

Insell transcript from SBC Media Teleconference

Blue Raiders' head coach talked with conference media Tuesday morning

October 25, 2011 · Athletic Communications

NEW ORLEANS -- Middle Tennessee head women's basketball coach Rick Insell talked via video teleconference with media members from around the Sun Belt Tuesday morning. His full transcript is included.

On establishing consistency of the program

I do not look at it as being easy or difficult. We have a system that we recruit to. We know the type of young ladies that we want to bring to Middle Tennessee and we have been very fortunate to get those young ladies. We have been very fortunate to get them to buy into our system when they get here. Everyone has a role and everyone carries out their role. We bring them through that process and we give them what we feel like they are able to achieve as freshmen and sophomores. We then move that bar up every year and add a little more to their plates.



This is the most exciting part of the year for me. I love putting a team together. I love watching a team come together and learn how to play the game the way that we teach it here in the Sun Belt.

On the young players from last season returning

I go back to the word patience. We are allowing our players to open their games up a little bit and I am having to become more patient because I am not used to us throwing the ball all over the gym.

We are committing as many turnovers as we possibly can right now in practice. My coaches tell me that I have to learn to live with that. For a while, I will. It is an exciting time of the year as we bring the ladies together and get the season started and playing the nonconference schedule is what it is all about. We are having a good time right now.

On losing Anne Marie Lanning and whether Ebony Rowe will step up in her absence

I don't think you ever replace an Anne Marie Lanning. She was absolutely awesome the four years that she was here. She came in a leader as a freshman. I think this year our leadership is going to have to come by committee. I think we have many voices on this basketball team that can lead in many different directions and that is what we are asking them to do. Ebony Rowe would be a great choice. I also think KeKe Stewart, Icelyn Elie and Kortni Jones can as well. We were very young last year. We lost five seniors off the previous team with four of those seniors starting. We brought in all those freshmen and sophomores that had never really played. I think all the coaches would tell you that when I had Alysha Clark, Jackie Pickel and Brandi Brown, I really never substituted much. I played six or seven players, so those freshmen did not have much playing time until last year. Then we bring in Ebony Rowe and throw her in the midst of that and she has a fantastic year. Ebony is going to have to step her game up this year because she has a target on her back. Our other young ladies on the team such as Icelyn and Kortni and KeKe have got to step up as well. We are not going to walk into gyms and have people say that these guys are freshmen and sophomores. Now they are going to look at them and say they have a tremendous amount of experience and they have played in the NCAA Tournament and are going to be ready to play. There are some very good teams in our conference.

On playing tough competition outside of the Sun Belt

I think that has been part of my biography since I have been in coaching. Even when I coached at the high school level, I traveled all over the country playing the best teams. I always have felt that this has helped prepare my teams when playing at the end of the year. At the high school level, it prepared us for the local, regional and state tournaments. There were not many situations that we had not yet encountered when we got to those tournaments. We were accustomed to the pressure, crowds, intensity and focus. Part of the reason I was hired here at Middle Tennessee was I felt like this community had not bought into the program like it should. I felt like this was a basketball community and that we needed to go out and play some of the top programs in the country – such as Maryland, Georgia and Tennessee. I felt like as a coaching staff you wanted to see how you could match your wits up against the top coaching staffs. For years you had admired and watched them and gone to Final Fours and seen them, and I wanted to play them in Murfreesboro so that our fans could enjoy seeing games like that. While we have lost some games playing that type of competition, it also helps our conference. The RPI of our conference and the teams in our conference is benefited by playing those types of teams. We have talked as Sun Belt coaches about one of the things to help our conference is to play those great programs. We can recruit and be one of the top six or seven conferences. With the coaches that we have, we can do that. With the coaches we have on each side of the conference, we can be one of the best conferences and we are all committed to doing that.

On Ebony Rowe's abilities

Ebony can do some things that you can't coach. She is blessed with that talent. She knows how to go get the basketball and finish underneath and she knows how to set a teammate up. One of the things that we have tried to do to expand her game is have her face up to the basket and drive to the goal or take a 15-foot jump shoot or shoot a 3-point shot. We rely on the 3-point shot and I feel like

for us to rely on her she had to be able to shoot the 3-point shot with consistency. We have started working with her on that. Ebony does not have to do everything because she has a good group of players around her. Icelyn Elie, KeKe Stewart, Lauren March and Dymon Raynor are good players, so she has some competition in practice that will help her improve her game.

On the team's ability to play in the paint

I think you have to take the ball into the paint in basketball games, and if they are going to close that part of the game down, then so be it. We have been very fortunate to have an Alysha Clark and others in the past who could do that. Now we have Ebony who can do that. I also want to emphasize that we have other great players around her and anyone of them could develop into a star.

On schools playing Sun Belt schools on the road

It is a risk because some of those programs are more concerned about winning games than improving their RPI. They are not going to have their RPI suffer by playing a Sun Belt school on the road. When the committee meets and sees that those schools went on the road in the Sun Belt, it will help them. One of the things that we have made known here is that we don't mind playing anybody anywhere as long as they play a return game in Murfreesboro. So, we will play Tennessee for two games in Knoxville in exchange for one game in Murfreesboro. We don't mind going to Connecticut or Georgia as long as they play us in Murfreesboro. One of the things that we are trying to do is reward our fans here. You see lots of teams that schedule teams just to get a win. But you are not going to get a sure win when you schedule a Sun Belt school.

On the preseason predictions

It is good to be recognized, but this is my seventh year here. The programs that you look at from top to bottom, you never know which schools are going to step up. You never know which players are going to step up as freshmen or sophomores. With Karen Aston as the new coach at North Texas, you are going to see a better program there. I think Karen does a great job and did a great job at Charlotte. You have Erik Johnson at Denver and Errol Rogers at Louisiana. You cannot look at any school and say that a game will be a definite win. All of the coaches know that you have to play hard no matter who you play. I feel like we have some of the best women's basketball coaches here in the Sun Belt. It is a lot tougher for me to win inside the Sun Belt than outside. Some of those teams outside the Sun Belt are just getting by on talent. While we have some talented players in this league, there are also some great coaches.

Printed on July 31, 2014

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/56067>