

October 16, 2014



An Interview With:

PENN STATE COACH COQUESE WASHINGTON

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Penn State coach Coquese Washington. We'll go straight to questions for Coach.

Q. You've lost Maggie and a couple of other really, really good players. And you've been like three-time defending regular season champions, where are you right now as a team?

COACH WASHINGTON: Where are we right now as a team?

Q. Yeah, without those people.

COACH WASHINGTON: Well, we're trying to find our identity. We'll definitely be a different team. When you lose the four seniors we lost and the contributions that they gave to the team, the leadership that they provided for the team, you know we're clearly going to be a different team and we're really young. So we've got the majority back, the majority of our team.

And haven't had a ton of playing experience. I think we're going to be -- like I said at the beginning of the season last year, it's going to take time to figure out what our identity and as players, who is going to step up and those kind of things.

That's the fun part I think about coaching college basketball is having the opportunity to watch the young people grow, develop their confidence, develop -- each team developing their own style of play.

So I'm excited about watching us figure out and determine who we're going to be this year.

Q. With that being said, who has stepped up as a younger player because of the experience of going to the Sweet 16 for you so

far in practice and who has looked more confident because of that?

COACH WASHINGTON: I certainly think, first of all, Tori Waldner, our senior, she's a senior. She's a captain. She's been around a while. She's been a part of all three Big Ten championship teams. She's played in the NCAA Tournament all three of her seasons.

So her experience has been extremely critical. With regard to our younger players, I would say Peyton Whitted and Kaliyah Mitchell got the most experience last year, and they've been able to step up and show a little bit of understanding and accepting a bigger role this year.

But I've also been really pleased with Sierra Moore and her explosiveness, and Lindsey Spann is really a true freshman for us in the sense she didn't play at all last year. She's showing some good things.

It's really, really early for us. We've had about a week and a half of practice and roles are still being fashioned at this point.

Q. Follow up talking about your team's identity. But do you have a vision for this team of how you see it at some point?

COACH WASHINGTON: Well, the vision is very similar to what we've done in the past. We still want to be up tempo. We still want to get up and down the floor. Just how we do it may be a little bit different.

We probably will focus and emphasize post play a little bit more this year than maybe we have in the past. And the biggest thing for us is going to be experience. So we've got to get on the floor.

These kids have got to get out there and they've got to play on the Big Ten Network, they've got to play in front of 10,000 fans so we can really see how they'll perform on the biggest and the strongest moments. So that's why I said it's still really early for this team.

In years past, when you've got four, five seniors or four or five juniors and seniors that have

played a lot, you know, it's a little easier to kind of figure out what the identity is.

But we've got one senior and two juniors and those two juniors haven't played. So we're a really young team and it's going to take us some time to create that identity and our coaching staff will be patient to allow that to happen.

Q. How would it affect your coaching to not have that player on the floor that can suddenly go off for 20 points in five minutes?

COACH WASHINGTON: Yeah, I'm going to miss Maggie a little bit. But you don't replace a kid like Maggie Lucas with one person. It's going to be -- we're going to have to replace her impact with the team. Everybody's gotta do a little bit more. Everybody's gotta step up and really do what they're capable of doing.

So we'll definitely miss her, but the team will be different. And when we had that player like you said who was capable of going off, we were able to play a certain way. So we'll just have to adjust to the personnel that we have and I'm confident that we'll do that.

Q. Could you just briefly speak to the newcomers, what does Maryland overall bring to the table in terms of style of play and some adjustments you'll have to make and the same for Rutgers?

COACH WASHINGTON: I'm really, really excited about Maryland and Rutgers joining the conference. I definitely think it makes our conference more competitive. It certainly I think heightens the reputation of our conference. And I think the conference will be better for them having joined the Big Ten.

As you noted, some different styles of play. Rutgers, Coach Stringer, they're going to be really aggressive defensively and strong defensive unit.

And you have to worry about their athleticism. And Maryland has always been a very strong rebounding team. They get up and down the floor and they like to play fast.

So I think that the one thing that is really, really fun about playing in the Big Ten is we have such a variety of styles from every team.

So every night you're coaching against a different style and it makes it really fun to coach, because it's not the same thing night in, night out. And I think it prepares us for postseason play.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports



visit our archives at asapsports.com

Oct. 16, 2014

2