lot on them, wanting them to do a lot more. This year I feel they have the experience to do it and the confidence to do it. I agree with everything Daniel said.

JEFF FISCHER: Let's talk about individually your games. Daniel, you can score,

rebound. Most fun part of your job blocking shots?

DANIEL MILLER: I'd say so. I'm getting up there among the tech leaders. I don't think I'll ever pass number one, Alvin Jones. I take a lot of pride in that. I've always been good at that.

JEFF FISCHEL: Describe your game for me, Kammeon.

KAMMEON HOLSEY: Bring a lot of energy, a lot of aggressiveness. Be a game-changer. Just playing hard and doing the little things on the floor, rebounding. Also, when I get a chance, one-on-one, go to work on the inside.

JEFF FISCHEL: What does coach think of going one-on-one?

KAMMEON HOLSEY: He wants to attack. No one can stop you one-on-one. I love it, one-on-one.

JEFF FISCHEL: How about working down low, Daniel?

DANIEL MILLER: If you're in the post, he definitely wants you going one-on-one when it's appropriate. He want us to have a guy doing one-on-one the whole game. When he sees it needs to be done, he wants you to do it.

JEFF FISCHEL: Would he be cool with you firing off a three?

DANIEL MILLER: Oh, yeah. He says if I'm open, to shoot. I got the green light.

JEFF FISCHEL: Twitter, what does coach think of you being on Twitter? Does he allow it?

KAMMEON HOLSEY: He don't think very highly of it. Actually, I don't tweet. I'm not a Twitter person. That's a good thing.

No, we're not allowed to tweet during the season anytime.

DANIEL MILLER: He tells us we're not allowed to have one. He met with us to make sure he had one to promote the program.

JEFF FISCHEL: Were you okay with that?

DANIEL MILLER: Yeah, he tweeted a picture of us at the airport yesterday. He's actually enjoying it.

He's telling us about his followers, things like that (smiling).

JEFF FISCHEL: I asked a bit earlier about what it's going through a day like this. I realize you have to answer a lot of questions. Is it a fun day, though?

DANIEL MILLER: Yeah, I came last year. I was excited to come this year. It is a long day, but we get to come and have a good time with all the other players, get to talk to some people, things like that.

It's also practice, getting ready for giving a speech in your class, things like that.

JEFF FISCHEL: You have a speech class?

DANIEL MILLER: We're always giving presentations, so...

JEFF FISCHEL: What is the last one you gave in your class?

DANIEL MILLER: I had to present a game show about three weeks ago. It was exciting (smiling).

Q. Talk about the influx, the new blood coming into the conference with the additions of Syracuse, the like.

KAMMEON HOLSEY: It means a lot to the program. I always thought the ACC was the best conference. Bringing along Syracuse, Pitt, Notre Dame, all the great schools that have achieved great things in the past. I feel like it's a great boost for the league.

DANIEL MILLER: You're adding some of the best teams in the country to our division. It's definitely exciting. Those games, we have to play just as hard every night. You can't take a night off.

JEFF FISCHEL: Give me the three things Coach Gregory is setting out for you guys this season.

DANIEL MILLER: We want to win the ACC. That's one.

KAMMEON HOLSEY: NCAA tournament, at least winning 20-plus games, not setting any limits.

JEFF FISCHEL: Last thing. When we talk about goals for the team, do you have input with them or is something coach is saying, This is what we need to do? Is it a group thing?

DANIEL MILLER: I guess we were all sitting in the theater room when we were talking about it. He was saying what should be some goals for us. You're not going to really get those goals unless we all believe in it. We won't even have a chance.

Everybody is getting on the same page and we have to do it together.

JEFF FISCHEL: Thanks for joining us here.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

NICK FAUST EVAN SMOTRYCZ

JEFF FISCHER: Time to talk Maryland Terrapins. I'm excited about Friday night. Your Midnight Madness. Nick, what is that going to be like?

NICK FAUST: It will be a great thing. Growing up, I always watched guys playing there. It's going to be a great opportunity for us and something we're looking forward to as a program.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: Fans are excited about it. Plenty of history in that building. Supposed to be packed. Hopefully it goes well.

JEFF FISCHER: Evan, excited to get back on the court?

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: Yeah, it's been a great. Like you said, just looking forward to getting back out there.

JEFF FISCHER: The season coming up. Nick, you finished strong. Is that a good building block for this season?

NICK FAUST: Definitely. Last season we felt as though it was a couple games we fell short, didn't put us in the NCAA tournament.

Coming back this year, it's definitely a motivation for us and we're looking forward to it.

JEFF FISCHER: Questions.

Q. It's nothing to do with you guys obviously, but do you anticipate being villains everywhere you go this year?

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: Yeah, I think no matter where we're playing, who we're playing, ACC road games are going to be tough. We're looking forward to getting tough road wins and using it as résumé builders.

I don't think that it's because our last year in the ACC anything will be crazier than usual.

JEFF FISCHER: Ready for some fired-up crowds, Nick?

NICK FAUST: Definitely. I'm ready for it. Been playing here the last two years. This year we just feel as though we're more mature and our guys have a lot of experience. We're looking forward to those big road wins.

JEFF FISCHER: How does this team change without Alex in the middle, Nick?

NICK FAUST: It's a big difference. Alex was a presence offensively and defensively, more so on the defensive side. His presence was a must.

This year it's a more so gap-building defense, building out, guarding, pressuring the ball. It's more so on the ball defense in the past two years where before, it was a lot of help side, things like that.

JEFF FISCHER: How is this team different than last year, Evan?

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: We got a lot of guys coming back with major minutes under their belt. Still a young team, but we got a lot of experience. I think that will definitely pay off for us.

JEFF FISCHER: Obviously, Nick, you're one of the returning starters along with Dez Wells. Off the court, what is Dez like?

NICK FAUST: He's a funny guy. He laughs a lot. On the court he's just so serious.

Dez is a great player. He just wants to win. He always has a will to win and does whatever it takes.

JEFF FISCHER: Evan, describe Dez.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: Dez battles every play. He hates to lose. I think that rubs off on whoever is on his team in practice that day. He definitely gets guys going. He's a big-time motivator. I think me and Nick are learning how to do the same.

JEFF FISCHER: We talked about how this team is changing a little bit without Alex. Does that mean we're going to see up-tempo? Is that what coach wants to see?

NICK FAUST: Yeah, for sure. Having Evan and Jake, guys like that who can really stretch the floor. Evan can also play a little five at times. We'll definitely be a running team. Having them two on the court at the same time is dangerous. Leaves open driving lanes and things like that which will help us out a lot.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: I think we have a team who can do a lot of different things well. Real versatile, guys that can score in a number of different ways.

As long as we get stops and we're able to get out and run, I think we'll be tough to stop.

JEFF FISCHER: New look this year including 15 schools. Nick, how does this change the conference? You're looking at now three great programs you have to battle against.

