

November 15, 2010



An interview with:

COACH LISA BLUDER

COACH BLUDER: Bradley. They're 1-0. Very good transition team. Very good shooting team, probably the best shooting team we've faced thus far.

They have a local player in MacKenzie Westcott from Williamsburg. It's always special for local players to come back and play in Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Katie Yohn, she's a sophomore from Elgin, Illinois. A very good three-point shooter. A lot of their plays, shots go through her. She's somebody we're definitely going to have to key on.

We do hope we have a good crowd tomorrow. I know the 5:00 start is unusual, but hoping we have a good crowd, knowing you can come to the men's game for free, kids are free on weekdays. Hopefully with our home opener being here, we hope we get some good crowds in there.

Not sure if we want to talk about the weekend yet nor not. But Saturday, we have the noon game. We're playing Northeastern, who lost a three-point game to Syracuse to open up the season. Looked like it was a very good game. They do play on Tuesday, so they'll have one more game before they come to Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Again, hopefully we get a lot of the tailgaters. I've heard rumors of free hot chocolate. We hope everyone will come in, stay warm, get fired up and stay for the Ohio State football game by coming to our game first. Our game on Sunday is 2:00. Regardless, win or lose on Saturday, it will be held at 2:00 on Sunday.

Q. Who is available tomorrow?

COACH BLUDER: Well, we hope that Jade will be able to suit up and possibly give us some minutes. She did a little bit in practice today. So I'm optimistic about Jade.

Hannah will suit up. I'm not quite as optimistic about Hannah giving us minutes, but she may. I'm optimistic about those two and I'm not optimistic about the other three: Kalli, Theairra and Trisha, not optimistic about those three.

Q. Is Kalli's thing going to be ongoing? You would hope after the shot, she might be back for the opener.

COACH BLUDER: I thought she would be. Now it's just rest, and hopefully she'll recover quickly so we can start using her. We certainly could use her. We'd love to have her services. It's just getting her healed so we can have her.

Q. Is it lower back muscle?

COACH BLUDER: It's back muscles is what it is.

Q. It's not a situation like Hannah had last year?

COACH BLUDER: No, not at all. Not at all. It's like what Kamille played last year with the back spasms, tight muscles in her back. So that's what we're dealing with.

Q. How beneficial is that back-to-back nights playing, coming out with two wins?

COACH BLUDER: It's nice to get the two wins. We definitely saw the signs of fatigue on Saturday. It was one of the worst shooting nights I've ever lived through with one of our basketball teams.

I think we hit our first three threes and missed the next 21 in a row, which is very unusual for us. We ended up hitting two of our last threes again, which shows you got to keep shooting if you're a shooter.

It was so strange. We were taking good threes, hitting rim, nothing would drop for us. You don't like to see that with your team, but at the same time it was almost a great test because first of all we had to win with defense, which is something we've been talking about for a long time. We had to out-rebound a much more athletic

team than us. We did both of those things.

It was a great test, a great example of how we can win with our defense this year. We don't have to just out-shoot people. I thought that was a real positive in that because you can't always rely on that offense.

I thought we showed signs of fatigue in that second game. This weekend we're looking at that same situation, and the following week, too. Hopefully now we have a little bit better idea of what's in store for us and how to prepare.

Q. Do you think it's early-season fatigue, lack of depth?

COACH BLUDER: I think it's a combination of both. Nobody is used to playing two games in a row at this point or being in the best game shape right now. Obviously, the lack of depth hurts as well.

But, you know, it's something that we're going to have to deal with this year. I guess it's good to try to get used to it.

Q. You talked about your zone Saturday night. What are they doing better this year? You said something about they're picking up better on the rebounds.

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, I thought we rebounded much better in our zone than we did last year. That's a great sign. So hopefully we can keep that going.

I just think, you know, the comfortability of everybody playing together last year, they just know where each other are on defense. Our zone, we kind of move better in our zone, we talked better in our zone. That's experience shining.

Q. Is Hannah the back again?

COACH BLUDER: Correct. It's the back. She got jarred pretty well. So, you know, I do believe she'll be back, it's just that we got to give her a little bit of rest to get her back. Again, hopefully that will be tomorrow. She did a little bit in practice today.

Q. Jade, twisted ankle?

COACH BLUDER: She sprained an ankle last week and was just not available this week at all. Again, today was the first time she did something. She did almost all of practice today, maybe not at 100 percent, but she did a lot of what we asked her to do.

Q. Talk a little bit about Kelsey. Is she backing up four positions now?

COACH BLUDER: She's really backing up two positions, the four and the five for us. You could say that because our four is so interchangeable with everybody else, with the perimeter players.

I'm just so proud of what Kelsey has been doing. I think she's playing extremely well. She's looking confident out there. She's looking for her shot, not hesitating to take the shot or the drive.

But for her in her senior year to come out here and to play so many different roles and to handle it so beautifully, I'm really proud of what she's doing for us.

Q. You have four players averaging double figures.

COACH BLUDER: We love that. We love that double-figure scoring. We love that balanced scoring because nobody can key on us. I think that's one of our strengths from last year. Nice to see us doing that again this year.

