

**February 5, 2013**



An interview with:

## **COACH LISA BLUDER**

COACH BLUDER: Minnesota. Kind of a homecoming for a lot of our players, which is fun for them to go back home. But also there's a lot of personal pride on the line when you're from the state of Minnesota and you go back up there to play. I'm sure that will add a little bit of intensity to this rivalry that's always been pretty strong.

We didn't go there last year. So some of our players haven't had the opportunity to play in Williams Arena, which is kind of a different arena. It's got a different feeling to it.

But we've had some success up there in the past in this rivalry. Obviously I think that will give our kids a little bit of confidence.

Minnesota comes into the game after a pretty good loss at Nebraska. I do think their record is deceiving. They're 3-6 in conference, but they've played what I've considered the hard part of the conference schedule, playing Penn State, playing Nebraska twice, playing at Purdue. Those are the toughest places to play in the conference and they've done all those already.

Even though they're 3-6, this is a team obviously that something's got to give. Both teams are coming in off of losses and both teams really, really need this win. It's going to be a battle I'm sure.

Rachel Banham, extremely good player, all Big Ten caliber player. We have to keep an eye on her. Their center does a really nice job. Kind of an undersized post, really strong. Seals really well, does a great job of calling for the ball, being nice and wide, a good target inside. Then they've got a lot of good players after that. Nobody that's off the charts as far as point production or something that

they do special, but just all good players that come in and can fill their role.

But those two players are definitely the keys.

**Q. Do you think some of these players going back to their home state, is a boost this team might need right now?**

COACH BLUDER: I hope they'll use it that way. Sometimes you worry about kids going back and they have something to prove, having that added pressure there. Hopefully they'll use it as an opportunity, excitement of going back home, not so much that they have something to prove.

**Q. How difficult was it to leave the Northwestern game behind?**

COACH BLUDER: Probably still haven't done it yet, which we need to do it in practice today. We have Mondays off for practice.

Yesterday we spent a lot of time with players watching film, making sure we learned from our mistakes in that game. But today we'll wrap that up at the beginning of practice and then it's time to move on.

We can't dwell on it. If you dwell on it, it's going to snowball into another one. That was one, again, like I said afterwards, it feels like it slipped through our fingers. It's one that's unfortunate, the ones that hurt the most.

But you got to get over it. In athletics, you got to learn how to bounce back, otherwise you're done. I mean, if you don't bounce back, you're done. I think we will make a good point of that with our team today, is that, yes, it stinks, but let's get over it, move on to the next one, get ready to go up there and play a great game against Minnesota.

**Q. The good news is very seldom do you face two-game losing streaks. Do you do anything different now or what's the plan to kind of snap out of that funk a little bit?**

COACH BLUDER: You know, I think we're not going to do anything different because we are who we are as far as our offenses and our defenses. All of a sudden we're not going to in the next two days change our philosophy on what we do in the game.

I continue to believe that a lot of shooting woes are confidence woes. It's between the ears and you have to get that solved. I think we need to really work on building our players' confidence back up. They need to get in the gym extra, and they were yesterday, and earn that confidence back by being in the gym.

Again, we're not going to change anything big that we do in the game. But definitely we have to change the way we're thinking about going into a game.

**Q. How big is this game in terms of when you look at what is coming afterwards?**

COACH BLUDER: Tough week next week. Definitely a very difficult week. Two of them are at home. But you're looking at three teams in the conference that last year we didn't have a lot of success against.

It would be really nice to get a win at Minnesota so that we feel good going into next week, definitely.

**Q. When is the last time you played a Monday night game?**

COACH BLUDER: I think we played one last year. It changes your schedule up a lot. Looking at next week, it's tough because you have to have a day off during the week. That means only one day to prepare for a game. You have to choose whether it's the Penn State game or your Purdue game. We're going to choose the Purdue game because we already played Purdue once. We feel we would rather have two days to prepare for Penn State. We have played against Purdue, we have a little bit more knowledge of them that we're choosing that.

It does alter the way you do things. We're doing it for TV to get games on television, the same amount of games we've had before, but we've moved them to Monday night instead of Sunday. I think that is unfortunate for your home crowd because Sunday games are so much better than Monday games. But our marketing department has done a great job of doing a lot of promotions as far as kids are free and Dollar Night. Thursday night with Penn State, Midwest One Bank has purchased 2500 tickets to give away for



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the Go Red for Women game and kids are free. Those are some really good promotions that our marketing department has done to try to help that situation.

As far as the practice, I would rather have two days to prepare for every opponent.

**Q. Three days for Nebraska then?**

COACH BLUDER: We might just go shooting on Friday because I'm a little bit nervous. Yesterday was off, and I don't want to go until next Thursday. That's a lot of days in a row without time off. I think that's too much.

I feel like Friday's got to be a day off or a partial day off, maybe just shooting, not going up and down the floor, having the mental taxation of having to prepare for a scout, concentrating on things like that.

It does really alter your schedule.

**Q. As far as Nebraska is concerned, what have they given in their short time here?**

COACH BLUDER: Their women's basketball team has done great. Last year they made it to the championship game of our Big Ten tournament the first year they're in the conference. I think that right there is a pretty good statement of what they brought to our conference. Another great competitor.

For us, it's kind of closer to home so it's kind of a nice rivalry. I think fans get excited about that. I think it's been a good addition to our conference.

**Q. What did they do to give you trouble last year?**

COACH BLUDER: I think their pressure defense is really good. I think that hurt us more than anything last year. I really haven't looked at them this year yet. I heard they're doing some kind of strange zone that's very different for Connie. As long as I've known Connie, which is a long time, she's always been a player-to-player person, real aggressive denial. That's what she was last year. This year I've heard she changed a little bit.

Kind of anxious to see it but I'm going to wait till after the Minnesota game to start looking at it.

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