NICK FAUST: Yeah. They're all great teams. I can remember playing Notre Dame my freshman year. It was a great game. We came out with the win, but it was a tough one.

Playing those teams is definitely something we're looking forward to. You come to college to play on the big stage. It will be a great experience.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: I think it's great for the league. I think it's a great chance to get a lot of good wins within the league, build your résumé come Selection Sunday.

JEFF FISCHER: What is it like having to answer questions all day long?

NICK FAUST: It's difficult at times, kind of annoying. But it's something you've got to deal with (smiling).

The question of the day is, What do you feel is the better conference, ACC or Big Ten? You're like, They're both good conferences.

It's a great experience overall, but something you have to deal with.

JEFF FISCHER: Is that the question you've been asked the most?

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: Yeah. I kind of have an interesting perspective. Like Nick said, it doesn't really matter who we're playing against. For me personally, I'll just be happy to be playing, period.

JEFF FISCHER: There are a few guys that are transfers. It's not like you're hurt, you have to sit out a year. Take us what it's like through that season.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: Game days are the worst, watching games you could be helping in, feeling helpless.

At the same time there's a lot of free time to kind of put towards your game. You're not able to travel. It's a lot of hours in the gym. I think it definitely benefited me seeing the game a different way, being able to devote so much time to improving.

JEFF FISCHER: Are we going to see a different Evan on the court?

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: I think I kind of can be able to make the right plays, make easy plays, create for myself as well as others. I think just overall improvements in athleticism, shooting the ball. Everything in general.

JEFF FISCHER: Nick, who is the one guy on the team you think is ready to take a big step forward this season?

NICK FAUST: Big step forward, I would say Jake Layman. He's matured a lot. He's knocking down shots at a high rate right now. He's definitely going to be a big contribution to the team because he can really stroke it when it's going.

JEFF FISCHER: People on Twitter love his hair.

NICK FAUST: Hair is gone.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: I'd probably go with Jake, too. A lot more mature team. Guys have made great strides. Jake in particular has been playing really well.

JEFF FISCHER: Mark Turgeon is in his third season at Maryland. Nick, talk about how he's tried to build the program in his image.

NICK FAUST: Coach just wants a team who is going to be committed to him, committed to what he wants. Over the years I've seen him grow. Actually this year he says this is the beginning where he's been the most relaxed. My freshman, sophomore year, it was more so depending on young guys to come in, step up, make a contribution right away. You have older guys now with more experience who are going to make that step for the team.

Definitely having him around and having him believe in us is a great feeling.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: I think coach is first a defensive-minded coach. Early stages of practice, that's really what he stressed. He made sure he established that before we even started getting into offense.

I think we'll be pretty solid there despite losing Alex. We'll just have to focus on ball pressure.

Q. How has Roddy Peters looked?

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: I think he's ready to help right away. Great in the open court. He sees the game pretty well for as fast as he's moving. Sometimes you have to kind of slow him down when coach wants us to get into a set or stuff.

He's learning. I think he'll definitely be able to contribute right away.

NICK FAUST: Like Evan said, Roddy is playing pretty well. Kind of has a John Wall style of play. Open transition in the fast court.

JEFF FISCHER: 25 wins last year, but you didn't get into the NCAA tournament. Nick, what are the goals for this team this year?

NICK FAUST: The goal for us is definitely to make it to the NCAA tournament. That's the next step for us. Our freshmen year making no post-season play. We're ready to make that next step.

EVAN SMOTRYCZ: I think, yeah, like Nick said, make the tournament. I think we have the strength of schedule that we'll be able to do that and get a lot of strong wins early.

JEFF FISCHER: Good luck this season. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

RION BROWN GARRIUS ADAMS

JEFF FISCHER: It's time to talk to the defending ACC champs, the Miami Hurricane.

You guys are the defending champs, but every starter is gone, Rion. Talk about how the team is preparing this year.

RION BROWN: We're approaching it the same way as last year, just setting our team goals. Coach L comes in with the same philosophy every year. We just want to keep that going, just try to teach these young guys the winning ways.

JEFF FISCHER: Garrius, talk about the season coming up.

GARRIUS ADAMS: Even though I wasn't part of the actual physical part of the team with the championship run, I did do a lot of the teaching and helping with the plays and being kind of like a second coach to most of the team.

Last year was great. I just want to continue that success this year.

JEFF FISCHER: Let's talk about how Coach L is handling having basically a new starting five. Rion, have you seen him change the way he is approaching this season, the kind of game plan he's drawn up for you for the season?

RION BROWN: I would say this year feels like the first year he got here. It's a lot of teaching the younger guys, trying to get them to understand exactly what he wants from them.

He never really changes. He's exactly the same every year. That's one thing I think he takes pride in. He approaches every year with the same mindset, and that's just winning and working hard.

JEFF FISCHER: Garrius, talk about what Coach L has been trying to pass along to you guys this season.

GARRIUS ADAMS: I would say Coach L is a very personal coach. He knows exactly what to get out of his players, which one does what well. I think he's going to take a key to that this year and kind of exploit me, Rion and all the other players on our team does so well.

JEFF FISCHER: Questions.

Q. In the past Syracuse, Pitt, Notre Dame, Miami was familiar with. What can you say about having them in your conference?

GARRIUS ADAMS: I'm in love with the new additions to the ACC. I think they're going to come and help a lot. I think it kind of reminds most of the people who were in the past with Miami about the old Big East. If you remember those games, those were very physical. They were hard games.

I think the new additions are going to be great.

RION BROWN: It's definitely exciting. Haven't got a chance to play any of those teams in my career. Getting new scenery on the road, it's going to feel great. Never been to New York. I'm excited about going there to play Syracuse.

I'm glad they made those additions to the ACC. I think it's definitely going to make the conference better. We're considered one of the best and we're keeping it going.

Q. You were talking about the physical play of the Big East. Is there a different brand of basketball for the teams that they're going to have to adjust to?

RION BROWN: I think, yeah, they're definitely going to bring some of that physicality down to the ACC. It's going to be a little struggle, whether the fast play continues, the more physical nature of the Big East starts to take over.

I think it's going to end up being a little bit of both. You're definitely going to see a different brand of basketball now. It's definitely going to be fun to watch. I'm ready for it, definitely.

GARRIUS ADAMS: Like Rion said, I think it will be a little bit of both, too. I think the teams that are coming in are great teams from great programs. I think the ACC has done a great job of bringing in the best teams to be in the best league.

Q. Talk about how winning the title last year has raised the expectations at home?

GARRIUS ADAMS: I think last year, we were very focused. I think that was the biggest thing that we kind of had to figure out was our focus. I think if we carry that over to this year, we'll be fine.

RION BROWN: I think it definitely raises the bar for us as a program. We don't want to have a letdown. We want to continue to be one of the best in the ACC. I definitely think we helped our cause with recruiting. Everybody being able to see that we can be a force, we can go out and get those great players who end up going to Duke and Carolina every year.