Q. With Kelsey, you or any of the coaches talk to her and say, We need you to kind of be in there and help us out?

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, she definitely knows it. She understands how valuable she is to our team. She's playing more minutes this year than she probably has in the previous years just because she is so important in that role of backing up both of those positions.

Q. Along those lines, have you talked to Morgan about fouls?

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, definitely. In the first game, she fouled out. But one of those fouls was extremely questionable. We watched it over and over on tape. We can't figure out what she did. But definitely the ones she can control, illegal screens, putting two hands on somebody. She's a shot blocker. I don't want to take that away from her. But at the same time she needs to get a little bit smarter maybe when she has a couple fouls about which one she's going to go for.

I don't want to take that away from her. Definitely if she picks up one or two early, we're going to have to taper off on that so we have her for that last five minutes so she can go after the shot blocks then. We have to get smarter on some of the ones we can control, like the screens or

putting two hands on somebody.

Q. You talked about Kachine not being 100 percent. Playing in back-to-back games, does that get her stamina built up?

COACH BLUDER: Yeah. I think it was good for Kash. Kash did a good job over the weekend. She didn't look fatigued. She comes out as MVP of the tournament. So I think she is really adjusting and coming back very well.

Q. To go back to Morgan Johnson, how would you rate her development so far coming from her freshman year to her sophomore year?

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, I think she's made one of the biggest jumps. Again, I think you see the biggest jump from freshman to sophomore year because they have the biggest area to improve on. The growth curve is the biggest for them.

She made a big jump. I think you see it in the way she calls for the ball and demands the ball. She's just not backing down. I love that about her. She's more confident in her shots. She wants the ball in her hands. She's done a very good job from last year to this year. She's made a great jump.

Q. Do you think part of that has to do with her offseason?

COACH BLUDER: Getting stronger I think was a key. I think also just knowing what's ahead of you, understanding what's asked of you and how you need to train. Coming into their freshman year, they don't really understand. People can tell you, You're going to work harder than you ever worked in your life, but you don't understand because you've not been there yet. Now she's had a year, she understands what kind of work ethic it takes, what kind of focus it takes to prepare for a game. That knowledge base is so much stronger your second year than your first year.

Q. Is it fair to compare her with Megan Skouby at this point?

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, I don't know if I compare the two because I think Megan just had more of a confidence about her. I think she's mentally a little bit stronger. Megan had some offensive things that Morgan doesn't have, but Morgan works probably harder and is mentally stronger than Megan was.

Q. I know at times in the spring last year, you kind of pulled back during the week because of the low numbers. Can you afford to do that in November when you're just starting out?

COACH BLUDER: You know, we did today. I thought we had to because of coming off of two games and then traveling all day yesterday. They didn't have a true day off. I mean, it's fatiguing traveling through the airports, having about a three-hour layover yesterday. It was a long day getting back.

We did taper back today with the game tomorrow. Is that what you want to do in November? Probably not. But it's what we need to do with our team right now.

Q. So on those back-to-back days, what it is about the second days? Is it the legs, mental? What makes you a little groggy?

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, it's the legs. It's the fatigue from going that hard, the intensity, the mental intensity of preparing a game, back-to-back games.

It's also the jars on the body. Getting hit, getting smashed when you're taking the ball to the hoop, getting laid out on the floor. I know I couldn't bounce up like they do anymore. There's no way I could do what they do. I still wouldn't be walking after Saturday's game.

Q. Have you been happy the way Jaime and Kamille have been running the point?

COACH BLUDER: It's been terrific. I think they've both done a great job. Jaime is extremely comfortable at the point guard position. It's what she played all of her high school career. There's really not that much difference in our offense. If you watch our offense, it doesn't have to be in the point guard's hands to run our offense.

Yes, they're involved more in breaking the press. But they're all involved, too. So our point guard, the way we run our offense, is a little bit different than what I think other teams do.

Q. With all the injuries to the guard, are you expecting to see more playing time from Megan Considine?

COACH BLUDER: Yes. That's one thing in our coach's evaluation after Sunday's game we did not do a good job. We did not get Megan into the game enough on Sunday. We need to take

responsibility for that. When she went in, she did a very good job. We need to reward her with that.

Q. Obviously people are on the mend. You're not to the point now where you're going to start looking again like you did last January, late December, for another body or two?

COACH BLUDER: We feel like people are on the mend right now. Would we be open to having a walk-on? Yes, we would be open to that. At the same time we do hope that we're going to have Hannah, Kalli and Jade back in the near future.

Q. You had a lot of turnovers in your first two games. Do you attribute that to early-season jitters or is this something you need to work on?

COACH BLUDER: Actually, the game that we had 21 in, I think we only had five at half. We actually had a really good first half of that. Second half, you know, let down quite a bit.

It's something we definitely need to work on. We cannot give the ball away. We've got to work on it. I don't know what I want to attribute it to, if it's early season or maybe trying to push the ball a little bit more than we did last year. But, you know, it's something we definitely need to work on.

Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports