

October 22, 2009

Women's Basketball Notebook - October 22

First in a series of preseason notebooks on the Blue Raiders

Athletic Communications

The Middle Tennessee's women's basketball team began practice last Friday, and will play its first game, an exhibition with Carson-Newman, on Monday, November 2. We talked to the seniors on the Blue Raider team that has been picked to finish atop the East Division of the Sun Belt Conference and has been ranked in nearly every pre-season poll. Here are their responses to some random questions about the team, their teammates and the upcoming season. We also talked to coach Rick Insell about his expectations for the coming season.

ON THEIR SENIOR SEASON:

Brandi Brown: "I'm going to make the most of it. I'm looking forward to it."

Alysha Clark: "We'd like to go deep into the NCAA Tournament this year. Last year was a disappointment."

ALYSHA CLARK ON PRE-SEASON HONORS:

"Individually, I really don't set personal goals. I just do the best I can."

ON THEIR MOST MEMORABLE GAMES:

Brown: "I would say the LSU games, here and there. Maybe the one down there was bigger because it was a road win. And we had a bigger crowd here than they did there."

Jackie Pickel: "It was the LSU game down there. When I came here, I was all about offense, but I didn't score a point in that game, and it was the best game of my career because I held their best player down." **Added Clark,** "Jackie didn't hold her down, she shut her down."

Chelsia Lymon: "I would say the UALR Sun Belt championship game last year. That was when I really saw us come together as a team, and I think it was our best game of the year. UALR was the second best team in the league, and we beat them by 20."

ON WHO IS THE BEST THREE-POINT SHOOTER:

Brown: "Jackie is. She has a really quick release. I need to take my time."

Pickel: "Brandi is. She is deadly from the top of the key. When she gets set, she makes 100 percent. Big girls can't get out to guard her, and then they can't guard Alysha either."

LYMON WORKS WITH GARRETT:

Over the summer, senior point guard **Chelsia Lymon** worked with senior guard **Dana Garrett** to help her with certain aspects of her game. Lymon helped Garrett with her ball handling, her 3-point shooting and her decision-making. "Dana is a hard worker, and she is determined to be a better player, or I could not have helped her," said Lymon.

ON TEAM CHEMISTRY:

Everybody mentioned the friendship among all of the team members, and **Dana Garrett** and **Shytoria Davis** noted how the ones already here made it so easy when they came in from junior college last year. But the quote of the day goes to Clark, who declared: "Everyone is an ingredient in a great pot of stew."

COACH INSELL ON HIS EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS SEASON:

"I absolutely believe that this is the best team we have had here. I don't know if I have ever had a group of seniors as good as these. They shoot the ball amazingly well, they have great basketball IQ, they all like each other, and the team chemistry is very good".

COACH INSELL ON THIS YEAR'S SCHEDULE:

"We have a great schedule. It is just the type of schedule that this bunch needs to get us ready for the conference and for the NCAA Tournament. We have road games at LSU, Louisville, Xavier and South Dakota State, and home games against Tennessee and Kentucky. Can we blow out any of these teams? Probably not, but I do believe that we can beat anyone on our schedule. We don't have any of the big 6-5, 6-6 girls that some teams have, but we do have a bunch of 5-10s and 6-2s that are flat good. Our experience and maturity give us a chance to win those games."

ON COACH INSELL STATING THAT CHELSIA LYMON WAS ONE OF THE BEST POINT GUARDS IN THE COUNTRY:

Pickel: "Chelsia has great leadership on the court, she has great quickness, and she has the ability to break down any press. Presses don't bother us because we know that Chelsia is going to break them."

Lymon: "He tells me that all the time, and it's a big compliment. He also tells me that I am the only person who doesn't believe it."



Point guard Chelsia Lymon was a Preseason Second Team All-Sun Belt selection it was announced earlier this week. (Bradley Lambert)

Brown: "Chelsia has changed a lot from when she got here. She has slowed down, been more deliberate, and she has matured. We all have."

ON FILLING THE NEED FOR A BIG INSIDE PRESENCE:

Shytoria Davis: "I need to play to the level I am capable of, and I also need to grow up."

ON COACH INSELL SAYING THAT BRANDI BROWN MAY BE THE HARDEST PLAYER ON THE TEAM TO REPLACE NEXT YEAR:

Clark: "Brandi is the silent killer. She is so humble and sweet, but she will beat you." **Davis:** "When you think of Brandi, you think of brains and threes."

Lymon: "Brandi is so versatile. She wants to be a guard. She doesn't really like being a post player, but she has the best post moves on the team".

ON COACH INSELL

Lymon: "When I was a freshman, I took everything he said to me at practice or during a game personally. But then I realized that what he was saying was intended to push us and make us work harder, make us better. And it works for me; it works for all of us."

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