I think that's really going to help us in the future and also this year. We had a lot of great freshmen come in this year kind of under the radar. We've been under the radar since we've been in the ACC. It worked out for us last year. Coach L has been doing great with those guys. We look to continue.

JEFF FISCHER: What was last year like with the run?

GARRIUS ADAMS: The excitement last year was tremendous. We did a great job of handling all that excitement, too. Coach L does a big job on telling us we need to have fun when we play, enjoying playing with your teammates. I think that's what we did. We did that very well all the way up to the Sweet 16.

JEFF FISCHER: I've been doing a little investigating. Rion, you said you're the best singer on the team. Is this true?

RION BROWN: Yeah.

JEFF FISCHER: Do you ever bust out something in the locker room?

RION BROWN: All the time.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

**BRICE JOHNSON
MARCUS PAIGE**

JEFF FISCHER: Talking Tar Heels. Brice, I hear you've been eating a lot.

BRICE JOHNSON: Yes, I've been trying to.

JEFF FISCHER: Give me a sense of the diet now.

BRICE JOHNSON: Well, the plan that they have me on is supposed to be six meals a day. I get four meals and a couple snacks maybe a day. Not the full six meals.

JEFF FISCHER: What is the goal weight-wise?

BRICE JOHNSON: The goal right now is 210. I'm at 207.

JEFF FISCHER: You want to keep growing for next season?

BRICE JOHNSON: Yes.

JEFF FISCHER: Tough to put on the pounds?

BRICE JOHNSON: Yeah, it's been pretty tough.

JEFF FISCHER: Marcus, I heard you were singing in the digital network booth.

MARCUS PAIGE: They told us to have fun. Miley Cyrus song jumped into my head. I thought it would be fun.

JEFF FISCHER: That's what you listen to before the game?

MARCUS PAIGE: Definitely. It gets me going (smiling).

JEFF FISCHER: Questions.

Q. Can you talk about how well this team is handling all the distractions that have

gone on with this off-season with P.J. and all that?

BRICE JOHNSON: We just been preparing like it's a regular day, moving forward. We're putting that behind us, just moving forward.

MARCUS PAIGE: I think we understand that people are going to ask about it.

As a team, we're ready to move past it. We've moved past it. We're working hard in practice every day trying to be the best team we can be day in and day out. So when we get him back, we're going to hit stride and continue playing the way we were playing before the games he's sitting out.

Q. Can you both talk about coming to the dome this season in Syracuse.

MARCUS PAIGE: I'm really excited. That place has had some huge crowds. Great basketball program that plays in front of those huge crowds. I'm excited to go up there and play.

Adding them to the league is going to make our league more deep and competitive than it already is. Great to have Syracuse in our league. I'm excited to go up to New York.

BRICE JOHNSON: I'd have to say the same thing. Just knowing the great tradition of the Syracuse basketball program, I'm looking forward to playing them in the Carrier Dome.

Q. We're used to seeing Duke and North Carolina compete for the No. 1 spot in the ACC. With the influx of other teams, talk about the challenge this year.

BRICE JOHNSON: It's going to be great. Just knowing there's a lot more competition, it's going to be a lot tougher for somebody to get that No. 1 spot, knowing every night you have to go out there and compete, you can't take a night off.

MARCUS PAIGE: You have to be completely better than anyone else, any other league in the top. You're going to have some parity in the top, have teams go on runs. Then

another team that's just as good can go on a run and claim that top spot.

Teams that are used to winning regular-season titles are going to be disappointed, so I'm excited for it.

Q. Last year it seems like you played your best basketball late in the season. You were a young team. How does that help you moving forward this year?

MARCUS PAIGE: I think it helps a lot. We were a young team. We were inexperienced, too. The guys returning didn't play a whole lot. Our guy that we featured last year, James Michael, was playing behind John Henson the year before. He got thrown into a spot where we expected him to be a big-time star for us. He handled that well.

As a team we took some bumps throughout the way. That experience will help us this year. We're more of a veteran group. We know what to expect. Hopefully we can advance past what we did last year.

BRICE JOHNSON: Like Marcus said, just the experience part will help us a lot. Going into the second round of the tournament, we know what's expected of us, what we need to do to get farther, what we need to do, to work on as a team. Marcus and I are working on getting bigger and stronger as a team, me and him personally.

Just the experience of playing in the tournament helped us a lot.

JEFF FISCHER: Marcus, who is going to be the most improved player for UNC this year?

MARCUS PAIGE: Oh, man. I'd like to say everybody. I think Joel James is going to show great improvement. Last year whenever he was in the game, he would struggle with foul trouble. The system didn't quite click for him in terms of running our secondary break, things like that. He shaped up his body even more. He has a year under his belt. He knows what to expect.

I think we're going to see a huge improvement out of him. That's going to help us establishing a big presence inside. I'm excited for what he's going to bring to the table this year.

JEFF FISCHER: Brice, how do you feel you need to improve individually this season?

BRICE JOHNSON: My goal is to get back to playing a lot more defense like I was in high school than last year. Marcus could probably tell you this, I probably didn't play as much defense as I should. It's part of me learning the college system.

Just getting down in the stance was tough for me because I was used to standing in the lane, blocking shots in high school. It was tougher to come in and face somebody that played like me, go by you.

JEFF FISCHER: Marcus, was it an adjustment for you as well?

MARCUS PAIGE: Definitely. The strength and physicality was a big adjustment. In high school you can get away with taking plays off on defense, just relying on your ability to stay in front of guys, save your energy for scoring on offense.

In college, you can't take any possessions off. Guys are bigger, stronger. They make you pay every time.

That's definitely an adjustment. It's hard for a lot of freshmen, not just us. Now that we're not freshmen anymore, we can hopefully eliminate some of those mistakes and be more solid on the defensive end.

Q. When the media poll comes out, I'm sure you'll be up at the top. Can you talk about playing from that frontrunner position?

MARCUS PAIGE: A lot of the programs that are considered elite get thrown up in the top 10 regardless of who they have coming back or whatnot.

I think we have a lot of pieces come back that can help us make a run that far or get deep into being one of the top five, top-10 teams in the country. Until we start playing games, those rankings don't mean anything.

It shows we have a lot of pieces, if we come together, hit or stride, can make a lot of noise come March or April.

BRICE JOHNSON: Rankings-wise, I don't really think they mean anything at the beginning of the season. When the games start, it depends on what your schedule is like, how you're playing progressively during the season. I mean, basically where they think you're going to be during the season, basically like where they think you're going to be, but at the end of the day you have to back it up in your playing instead of like relying on, We're top five, we're top 10, we can take nights off and we're still going to win.

You have to compete and be able to back up that ranking that you have.

JEFF FISCHER: Brice, you and P.J. surprised Marcus, jumping out of the locker. Talk about why you did that. Had people laughing a

little bit.

BRICE JOHNSON: Me and P.J. were sitting there. We just wanted like a good, quick laugh, something a little funny. We were going to videotape it to have a little fun.

