

**October 13, 2008**

**IOWA**  
**BASKETBALL**



An interview with:

## **COACH TODD LICKLITER**

COACH LICKLITER: Well, I want to thank you for being here, for your interest in Big Ten basketball. A new season, new opportunities. It's just a great time of year.

I've grown up with the fall being a great indicator that it's time to spend more time in the gymnasium. My father coached. It was just always an exciting time for us, a new opportunity, as I said. So I want to thank you.

The events today hopefully will be of benefit to you, not just in a press conference situation, not just questions, answers, but actually being able to get on the floor. Steve Roe was instrumental in working with me on this and had an idea. The NCAA allows us two hours a week in the pre-season to work on individual skill development in a team setting after the 15th. So we thought it would be a good use of our time to get together, allow you to see some of the new and also to experience the veterans and watch their leadership. So hopefully that will be good.

When we finish here, we can go down and spend a little time with players and also watch, for those of you who can stay. I appreciate Steve helping me with the logistics.

As we approach this year, like I said, we're excited. We're excited about the opportunities. I recently read a line in a book that said, Walk towards the talk. I thought we had really established our vision, our values, the talk part, in the first year. I had a good friend that was a teacher back when I first started in the teaching profession and coaching. He told me the most difficult part of any job is starting it, and I think there's some truth to that.

We felt like we got it started. We established, like I say, our vision. Now we're trying

to, as this particular author said, walk towards the talk. It hit me that walking was a bit too slow for me; I'd rather sprint towards it.

In the line of athletics, there's competition, there's challenge. I've been asked about our schedule, how demanding it is. Part of being in the Big Ten and part of supporting a team in the Big Ten, as fans, you're guaranteed a great schedule. You're guaranteed tremendous competition. So there's going to be some terrific challenges out there, and we're going to try to prepare for them.

Like I said, we've been involved two hours a week with the entire team over the course of the last couple weeks. A couple things I've noticed that I'd like to share with you is there are veterans that understand technique, they understand schemes, and they have completely, in my opinion, committed to what we want to do.

Now, what that does is that enables us to have examples. That enables us to have leaders that are actually demonstrating. Well done is much better than well said. I think that quote is attributed to Franklin, if I'm not mistaken. Whether it was his or not, it's correct. So now we're seeing what we want. There are veterans out there that are really demonstrating, again, what we want to get done. We're excited about that.

It's not just staff, although we do have a terrific staff. I have a great staff. Chad Walthall, LaVall Jordan, Joel Cornette. Then those that stayed with us, Jerry Strom, Pam Culver, Shelly Deutsch, and Justin Wieck that stayed with us, really bridged the gap between the new and the tradition. They have helped us establish this over the year without any question, but also now we've got players that are helping us.

With the new guys that are coming in, it gives us added depth, not just for games, but in practice. I think that's more important than the games themselves. I think that the challenges that we'll be able to have in practice will enable us to grow. I don't think you grow at the speed you need to unless you're stretched, unless you're

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

visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)

**Coach Lickliter - 10 13 08 (2)**

challenged. I see we're going to do that. We're going to do it in a competitive arena, but also in a supportive arena.

We've got guys that we've recruited now on our vision, on what we want. And so we're really excited about the new guys, what it's going to mean to build together.

As we move forward and as the veterans help the new and we establish the way we want to play, our vision now is to become more consistent. I thought we did some really good things last year. We just weren't consistent enough.

We want to play high-percentage basketball and be consistent in our efforts, in what we do. I think if you look at champions, you'll see that they stay consistent. There's so many great examples on this campus, in this particular department, athletics, of those kind of champions staying consistent. We see it in our administration, in what they say, what they do, what they believe. We see it in fellow coaches. I can't thank those individuals enough.

I got to tell you, Tom Brand's office is right next door to mine. If I go in there any day, it will be a consistent approach. I know what I'm getting from him. Here is a national champ that immediately wants to be a national champ the following year. It's not just about talk. He's just one example. I just see it in every other coach, and I want to thank them for that.

We can point to our players and say, This is the way you respond in adversity, and this is the way you respond in prosperity. You respond consistently with your values and the way you want your program to go. So I think that's the message that we want to get out. I think it's being reinforced. As I said, I'm excited.

I want to thank the Hawkeye fans. I know last year there were difficulties. No one is happy with where we were as far as position in the league, wins and losses. Nobody was more disappointed than coaches and players. But I thought the fans really stayed with us. They supported us.

