

October 29, 2009



An Interview With:

**Iowa Coach
LISA BLUDER**

LISA BLUDER: Like I'm sure you've probably already heard this morning, everybody is pretty excited to be here and ready to go this year, so a lot of those same feelings here. I think this media day always kind of puts everything into perspective as far as a timeline and when your first game is coming up, and we're anxious for the year to start. We have a brand new team. I was sitting here listening to Felicia talk, and she talked about having the youngest team in America and I think we might have to challenge here. We have nine freshmen and sophomores on our team, only one senior and two juniors. So I'd say we have to be one of the younger teams, as well, especially competing against this Big Ten Conference this year, which again, I think is going to be extremely tough, and it's going to be a great competitive conference.

We're excited about Kachine Alexander and what she can do for our team, moving into her junior season and more of a leadership role. Kamille Wahlin, who had a great freshman year for us last year, will be moving to our point guard replacing Kristi Smith, who obviously led our team for four years and had a very successful Big Ten career. We're just excited to get things started.

Q. You guys obviously relied heavily on your threesome last year that now have left. Has the team kind of been able to establish new leadership patterns since they've left, or are you still noticing a void of some sort?

LISA BLUDER: I think that our upper classmen, we have the three juniors and seniors that we have, have done a nice job of trying to establish how to maintain the history of our program and the traditions of our program and how hard people work when they come to practice and how you show up and what the values of our

program are. I think all those things are important for our young people to learn, and you have to count on your juniors and seniors to teach them those sort of things, and I think our three are doing a nice job with that.

Q. Now that you've had a couple weeks of practice, talk about Morgan Johnson, any of the freshmen that really look like they've opened eyes even beyond what you've anticipated?

LISA BLUDER: Well, I think Theairra Taylor is probably somebody that we're very excited about because really about three months ago, I didn't know that she might not be able to play this year because she's coming off of an ACL six months ago. But now after seeing her in practice, I'm pretty convinced that she's going to be able to play this year. Now, we don't have to make that decision for another couple of weeks, but it's looking very positive that she will be able to play this year, so that's exciting for us to have an athlete like her.

Jaime Prinity also is doing a great job for us with the three-point shooting and that was a big void losing Kristi and Wendy, great three-point shooters for the past four years in the Big Ten Conference. So I think Jaime is anxious to try to fill that void, too. I think those two definitely. We'll be looking at significant playing time.

But I think Trisha Nesbitt, who's going to be backing up on point guard as a freshman, she'll get playing time because the positional need. We have to have somebody back up our point guard and she's the most logical candidate for that. And then Morgan will be backing up JoAnn at the 5.

Q. Just wondering, we all know what the identity of your program was the last couple years, great three-point shooting, opens up the inside game, great penetration from the point. What's the identity of Iowa women's basketball this year?

LISA BLUDER: It's actually pretty similar. Right now our three-point shooting is unproven but

it's there. It's not like it's nonexistent. We don't go to the gym and shoot 20 percent from three-point range. They haven't done it in a game. They haven't proven it yet. But I believe that we do have good three-point shooters on our team, so I think that we'll still have that same type of identity.

I do think that we have the possibility of being a more up-tempo team than we were and getting some of those threes out of transition, too, and we like to shoot the three out of transition.

Q. Can you talk about the race as a whole? Obviously the poll came out today and Ohio State looks like they're going to be the team to beat again. You're picked fifth. I don't know if you felt that was too high or if you felt snubbed or what. How do you see the race and where you guys were picked?

LISA BLUDER: Well, I think Ohio State is a logical choice. They've done a tremendous job. They return their team. I mean, why wouldn't you pick them to win it all? So I think that's a very logical choice. And I think Michigan State, the same thing. Why wouldn't you pick them?

We're sitting in the conference I think that's a real compliment to us considering what we lost. When you look at how much scoring we did lose and how much experience we lost, I think that that's pretty good.

Q. JoAnn Hamlin, I'm assuming for once in her life she's finally healthy. What can she do this year? Can you just talk about everything she's gone through the last couple years and what can she do this year if she stays healthy with this team?

LISA BLUDER: I think she's the X factor for us. JoAnn has looked tremendous in practice. People say we returned two starters, but in my mind we really returned three starters. JoAnn started for us most of the season until she went down with an injury, and she was having some very nice games in there.

I think JoAnn could have a spectacular year for us. She has went through a lot of adversity, first of all, being at Kansas State, making the transfer, having shoulder surgery, going through a severe ankle sprain last year that took her out for six games and lost her starting position after that.

But I just think that JoAnn Hamlin, she's playing so strong and so confident, and she's being a good leader for us, so I think that JoAnn

could have a remarkable year. I think she's under the radar for a lot of people. She won't be for long.

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