It so happened it was Marcus. His locker was open. We decided P.J. would sit in his locker and wait for him to come in. When he jumped out, Marcus fell. At the beginning we didn't think it was going to blow up like it did. We thought it was going to be a couple laughs in the locker room. But it blew up like wildfire.

MARCUS PAIGE: I don't know what you're talking about (laughter).

Honestly, that's just P.J.'s personality. He's great to have around. I consider him a good friend. He always jokes around with me and picks on me a lot. The fact that it was him didn't surprise me, but the fact he was in my locker surprised me. They caught me off guard. That's okay, it's a long year.

JEFF FISCHER: Great talking to you guys. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

**T.J. WARREN
TYLER LEWIS**

JEFF FISCHEL: I'm glad to be joined by North Carolina State.

You were the two guys that saw significant minutes that are back. Tyler, talk about how much the team has changed.

TYLER LEWIS: Well, this season the team has changed a ton because we lost five people that played a lot last year. Just knowing that me and T.J. played some good minutes last year, we have to step up and be leaders and lead by example throughout the season.

T.J. WARREN: With the new faces to the program, we got a good group of guys that want to get better and improve every day. Me and Tyler have been doing a good job of leading them on through this process.

I can't wait to get out there with them guys.

JEFF FISCHEL: We'll take questions.

Q. How much do you think you need to score this year for your team to be successful?

T.J. WARREN: Whatever my team needs me to do, I'm going to do it. I got their back, they got mine.

With the coaching support, anything can happen for this team this season.

Q. Are there other guys on the team that can fill it?

T.J. WARREN: We have Rolston, Billy, Des Lee comes from a strong background, Tyler Lewis. We got a good group of guys, everybody is going to get a good feel for this season.

JEFF FISCHEL: T.J., you were incredibly efficient. The pressure of putting up more points

might hurt some of the ways you were dangerous because you were so efficient last year. Do you have to be careful about when you attack?

T.J. WARREN: I'm not focused on that. I just want to go out there and focus on winning and playing hard.

JEFF FISCHEL: Tyler, how do you look to this guy? You're going to be relying on him a lot.

TYLER LEWIS: A lot. T.J. is such a great scorer. I have to put him in positions where he likes the ball. He's one of the best scorers in the ACC, if not the country.

Q. I know last year in the NCAA tournament that early exit to Temple, how much does that motivate you coming into this year knowing you have some unfinished business?

TYLER LEWIS: That loss definitely played a big toll on me and T.J. just because as soon as we got back, the four returning players that we had coming in, we gave everybody a week off, the next week we got back to workouts knowing we want to become better this year. We have to play our best basketball at the end of the season, too.

Now that we have so many great incoming freshmen, as T.J. comes along, just knowing we're going to struggle a little bit probably at the beginning with the newcomers, just pick it up throughout the whole season, hopefully play our best towards the end.

T.J. WARREN: We just want to build off of last year. The early exit really hurt. We moved on from that with the new players. They know what we want to do, how successful we want to be. Just all going to start in the gym working.

Q. Every team loses players. You lose four players. How do you possibly have the same expectations this year as you did last?

T.J. WARREN: The expectations are a little bit different. With this new team, there's a lot of question marks for the media. We know what

this team is capable of. In games, we'll show you guys.

TYLER LEWIS: It's going to be hard to replace the four thousand-point scorers. At the same time we have a great group of guys who can obviously step up and get their roles, do their roles very well. People that we rely on, we have a lot of confidence in them.

Q. Is this an opportunity for you guys as a unit to under-promise and over-deliver for this coming season?

JEFF FISCHER: Do you feel like people are underestimating you and you can do more than that?

TYLER LEWIS: Yes, I certainly agree. People are underestimating us a lot. I feel like we have a lot of people with weapons that people haven't heard of. Des, Cat, knowing they're going to be great for our team, along with T.J. right here.

Hopefully we're going to surprise a lot of people. I think we will.

T.J. WARREN: Being the underdog throughout this conference, being picked low to win, we just want to go out there and show people.

JEFF FISCHER: You have new faces coming in. You mentioned Cat. How do you expect the new guys to contribute?

TYLER LEWIS: They're going to contribute a ton to our team. I mean, they still have a long ways to go, as long as everybody else on the team, because they're all freshmen. I have a lot of things I have to improve on, as well.

Just knowing they're really good freshmen, they're going to come in and make a big impact.

JEFF FISCHER: What do you feel you have to improve on?

TYLER LEWIS: I mean, certainly I still got to become a better leader to this team. Also I got to be able to, when things aren't going well, be able to take over the team as the point guard, as the leader, hopefully calm everybody down.

JEFF FISCHER: T.J.?

T.J. WARREN: Definitely on the defensive end, staying consistent. Definitely rebounding on both ends of the floor, staying consistent on that, too.

JEFF FISCHER: What has coach been saying to you about the season?

T.J. WARREN: He's been telling us it's going to be a little struggle. When we face adversity, we have to pull everybody together and just fight through it.

TYLER LEWIS: Coach Gott is telling me in my ear every day I have to become the leader of this team, bring intensity. If I bring intensity, everybody else will bring intensity.

JEFF FISCHER: Good luck this season.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

ERIC ATKINS JERIAN GRANT

JEFF FISCHER: I'm joined by the Notre Dame backcourt.

Jerian, is there a better backcourt in the country than the two of you?

JERIAN GRANT: Personally, I don't think so. At the end of the day, we're going to have to go out there and prove it. I think we've established ourselves as one of the better backcourts. I think we're going to have to do that again in the ACC.

JEFF FISCHER: Eric, go ahead.

ERIC ATKINS: Yeah, I feel the same way. I definitely feel like we are one of the best. We're definitely going to have to go out there and prove it this year, playing against some great guards in the ACC.

JEFF FISCHER: We'll take questions.

Q. Jerian, with your brother Jeremi, what has the conversation been like? Any personal battles between the two of you?

JERIAN GRANT: Yeah, you know, we talk every day. We're just excited about being able to play in the same conference again.

I get to go down there and play against him again. Personally we both want to have great seasons, we want our teams to have great seasons.

He's looking forward to getting a lot more minutes this year, being able to show people what he can do on a consistent basis.

Q. What do you anticipate being the biggest change in this move? Will it be the culture of the gyms you're going to, the style of play?

ERIC ATKINS: In my opinion, it will be the culture of the gyms. In the Big East we played at a lot of schools that had NBA arenas. Sometimes it wouldn't be as packed.

I feel like in the ACC, they're all like college-based arenas. That's definitely going to have a different feel to it. They're always going to have more of a home-court advantage I feel like.

JERIAN GRANT: Yeah, I think it's going to be a little different. In the Big East, you're seeing a lot of games that were in the 40s and low 50s. You turn the TV on, the building ACC is scoring 75, 80 points.

It's going to be different with the contrasting styles a little bit.