I'm encouraged because when we do play the way we know we're going to play, there's going to be great excitement not only in this building, but I know we'll get a following on the road also. So the fans have just been terrific. I want them to know we're working to put a team out there that we're going to all be proud of, that will represent the Hawkeyes the way the fans deserve to be represented.

As we move forward, a change you're going to see is the three-point line. It's moved back a foot. We think this is going to benefit us. We've had a great emphasis on strength. We have a new strength coach. We've got an emphasis on strength. Maybe that will help our range also moving back a foot. But I don't think that strength is necessarily the concern. I think it's more with technique and repetition. I like the guys that are shooting it.

I do think moving the line back will now reinforce if you are a three-point shooter or not. Before it might have been a little too close for that. Secondly, it will open up the lane. It will allow us to play with better spacing. I'm excited about that. I think it's a good thing for us.

Defensively we're going to have to be more active. We're going to have to be more in tune with one another because of the spacing. But I do think it's a good thing. I'm excited for that change. I think it's going to be the right move for us.

That's a brief overview. Again, I want to thank you for being here, for your support, for your interest. Like I say, I'm excited about this new year and about the team that the staff has helped us to put together and the direction that we're going. Again, thank you.

I'll open it up for questions now.

**Q. Jarryd okay, a hundred percent ready to go?**

COACH LICKLITER: I think so, yes. When you say "a hundred percent," I'd like to be his hundred percent. I'd be pretty good. He ran somewhere around a 5:30 mile, 5:33. That's about where we want the guards to be. I think he's bench pressing over 300 pounds. Then you've got obviously his big heart, his energy, his enthusiasm for his team and the game. It's really comforting to have him back. We think he's as close to full strength as anybody could be given the seriousness of the injury.

I had a player one time that had the same surgery. He bumped knees in a game. He came over, I said, Good knee or bad knee? He said, Coach, they're both good. I need to be reminded of that. There's not a better medical team anywhere. Jarryd is probably as good or better than new.

**Q. How will he be as far as being able**

**to practice cutting?**

COACH LICKLITER: I think he's doing it very well. I don't know, if my memory serves correct or not, I can remember him doing some things that I was amazed at as far as cutting to the basket, his explosiveness and all. He really hasn't been in that situation yet. I anticipate he will be there.

**Q. What does it say about him being a captain as a sophomore?**

COACH LICKLITER: I think captains emerge. One of the things we got to see is he handled prosperity really well, as I said before. He was starting. He was doing so with a real team spirit. Then to have it taken away the way it was with the injury and to watch him respond and to hear him say, Well, now I've got to support my team from the bench, it was very obvious that he had the tools to lead.

So it just basically emerged.

**Q. Have you ever had a captain with little game experience before?**

COACH LICKLITER: I've never really thought in that regard. There's differences in playing minutes and possibly being a leader. Normally captains are guys who play more, but I don't know that that's necessary. I've had leaders that have played less minutes, but they've been terrific leaders. Don't have to have one or the other on that.

We've got other really terrific leaders on this team. I'm really impressed with Jeff Peterson and Jake Kelly right now. They were already terrific guys. They were fun to coach. But they've made tremendous strides, too, as far as development, commitment and the way they're playing. So I think they're really leading by example also.

**Q. Moving the three-point line back is going to open up something for a good jump shooter from 15 feet or less. Do you have some of that ingredient for this year?**

COACH LICKLITER: Well, we'll have to see on that. I do think you're right. There's going to be more room available to being able to cut, being able to play inside the three-point line. I think we do have that. I think one of the things we like to sell is if we can recruit and help develop shooters that are going to shoot the ball behind the 21.9 line. The spacing is going to be terrific because now defensively you're not going to be

able to leave them. So I think we have that. I think we've got guys that really consistently will shoot the ball well from there. And I say "I think" because we've not experienced it, we've not played at this level.

For these guys that are coming in, the freshmen, there's always an adjustment to speed and strength in the next level. When they went from middle school to high school, there was that adjustment. High school to college. We just have to give them that opportunity. I have great confidence in them, but I want to give them the opportunity and let them prove my confidence to be correct.

**Q. Who do you see the rebounding coming from on this team?**

COACH LICKLITER: Offensively we're planning on making 'em all.

One of the things, if you look back, what we have to draw on, we're moving on, but I did coach at Butler University for a number of years, so I draw upon that. I think it's a good blueprint. Our guards did a lot of rebounding. If we can maintain position as a big, you don't necessarily have to retrieve the ball if you can keep your guy from getting it.

