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Coach Insell Quotes from Tuesday's Press Conference

Third-year coach discusses this season and Saturday's opener at Old Dominion

Todd Treece


Opening by Coach Insell

"I don't really know what to say right now. Our first two exhibition games were kind of blowouts but you kind of want that. I'd hate to be sitting here today with a loss in an exhibition game. I don't think my athletic director would be too happy.

"But we do start this week at Old Dominion and Old Dominion has one of the most storied programs in the women's game. Wendy Larry is probably one of the top 10 coaches in the country in Division I and a close friend of mine and we appreciate the rivalry that we are developing with them right now.

"But we are excited about this year. We've got a young team. Sometimes we look like a junior high team and sometimes we look like we could play for a national championship, so we have got to live with it now and hopefully we will begin to get better by the end of the year."



Head coach Rick Insell spoke to the press at the conclusion of Tuesday's weekly football press conference, discussing the upcoming season and Saturday's opener at Old Dominion. (Bradley Lambert) 

Q. Coach, is it always exciting when you're starting a new season having to replace someone like Chrissy [Givens] to see where that void gets filled?

A. "If it gets where it's not exciting, I'm going sell insurance with Andy Womack and my wife. But yes it is, to take a new group of players and young players. I know [Monday] night when we made a run, we had three sophomores and two freshmen on the floor. And I approached my coaches and said, 'Look who we've got on the floor right now.' Just to see those kids carrying out your game plan, trying to do what you asked them to do, you know that's what coaching is all about and that's what I enjoy. I enjoy the teaching and the practicing about as much as I enjoy the games."

Q. How important are the early weeks as you try to find rotations and find mismatches and how important is team chemistry?

A. "You're right. Chemistry right now is probably one of the most important things, seeing who plays well with whom. In the two exhibitions we were able to look at some of the young ladies that we hadn't really been able to look at because we've just had a month of practice. To see them go against someone else and see them play with some of their teammates, we found out some positive things and we also found out some negative things. But that's what practice is all about. That's what early season is all about. That's one of the reasons we are playing the schedule that we are playing is because we are going move this program to the next level and to do that you've got to play the Old Dominions and the Tennessees and the Marylands."

Q. Coach, you are without [Starr Orr](#) in this first game. How does this affect you on the defensive end and more particular with your press?

A. "Well it affects us greatly because of her quickness, her vertical jump, her lateral quickness, the things she gives us, her speed. She played in about 34 games last year and I think she started 31 of those games. But it's going to make us a better basketball team because our young ladies going to Old Dominion know now that they've got to perform. They can't sit back and say, 'Well, Starr's going to be there.' She's not going to be there. [Jackie Pickel](#), [Latoya Barclay](#), [Morgan Boyd](#), [Anne Marie Lanning](#), they're going to have to pick the slack up. It's a great opportunity for those young ladies going out there knowing that there's not any pressure except for the fact that they've got to go out there and perform."

Q. Old Dominion returns three full-time starters and another player that started quite a bit. Just talk about some of the things you're going to have to do to combat their strengths.

A. "I think the biggest challenge we'll see at Old Dominion is their size. They've got two 6-foot-4 kids that are really athletic and go up on the glass and run the floor. That gave us some problems last year and I'm sure it will give us some problems this year. They've got a lot more experience now. They played the whole season. They did go to the NCAA Tournament and they're a better basketball team than when we played them last year. And I feel like even without Chrissy [Givens], we've still got a chance to be a pretty good basketball team this year."

Q. With last year's success, you became the hunter inside the conference because you went undefeated in the conference. Do you still see yourselves as more the hunter or as more of the hunted because of some of the victories you guys were able to pull off last year?

A. "I thought Western Kentucky was the hunter. That's what the coaches voted you know? We're still chasing them aren't we? That's kind of what I see. I'm just being sarcastic with you. I'm sure that with the success Middle Tennessee has had the past four years that all the programs around the conference are looking at us and you know the way we play, I hope it's changed the conference for the better. We press, we shoot the three many, many times, probably more than we should, but it's exciting and we're able to recruit to that also. So I think in the conference and I've seen this already, that a lot of the teams are going toward a

more guard-oriented offense and probably the reason they are doing this is to offset some of the quickness and some of the press tactics we are using."

Q. How important is it that the entire conference is upgrading their schedules to include better out of conference games?

A. "That's big. I mean it's big for the Sun Belt Conference in the fact that we've gone from ninth and I think now we're eighth [in the nation in RPI] and I'd like to see us get up there maybe five, six, or seven as far as conferences are concerned. And if all the programs around the conference are doing what we're doing and most of them are trying to right now, playing some of the most traditional teams around the country, we're going to have to get some wins. I think Kermit [Davis] made that statement down at the Sun Belt Conference media days and he's right. I mean as far as the women's game is concerned, too, we're going to have to get some wins and if we do, it's going to move our conference up. You can look and most everyone in our conference is having the same challenges we're at. I think the last we documented 172 teams that we called for games, we'd either play them at their place or at our place and they would have nothing to do with us. And I'm sure that Arkansas State, Western Kentucky, North Texas, Arkansas-Little Rock, they're all having those same problems and that's a testament to our conference."

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