Q. Can you talk about replacing the winningest class in school history, especially a guy like Jack Cooley.

JERIAN GRANT: Jack was a double-double every night guy. I don't think we have any one person that's going to do that this year.

As a committee, I think definitely guys are going to be able to step up and do that. Garrick Sherman is going to be more consistent this year, get a lot more minutes on a consistent basis. That's definitely going to help us.

ERIC ATKINS: I think we're definitely going to have to do it as a team. The rebounding that Jack provided for us, hopefully Jerian's and I's class can finish as the most winning class in Notre Dame history.

JEFF FISCHER: You went 25-10 last year. Eric, what are the goals this season for this team?

ERIC ATKINS: One of the goals is, again, to get an NCAA bid in this new league for us, just to be successful in the new league. It has a challenge of its own. Then to make a run in the tournament. I think that's the biggest key for us.

JERIAN GRANT: Yeah, coming into a new conference, we feel like we have to reestablish ourselves. That's something I think

we're going to do and be able to do this year.

Then it's tournament time, it's time for us to get a win, make a run in there. I think that will really be able to tell how we did in our season.

Q. You touched on the different cultures of the gyms. Are you coming in with the attitude of just kind of dipping your toes in the water at the start of the season or do you realize you just have to dive in head first?

JERIAN GRANT: Well, yeah, our first ACC game is against Duke. We have to come ready right away. It's going to be a huge game for us to make a statement.

I don't think there's no dipping your toes when you're playing against Duke. It's all in.

ERIC ATKINS: We have to dive in right away, opening up with Duke. The ACC didn't make it easy on us at all opening up with Duke.

I think that's good for us. We get the premiere team in the league to start off with. It can only be good for us.

JEFF FISCHER: I'm going to talk to Mike Brey this afternoon. The guy is always like positive energy. Is that what he's like for you?

JERIAN GRANT: Coach Brey is a positive coach. If guys make mistakes, he's telling you what you can do better next time, not how bad you did.

He's always smiling, making jokes. He brings a lot of energy to the guys. I think that helps a guy get better. Coach Brey tells them what they're good at instead of telling them what you're bad at.

ERIC ATKINS: In my opinion, Coach Brey is a great coach because he's a confidence-giver. Everybody feels like they can play their own game, letting us do so.

JEFF FISCHER: I talked a lot about how you distribute very well, but you also protect the ball well. How important do you consider sharing and also making sure you're protecting the ball?

ERIC ATKINS: That's huge for us. That's part of the culture and being a guard under Mike Brey, is protecting the ball and being good with it. He instills that in us very early. I think it just carries on year after year.

JERIAN GRANT: Yeah, taking care of the ball, it's really tough. With Coach Brey, you're not going to be on the court much if you can't take care of the ball. That's the main focus for all his players. As you continue to do a good job with that, you're going to continue to get a chance to play.

JEFF FISCHER: Sometimes you get on hot streaks. Jerian, I don't think I've ever seen anything like the hot streak you were on against Louisville. Describe that.

JERIAN GRANT: Your teammates give you confidence. The guys are giving me the ball, telling me to go make a play. When your coach and your teammates have confidence in you like that, it boosts your own confidence. You think any shot you shoot is going in.

ERIC ATKINS: I've never seen a streak like Jerian got on against Louisville. I can't say I've ever done anything like that, but it was amazing like that.

JEFF FISCHER: Thanks for come by, guys. Good luck to Notre Dame this season, the first year the Irish are in the ACC.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

LAMAR PATTERSON TALIB ZANNA

JEFF FISCHER: Glad to be welcoming in another new school to the ACC, Pitt.

Guys, there are going to be questions about joining the new conference. Lamar, what is it like joining the ACC?

LAMAR PATTERSON: It's great. Looking forward to a great year. This conference is shaping up to be one of the best ever. We're hoping to make sure we perform in it.

JEFF FISCHER: Talib?

TALIB ZANNA: It's great playing a lot of good schools in this conference. It's going to be a fun year.

JEFF FISCHER: It's a new conference. How do you set goals? How do you know how you're going to fit into the conference?

LAMAR PATTERSON: Our goals are high. That's where we're going to set them. That's where they've always been set at. We just have to, I guess, adjust our style a little bit, tweak it, just go out there and play basketball. That's what you have to do at the end of the day.

JEFF FISCHER: What does that mean, to tweak your style, Talib?

TALIB ZANNA: Play an up-tempo game. ACC is up-and-down. It's going to be fun.

JEFF FISCHER: Pitt is known for grinding. You want to get up-tempo?

LAMAR PATTERSON: If we have to. We'll grind. We'll get up-tempo. At the end of the game we'll grind, wear people out. That's what we're used to doing. That's what we have to keep doing.

JEFF FISCHER: Questions.

Q. Talk about joining the new conference with Syracuse and Notre Dame. Do you feel a little bit you can't get away from Syracuse?

LAMAR PATTERSON: It's great to come with familiar faces. Those are two teams we're used to playing. Nothing will change there. We'll go back to a Big East style when we play them.

It's good to have also new faces to go along with the old faces. Change is good. I'm looking forward to a great year.

TALIB ZANNA: I think the change is good. Probably we'll try new things. New conference, playing schools like North Carolina, Maryland, NC State. It's going to be fun.

JEFF FISCHER: Lamar, you started 66 straight games. A lot of knowledge acquired over all that time. Give me a sense of how you've grown as a player.

LAMAR PATTERSON: I've grown as soon as I stepped on campus watching guys ahead of me, like Brad Wannamaker, Gil Brown, guys like those to look after. They showed me the way pretty much.

Once I got out there playing my own minutes, I just learned as the game went on. Like you said, 66 is a lot, but it's just something that happened over the course of time I was there.

JEFF FISCHER: Talib, you averaged 10 points a game, leading rebounder. What are goals for you this season?

TALIB ZANNA: Win a lot of games. Just go far in the ACC tournament, win the ACC. Just have a wonderful year.

JEFF FISCHER: Obviously coach has talked about that as well. For people that don't know, describe Jamie Dixon for us.

LAMAR PATTERSON: Coach is a hard worker. He wants everything to be perfect. He won't have it any other way. He's going to make sure that we know what is expected out of us. He's going to get it, I tell you that. He's going to get it.

He built this program around toughness, defense, unselfishness. That trend will continue no matter what.

JEFF FISCHER: He's been averaging 26 wins a year. He's kept it going and built on the program.

Talib, what is coach like?

TALIB ZANNA: He's positive about what he do. He's serious. He get his job done. He make sure once you step on the court, it's business time.

He just push you hard every day, just get the best out of you.

Q. For years depending on who you would ask, there would be some debate about whether the Big East or the ACC was the premiere conference in college basketball. In your opinion, is there any doubt now with the influx of you three that the ACC is the premiere league?

TALIB ZANNA: I think Big East is better, just how physical it is, the fans, the teams.

I know ACC has a lot of schools that win a lot of games, make a lot of history and championships.

Being in the ACC, we have been looking up to since they announced we was in the ACC. They announced about it in July. We happy about it. As basketball, we just have to go in and play the game.