I think we've got guys that will do that. I think, again, we've emphasized strength. JC Moreau is the new strength coach. I know he's worked hard. We don't monitor it. I let him do that. He knows this is a physical league; we need the strength. So I think our guards are going to need to rebound.

But I also think we're active. Cyrus Tate, is active. Jarryd Cole is active. Aaron Fuller, Andrew Brommer, David Palmer, those guys, they're active. So often, Aaron Fuller, if you measured height-wise, I'm not sure where he could be, maybe 6'6", 6'7". But he has great pursuit, he's got great reach. You don't necessarily measure that till you get in the game and give him an opportunity.

**Q. How have your expectations for Jeff changed compared to his freshman season?**

COACH LICKLITER: Really they haven't changed, per se, except for I think he should have a better understanding of playing high-percentage basketball. Last year, in fairness to the guys on the team, when you come in new, it was almost like a year of audition. I said a couple times we

would teach a little bit, then to no fault of theirs, the players I felt like were almost saying, Yeah, but coach, here's what I can do, because we hadn't recruited them.

I think we're past that. We know what we can do. And the players, I think we've developed a trust. Now it's more of not what you can do necessarily, but what do you need to do for the benefit of the team. How is it that you're going to complement somebody else? What are your strengths that add to the strengths of your teammates?

That's what now is exciting starting Friday. We're going to be together a lot. I know they have a good feel. They played in prime time. They played pickup. But it's still just a little bit different once we get in and we ask them to guard one another.

**Q. How do you see point guards shaping up? Also talk about the turnovers last year.**

COACH LICKLITER: I think that's a process, Being comfortable with the system also, so that we know where players should be, and being dependable being there. We made great strides in that area, I really believe.

A point guard should just worry about the offensive efficiency of his team, nothing else. Just make his team efficient on offense. And they should be really praised and appreciated for that. I think, you know, as I said, we've made strides in all those areas. I'm excited to watch the leadership that we'll have at point.

**Q. How challenging was that for you last year, to come in to try to coach a bunch of players who you didn't recruit and were conditioned in a different system? Was that more difficult than in years past where you had your players, knew what to expect?**

COACH LICKLITER: I think, as much as anything, we didn't have the players, as I said before, helping lead. So now it was a group of individuals, and they were dependent upon basically the staff for all of the guidance. They just didn't know. They hadn't been exposed to it. Not because they didn't want to. They were all good guys, they could all play, but now we're asking them to play a certain way. A way that we know has been successful, and way we could see it being successful here at Iowa.

I told the team this not too long ago: If you have a question as to what my motivation is, why I

want to ask you to do something or why we're moving in a certain direction, it's because I want to win. They keep score for a reason. It's fun to compete. It's fun to meet a challenge. We want to win.

So as we look at it, that's where we're going with this. We're going to direct our guys to play the game in such a way that gives them the best opportunity to win.

You kind of have to work through some of that. I think for Cyrus, this is the first time in his career that he's had the same coach in college two years in a row, if I'm not mistaken. I could be wrong. I apologize if so. It just happens.

When I was at Butler, we had three coaches. Joel Cornette had three coaches during his career. The nice thing for them, the system didn't change. But there is an adjustment period. To Cyrus' credit, if he saw his field goal percentage increase over the course of a year, it wasn't necessarily - and I've said this a couple times - that he was in the gym working on his shot, it was because he bought into shot selection. He was willing and eager to shoot the ball from positions that were going to be successful for him.

**Q. What freshmen are you expecting the most from?**

COACH LICKLITER: Seven of 'em (laughter).

You know what, when you say "expecting the most," I expect them today to get better, to commit, to really put the team first and embrace what we're trying to do. I've said this before. We recruit, in my opinion, high achievers. I want high achievers in the classroom. I want high achievers on the court. I want them, when they're finished here with their career, to say, we maximized our time. I was on the best team I could possibly be on and I'm the best player now. What I would want is just their commitment level.

I'm confident in the way they play. I really like this group. I think they're talented basketball players. As I said, I also think they're high achievers. On and off the court I believe in 'em.

Now what we need to do is say, Okay, let's make sure that - I think Wooden said it - make every day your masterpiece, make today your masterpiece. Let's put our signature on today. If we do that, we're going to get a lot out of all of them.

**Q. How important is it, with that many freshmen, that you get production out of the younger guys on the court?**

COACH LICKLITER: We'll need it. There's no question about that. The way I look at that is it's opportunity. We haven't had our first full practice yet. So to try to guess, that's all it would be, just a guess. But there will be opportunity.

**Q. When you have a team that's young, do you set big-picture goals at all or is it just about day by day by day?**

COACH LICKLITER: I think there's three aspects to it basically:

Our vision, that's for me to establish. I've said we want to play at a championship level. We want to be champions.

Then there's the mission basically. That's how you do that. We're value-based. We believe that you want to do it intrinsically. I don't want to be the one motivating them with punishment or reward. I want to do it because it's the right thing to do.

Then there's goals. Goals are time bound. I don't know where I found this particular procedure, but it makes sense to me.

So, yeah, we're going to have goals. One of the things I don't ever do is predict wins, losses, whatever, because I've really never gone into a game thinking, We're not going to win. We're going to prepare well and we're going to go in the next game and we're going to compete. Our expectation is to win that game. So I'd never want to limit a group.

So that's where we're going with this. We know the only way that's going to happen is to maximize the time we have. We need to make sure that we're on task.

**Q. With that in mind, now in your second year, how do you view the conference?**

COACH LICKLITER: I think it's a terrific conference. I told somebody, if you're going to talk about the best conference in America, the Big Ten has to be in the argument. Somebody might have a reason as to why some others might be, but it has to be in the argument. To say that, that means you're at the top. You're right where you want to be. You want to compete at the highest level. The Big Ten offers that.

**Q. A lot of magazines are picking you guys to finish eight, nine in the conference. Is**

**that motivation or do you pay any attention to that?**

COACH LICKLITER: Well, I like to read it. I like to see what people are thinking. I've seen it both ways. I'm sure you have, too. You've seen where the expectations are high, a team struggles for whatever reason. I've seen where they're low. I've seen where the expectations are high, and they've maintained it.

I think predictions are fun. I think it's enjoyable to look at. I don't think it should be reality. You should create the reality.

**Q. You're limited to two hours at a time with a team. With one player in particular, you have more access. How is he developing so far?**

COACH LICKLITER: I don't see him much. He told me he's very busy (laughter).

He loves the University of Iowa. He's been very busy. He's speaking of John, our son, who is walking-on. I was really encouraged by just his approach. He just wants to help. He has no agenda. He just wants to help us get better. He lived through last year. It's kind of a contrast in our home. He had almost like a storybook year and we had our struggles.

I've said this more than once. I've been in this a long time. To my recollection, no one in our family's ever finished their season on a win. It's very hard to do. I'm happy and pleased for John. But now I've asked him could he and Matt Gatens and Anthony Tucker, who have done it, could they help us do it. That's always your dream. You want to finish, go out on a win.

**Q. Must be nice to have Garrett join here, too.**

COACH LICKLITER: I tell you, I think Jim Ecker wrote an article here, I know he did, he had a couple statements that I thought were very accurate. It was a good article. I appreciated it. He said I was proud and thankful I believe is what he said. He couldn't be more accurate.

I'm proud to have him involved, and I'm thankful that they're here. I'm thankful for the opportunity. Again, no agenda on his part. He wants to earn a master's degree here from the University of Iowa. He wants to coach someday. He's a graduate manager. I said, Good, dependable help's hard to find, but when it's free, it's almost impossible. I'm glad to have them both.

**Q. Jake Kelly has maybe taken his game up a little bit. Can you talk about his development.**

COACH LICKLITER: It's so early in the season. I'm always cautious. But I really like where Jake's at. I really like his approach. We've always known he was a gifted player. I thought last year he really tried to defend. I thought as much as anything, it was a physical part, as I said, the adjustment. But he's been in the weight room. He is stronger. He understands the technique. He leads by example.

We're really excited about where Jake's at. I think with his approach, it's going to be fun to watch to see how good he can be.

**Q. Who do you anticipate your starting five being that first game?**

COACH LICKLITER: Yeah, if you could get the names in a hat, we'll throw them in there.

I have no idea. I'm sorry. I just don't have any idea. I don't think that would be fair to even guess. We have a lot of practices, a lot of opportunities.

**Q. You have a lot of guys who played different positions. Is that part of your style, you can rotate them?**

COACH LICKLITER: I sure like it, yeah. I like versatility. I've said often that what I like is a guy who can maybe defend more than one position, and now we can put the defense at a disadvantage.

I do think we're versatile, and that is part of it. I think that's one of the reasons strength is so vital. Strength is never a negative. If we can go out and find versatile basketball players, now we can gain strength also, they can play more than one position.

Again, thank you.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**