

**January 6, 2011**



An Interview With:

## **COACH LISA BLUDER**

COACH BLUDER: Well, I think it's kind of the game that a lot of people have been waiting for. The rematch of the Big Ten Championship, the opportunity for us to host Ohio State, which we didn't have the opportunity to do last year. We played them twice, a four-point loss at their place and a two-point loss in the Big Ten tournament.

So I know that our players are very excited about this game. I don't think I'll have to do a lot to get them motivated to get ready for this game.

But I also think our fans are ready for this game. I think they've had this one circled for a long time and I think that they are very excited about having the opportunity to have Ohio State, a great team obviously, here in Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

### **Q. What was the mood on the plane back last night?**

COACH BLUDER: They were pretty excited. They're happy, and they should be. I want them to enjoy their victories; I want them to enjoy their successes. It was a very loud and talkative group last night.

### **Q. How big was it to get that win with what you've got coming up?**

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, we definitely have a tough stretch coming up, hosting Ohio State and then going to play at Michigan State, two of the top teams in the Big Ten back to back.

But you know, it was important for us to get on the winning road. We needed to know what it felt like to win. We needed to know between the ears that we were capable of winning, and we proved that to ourselves last night.

And the good thing is we did it with not only good defense and rebounding, but we shot the ball better in the second half, and I'm hoping it's like the dam is going to explode now and we're

going to get back into the shooting routine and the shooting percentages that we're capable of doing.

### **Q. How important was Hansen's contribution for you last night?**

COACH BLUDER: She was very key for us. Not only did she hit the three that tied the game, but Kalli then drew a foul at the other end, came down, made both of her free throws to put us up two. She played good defense down the end. She had eight rebounds for us. It's fun for me to see Kalli just coming of her own and getting that confidence of playing this level of basketball, and I think she's really enjoying it.

### **Q. Was that a turnaround game for her do you think?**

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, I think you would say that. You know, she played really well in our Virginia Tech game, but that was one of those games where we're up big, I guess it was in Cancun, she goes in and there's not a lot of pressure. Now there's pressure, you're on the road, you're playing Big Ten basketball, so I hope that's her coming-out game.

### **Q. You've decided now not to redshirt Nesbitt. What went into the decision to play her last night and how did she get through it?**

COACH BLUDER: We made that decision. Not just a coach's decision; it was based on what Trisha wanted to do, as well. And we really based it on Trisha's desires and her ability to help our team, which we think she can help our team this year. And although she's missed a lot of games, we still have a lot of Big Ten basketball and hopefully a lot of NCAA basketball ahead of us.

So we do believe she can help us, and we're excited to have her back. She only played four minutes last night, so it's going to be a gradual recovery; she's probably not going to be at the peak of her game right away, but hopefully she's back to normal in a month.

**Q. How do you plan to slow down Lavender?**

COACH BLUDER: You know, that's really difficult to do. I don't know if you can slow her down. If you put maybe six or seven people out on the floor, you might be able to. She is one of the best players in America, you know, on her way to becoming a four-time All-American, certainly one of the best players to play in the Big Ten. Those are some pretty high remarks.

She's just a tremendous player. I don't think one person can handle her. So yes, we're going to try to provide help from other people.

**Q. Before the season it was said this game was probably going to shape the Big Ten race, but now with the two losses, is it that much more important?**

COACH BLUDER: I think this game is still going to shape the Big Ten outcome. I really think it still -- this game is important for that situation at the end of the year. I think this is an important game for both of our programs right now.

**Q. Are you treating this as a rivalry game as far as your players and the coaching staff is concerned?**

COACH BLUDER: I think it has been become a rivalry game for us. It's a rivalry game for us because of last year with it going down to the wire and the Big Ten Championship and the year before we beat them here in Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

But it even goes back to a rivalry from before then, you know, when we had the sellout here, the 22,000 people watching, and Ohio State beat Iowa in that game. This rivalry goes back quite a while.

**Q. Have you ever had a five-game trip where you played two teams four out of those five games, and do you like that?**

COACH BLUDER: I guess I haven't even looked that far down my schedule. I don't even know what I'm doing tomorrow. I really haven't looked that far ahead, so I'm not really sure if I have or not.

**Q. With this being a CBS game, what does that mean for the program?**

COACH BLUDER: I think it means a lot. This game can be seen across the United States from coast to coast. It's Saturday afternoon; CBS could pick anybody in America to put on. Nobody

is going to say no to CBS. I think there would be very few people that would say no. For us it's a feather in our cap that they selected the Iowa versus Ohio State game, but also it's a feather in our cap that it's here in Iowa City in Carver-Hawkeye Arena and it's an opportunity for us to show the nation what we're all about. So I think it's a tremendous boost to our program.

**Q. It doesn't sound like Samantha Prahalis is probably the most popular person in Iowa City. What are your feelings about her as a player?**

COACH BLUDER: Well, she's a good player. You know, she's a very nice player. She's a competitor. She's a very emotional player. But Kachine is a very emotional player and Kachine is an intense player. So it's interesting, I think a lot of people are looking forward to watching her here in Carver-Hawkeye Arena. But you know something, she can back it up. She's a good player.

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