LAMAR PATTERSON: It's definitely the ACC. With us coming in, Syracuse, Notre Dame, Louisville next year, it's kind of hard not to say it's the best conference when you add to the teams that are already there.

Now we just have to live up to it as a whole, get as many teams in the tournament as possible, just win as many games.

JEFF FISCHER: How is the team different without Trey and Steve?

LAMAR PATTERSON: He was a leader. Me and Talib have to fill that void. Steve was a big, big body in the paint. He was huge, a hard worker. Whenever he was on the court, you know you had to work hard. You knew if he didn't, he was going to kick your butt because he was working hard.

I'm definitely going to miss those guys. That's college. Guys come and go. Just want to finish this year out and then it will be my time to go.

TALIB ZANNA: We miss Trey and Steve. You forgot about Dante, too. We came in together with Dante. Trey being there, he's a good leader.

He led us every day. Being a senior, fifth-year, he have a lot of experience. He tell us what we have to do just because he's been there for a long time.

Steve is just somebody who was tall, strong. I bothered Steve every day in practice. It was really tough for me. We really miss those guys, so...

Q. I was struck by the fact that you both said you need to change the way Pitt plays basketball coming into a new league rather than making the teams adjust to you guys. Is that what coach is saying?

LAMAR PATTERSON: I didn't necessarily say change completely. Tweak it a little bit, getting up and down. That's what we've been working on.

Like you said, teams will have to adjust to us also. I'm sure our team is not going to want to be being pushed around. When we do our block-out drills, that's all we do, push each other around. It's good to go out there and play against other people for once.

Like you said, they're going to have to adjust to us also. But we're going to have to do a little bit of adjusting, get up-tempo a little bit so we're not getting out-ran, stuff like that.

Q. What is the one thing about Pitt basketball that ACC fans don't know yet?

TALIB ZANNA: Just being physical. We don't take stuff for granted. We come in, take care of business. Just how physical and tough we are.

LAMAR PATTERSON: Just being able to grind stuff out. When it comes to the end of the game, you think there's no fight left, we've been a team that has consistently shown we have a little bit of fight. We're going to fight until the horn sounds. Like Talib said, just the toughness and physicality of the game. That's something that Dixon instills in us from day one.

Q. Duke and Carolina have been the powerhouses of the ACC for so many years. Do you think you guys, Syracuse, Louisville next year, can come in and hang with the big boys of the ACC?

LAMAR PATTERSON: Yeah, definitely, definitely. I think that's what the move was about. I think it was make the league as competitive as it can be.

I think moving us, Syracuse, Louisville, Notre Dame, all them schools, it's definitely going

to give those two schools, the powerhouses, a run for their money for years now to come.

I think the ACC is definitely going to be a special conference.

TALIB ZANNA: Don't get me wrong, I think we big boys, too (smiling). I think they should worry about us coming into the conference, too.

LAMAR PATTERSON: You learn we're pretty much all the same people, like the same things. We all just are competitors and like to win.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

C.J. FAIR BAYE MOUSSA KEITA

JEFF FISCHER: Pleased to be joined by some of the new guys, Syracuse Orange. Had a good run in the NCAA tournament. Let's start with the Syracuse press.

Q. Talk about what you're most excited about.

C.J. FAIR: I say I'm most excited about just playing new teams, being in a new league. You see this league on TV a lot. It's going to be a fun, exciting year.

BAYE MOUSSA KEITA: Like C.J. say, going into a new conference, playing different teams. We've been in the Big East a long time. Kind of excited about seeing the new conference.

JEFF FISCHER: You have to replace three guys that were double-digit scorers. Give me a sense offensively what Syracuse is going to look like.

C.J. FAIR: We going to have some new faces scoring the ball.

This year we got a big front court. We got a new backcourt as far as our freshman point guard, sophomore and freshman guard.

We're going to have a good team this year. You just got to get the freshmen feet wet, know what to expect. It's me and Baye's job to be leaders of this team.

Q. Joining the league now, what is the difference between getting ready and traveling to Duke for a game as opposed to going to Providence or Georgetown?

BAYE MOUSSA KEITA: I think there won't be a lot of difference. We'll get into our game

routine. The coach is going to get the scouting. We're going to go ahead and do the same thing.

It's going to be a little bit different playing different teams. Apart from that, we'll just go about playing like we did in the Big East.

C.J. FAIR: Like Baye said, we face a new opponent. Everything is going to be new to us. We just got to handle our emotions and excitement, just stick to our game plan.

Q. Is there a team that you're going to miss playing the most? Is there a team you're most looking forward to playing?

C.J. FAIR: I'm not going to say I'm going to miss playing a team (smiling). I know you hear a lot of talk about Duke and North Carolina, Tobacco Road, stuff like that.

I'm excited to be facing new teams. That's really what I'm excited about.

BAYE MOUSSA KEITA: Like C.J. say, every conference you go into, there's going to be a good competition. We're excited for that. Even though there's a lot of rivalry between us and Georgetown, this is a new conference, so we're going to have new rivals. We're excited about that, too.

Q. Talking about Duke specifically, reports out yesterday less than a day after tickets went on sale, they only have seats on the opposite end of the dome. Record crowd expected. When you get a big stage like that, how much does that get your juices flowing?

BAYE MOUSSA KEITA: We heard yesterday the dome is sold out. It's going to be a good game. Just like we play Georgetown, the dome is always full. It's going to be a good game, and like C.J. say, handle our emotion. Every time we play a big team, there's a lot of excitement.

C.J. FAIR: Yeah, Duke and North Carolina come to the dome, I know a lot of our offense want to witness that. We just got to handle our part, use the crowd to our advantage, pull off a victory.

Q. C.J., why did you ultimately decide to come back for your senior year, not go to the NBA?

C.J. FAIR: I just thought it would be best for me to come back. I went home and talked to my family about, weighed the pros and cons.

Leaving school early is definitely a big risk. I think for me coming back was best for me and better my chances at the next level.

Q. Talk about following up the Final Four with five freshmen now on the squad, the challenge of that.

BAYE MOUSSA KEITA: You know, everybody was saying we have five freshmen. That's really good. We went to Canada, played four games there, show up, see what everybody have. Like C.J. said, we're leading them every day in practice.

I think they're going to be good. Between high school and this level, a whole different level. We're going to try to push them to be better. They've been good so far during practice. We're going to wait to start the season and see what we have down the road.

C.J. FAIR: Yeah, we went to the Final Four last year. So we got a taste of it. This year our goal is to complete the job being in the Final Four.

As far as our freshmen, we got a lot of talented freshmen. When we took the Canada trip, you could really see how they operate, how they play. I was very impressed. A lot of them exceeded my expectations for them.

Q. C.J., you and I climbed up to the dome last year. Can you imagine five or six games where people are sitting that far away? What does that do for you as a player?

C.J. FAIR: You just know that occasion, the enjoyment the fans get out of watching us play.

For me as a player, you just want to go out there and get the fans starting to appreciate, by honoring them, play your best, play hard.

Q. Bringing Pittsburgh and Notre Dame in, what is it going to be like to keep those rivals going?

BAYE MOUSSA KEITA: Pittsburgh is always a tough team to play, and Notre Dame, too. We're going to Pittsburgh this year, and they're coming to the dome. It's going to be a tough competition like usual.

Keeping the rivalry going is a big thing. We're excited to go back to Pittsburgh because it's a really, really, really tough place to play.

JEFF FISCHER: I want to thank Syracuse. Good luck this season.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

JOE HARRIS AKIL MITCHELL

JEFF FISCHER: We're joined by Virginia. What did you do in the ACC photo booth?

JOE HARRIS: I don't know if we can reveal what we were doing in the photo booth (laughter).

AKIL MITCHELL: Private information (laughter).

JEFF FISCHER: 'Hashtag Swoon,' talk about what that is on Twitter?

JOE HARRIS: I'm not that familiar with it. It's been embraced by a lot of our fans, the Swoon Movement.

JEFF FISCHER: Swooning over you?

JOE HARRIS: Everybody.

JEFF FISCHER: The team?

JOE HARRIS: Yeah (smiling).

JEFF FISCHER: Akil, they're swooning over him, right?

AKIL MITCHELL: Yeah. I'm the biggest swooner there is.

JEFF FISCHER: Going to have to follow those tweets (laughter).

We'll start with questions.

Q. Do you guys notice bigger expectations around the team this year? If you do, how do you balance that with you guys as the senior leaders?

AKIL MITCHELL: We can really kind of sense an excitement level around the fan base, around grounds. I mean, I don't think it's impacted us as much. We understand what we have to do to be successful is the same things we've had to do in the past.

It's pretty cliché, but we're going to take it one game at a time, work as hard as we can every practice, to be the best team we possibly can be.

JOE HARRIS: Going off what Akil said, there are those expectations, but we're just worrying about what we can control, and that's trying to improve every day, be the best team we can be, worry about the now rather than the expectations that might be put on us.

JEFF FISCHER: It strikes me when I look at this team, the big difference, depth and experience, you've built that up. Joe, how does that make a difference for this team?

JOE HARRIS: It's huge. Last year going into the season, I don't think we had a true point guard at all. Now we have four. It's a good problem to have that depth.

I think there will be a much more balanced attack offensively. We have a number of guys that can contribute and score in different ways.

It's exciting going into the season with added depth and talent on the team.

JEFF FISCHER: Akil, how have you noticed it?

AKIL MITCHELL: I think the big thing is with that added depth, guys are buying into their roles and positions on the team. Like Joe just said, we have four guys competing for the point guard spot, multiple bigs that can play.

It's really going to force us all to compete against each other, but we know we have each other's back. It's a team mentality. I think that's the biggest difference between this year and last year, the maturity, understanding of what we have to do to be successful.

Q. We saw a lot of the younger guys getting reps last year. How have Nolte, Tobey, Anderson improved since last season?

AKIL MITCHELL: Yeah, I think it's something that Joe and I also had to go through when we were first and second year, baptized by the fire. Evan and Mike and Justin, all those guys

have had to kind of learn on the fly.

I think it's helped them a lot. I talked to them multiple times since we started practice. They're saying the game has slowed down so much more since playing last year. They've understood the defense. Mike looks a lot better. Defensively he still has a lot of room to grow. Evan has gained 15 pounds of muscle. He looks a lot stronger. Justin's decision making has improved.

They've all taken strides and it's impressive to see.

JOE HARRIS: Going off of what Akil said, same thing. They've all improved a considerable amount. I'm just excited to get going with them, see what they can contribute on the floor this year.

From a physical standpoint, I think Tobey and Nolte had both put on a lot of weight, particularly muscle. Then Justin has improved in his decision making areas. I'm just excited to get going with them, see how they can contribute this season.

Q. The teams that are coming in this season, from a player's perspective, are they being viewed as the new kids on the block, the bullies?

JOE HARRIS: I would say it's exciting for the players. I know I'm excited to play against some different teams, new faces, go to different venues. I think it's great for the league. The ACC was a powerhouse beforehand from a basketball standpoint. Adding these three teams to the league makes it that much better. I think it's definitely one of the best basketball conferences in America.

AKIL MITCHELL: Yeah, I don't know if we perceive them as bullies or anything like that. It's kind of weird to look around, not really recognize some of the faces here and there.

It's exciting, like Joe said, to get a chance to play in some new places. They're three really good teams. Whenever you add that type of competition, it should get any competitive player fired up.

JEFF FISCHER: Back-to-back games you traveled to Notre Dame and Pitt. Are you excited about one or the other?

AKIL MITCHELL: It would have been fun to go to the Carrier Dome. We don't get that opportunity this year. Getting the opportunity to play at Notre Dame, at Pitt, it's something different. It will be a lot of fun.

JEFF FISCHER: Joe?

JOE HARRIS: I think it's going to be exciting. I'm excited to go and play in a different venue, see what their fans are like, what the atmosphere is like. I'm sure it will be great.

Q. You have improved in win totals the past four seasons. Do you see that trend continuing and do you see this team this year being even better than last year's team?

JOE HARRIS: To me that's the goal every year. Our goal is to make it to the post-season, to improve off of what we built last year. So far, as Akil and I have been in this program, it's improved every year.

It's not any different for our goals this coming year. I think we have a chance to be a special team with some of the depth and talent we have this year.

AKIL MITCHELL: Four years ago that was the goal when coach recruited us. That was the goal to really turning around that program. Every year I think we've built steadily towards doing it. This year I think it's another opportunity to continue to build.

We should be a good team. After you continue to build after four or five years of being better every year, at some point you come to a point in the road where you have to get better. I think we have an opportunity to do that this year.

JEFF FISCHER: Good luck this season. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

October 16, 2013



An interview with:

BEN EMELOGU JOEY VAN ZEGEREN

JEFF FISCHER: We lead off with Virginia Tech. Ben, talk about your relationship with your coach.

BEN EMELOGU: He's a player's coach. He loves us like our sons. He doesn't have a family. He treats us just like his kids.

Every day he asks us how we're doing. We know that he loves us.

JEFF FISCHER: Joe, your thoughts on coach?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: I agree. When I first met James, he was an assistant coach. When he got the job, I thought he was right in spot for that. Knowing him as a person, he doesn't try to be a player's coach. It comes natural to him.

JEFF FISCHER: Have you seen him change from an assistant coach to a head coach?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: I have seen him change. But I think he brings a lot of experience with him from the assistant coach job. He knows how to deal in certain situations and certain players.

JEFF FISCHER: What are the goals you and coach have set for the team this year.

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: We're trying to get an ACC championship and then get the NCAAs.

JEFF FISCHER: Ben, what are your goals?

BEN EMELOGU: Helping my team out, have fun.

JEFF FISCHER: Who is your favorite player?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: My favorite player at the moment is Kevin Durant.

JEFF FISCHER: Why?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: I think he's versatile, athletic. I like the way he's a team player.

JEFF FISCHER: Ben, who do you look up to?

BEN EMELOGU: Kevin Durant.

JEFF FISCHER: What is the one app on your phone you can't live without?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: I'd have to say Skype. I'm from overseas. I Skype a lot with my family.

JEFF FISCHER: Do you feel like it's hard being away from home so much?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: It's kind of hard, but I've gotten used to it.

JEFF FISCHER: How many years have you been away from home now?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: Five, six years.

JEFF FISCHER: Ben, what do you listen to on your iPod?

BEN EMELOGU: I listen to Jayco, Wally, very lyrical rappers.

JEFF FISCHER: Let's talk about Blacksburg. What has your first experience been like?

BEN EMELOGU: The people there are great. They're very kind and loving. So I'm liking the city. I can't miss home at all. That speaks for itself.

Q. Last thing before I let you go and move on. You're dealing with cameras, is that fun for you or something you have to do as part of the job being a college basketball player?

JOEY VAN ZEGEREN: I see it as fun.

JEFF FISCHER: Good start to the day.

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An interview with:

TRAVIS McKIE CODI MILLER-McINTYRE

JEFF FISCHER: Time to talk to Wake Forest. The important first question, Travis, you're running for homecoming king, trying to get votes. Here is your platform.

TRAVIS McKIE: All students that are probably not watching, please vote for me. I need to win. Appreciate it.

JEFF FISCHER: Codi, have you voted yet?

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: No.

TRAVIS McKIE: It was yesterday. It's too late (laughter).

JEFF FISCHER: Let's start with general talk about this season. Travis, senior year. Give me a sense of what you want to accomplish this year at Wake Forest.

TRAVIS McKIE: This is my last year. I want to help the young guys take that next step. We can be more consistent throughout the season. Last year we made a lot of great strides. They came at a lot of different times. We had one big win, wait a month or so to have another big win.

We need to put a string of games together.

JEFF FISCHER: What are your goals, Codi?

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: I believe just to show our true talents. Last year were flashes of what we could do. I think that showed why we were so good at Wake Forest, what would happen when we would get on the road.

JEFF FISCHER: There were moments at home when we saw how good this team could be.

TRAVIS McKIE: We were 8-1 at home last year. The young guys are more comfortable at home. We weren't very good on the road. I think this year they're a lot more experienced. I think we

all are a lot more experienced. We learned a lot from last year. We're trying to make that next push.

JEFF FISCHER: Codi, why is it tougher playing on the road?

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: Last year we didn't expect it. We thought away games would definitely be like high school. It's definitely not. Bigger stage, crazier environment.

I think that comes from us being confident, being sure of the players we are. We have that confidence this year that we developed from last year, that those road games will be different.

JEFF FISCHER: Questions.

Q. Travis, last year the Sensational Seven, the freshmen class, a year older, wiser, more experience. How much have those guys grown in your eyes?

TRAVIS McKIE: It's night and day. I think it's more mental than anything. I think last year with seven freshmen, they don't know anything. You have to assume they know nothing.

I think last year on and off the court you had to worry about them at all time. Hopefully they was making the right decisions.

This year they've grown not only as athletes, but students. They have more confidence about themselves. I think it's definitely going to show when the season starts.

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: It's grown a lot. I have noticed in my teammates how mature we've become in terms of on the court and off. I can tell everybody's confidence level has shot through the roof in terms of knowing their abilities on the court. I think that's going to help so much.

JEFF FISCHER: You've been with Jeff Bzdelik. What kind of impact has he had on you as a player?

TRAVIS McKIE: This year he's a lot more relaxed. Last year he was new to the East Coast, I was new to college. We had our transition points, ups and downs. He's more excited to get this year

started.

JEFF FISCHER: Codi, give me a sense of coach.

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: Last year it was definitely tough for him. Seven of us that didn't know a lot. It was frustrating for him to tell us something and we wouldn't do it because we didn't know any better. Definitely this year he's more relaxed as a coach. We can see that up close in person.

Q. Is 'relaxed' a relative term for coach? Last year he seemed rather grumpy most of the season. You're saying he's relaxed now. How is he showing that?

TRAVIS MCKIE: Seven freshmen make you grumpy. It made me grumpy. When coach came down on them, he was also yelling at me and C.J. because we didn't tell them what to do.

They've grown up. They know where to go now, what to do. A lot more is expected of them. I think coach is more relaxed because he has a comfort level and confidence level.

I think going into their sophomore year, he know what to expect out of them.

JEFF FISCHER: You brought up C.J. First time without your tag team partner. Weird, right?

TRAVIS MCKIE: It's definitely weird. But I wish him nothing but the best. He's gone. I wish him the best in Germany. Talked to him last week. He's doing well.

The whole community loved him. He did a lot for this program. One person can't replace that; the whole team has to.

JEFF FISCHER: What is it like trying to step up and fill that void?

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: It's a lot. At the same time myself and my other teammates knew what we were getting ourselves into. We decided to play for the ACC when we decided to play for Wake Forest. Something we have to do. We have to work to get that.

Q. Travis, is the time now? Is it time to blast through the door with this program and get them back into the tournament, do all the things you want to do?

TRAVIS MCKIE: Yeah. It's been a long three years. I think we made small steps in these three years. Last year we had a lot of good things happen. Those two big wins at home against Miami, NC State.

This year is the year we take that next step, make the push for post-season play. We try to focus on each day getting better as a team, weights, whatever we're doing to get better as a team. If we take it one day at a time, but definitely this year is the year.

JEFF FISCHER: Codi, do you feel this is the year?

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: Most definitely.

JEFF FISCHER: You talked about the goals for this year, what you're trying to accomplish. What has the off-season been like?

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: The off-season for me personally has been a grind. I knew what I had to work on. A lot of that was dealing with mental aspects of my life, being able to time management, balance things. That, I couldn't do last year. I reached a point with a lot of practice over the summer I could balance everything I couldn't.

TRAVIS MCKIE: Also more mental than anything. I workout all the time. That's nothing. But just being a leader, knowing how to talk to these guys. In practice it can get heated. People respond in different ways.

I learned a lot from last year in dealing with seven freshmen, knowing how to talk to people. I think this year will be a lot better for all of us, myself included.

Q. What would you say to some of the fans that are upset with Bzdelik?

TRAVIS MCKIE: Come out to the game this year, support. We don't focus on the negative energy out there. We focus on each guy in the locker room just constantly getting better. We're focused on the season.

When we win, everything is all good. I think winning is the result that everybody wants to have. We have to put in the work to get those wins. We're doing that right now.

CODI MILLER-McINTYRE: Basically the same thing. Just support us as a team, as a program. That will help us extremely during the game, so...

JEFF FISCHER: Thank you, guys, for joining us here.

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