

Insell, Davis discuss upcoming season at press conference

Rowe, Knight also on hand to answer questions from media

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Women's basketball head coach Rick Insell

Opening Statement... "We're pretty excited about this year right now for a couple reasons. We got everybody back, but we didn't feel like we played real well in the first round of the tournament against Vanderbilt. We felt like we were a better basketball team than that. With everybody coming back, we got the chance this year to have something special. I think all of our players will tell you that, our coaching staff will tell you that."

On the goals of the 2012-13 season...

"I think our players will tell you that our goals really don't change. I think when you're recruited in here you know from the get-go that our goal is to get to the Elite Eight with a chance to get into the Final Four. I think all of our players will tell you that. When we recruit these young ladies that's what we tell them. As far as getting into the NCAA Tournament, we've done that. But, we have to do a better job when we get there. We've got to win some games. Winning those type games moves your program to another level and that's what we're all about is moving our program to another level. In doing that, we've got to win some games there."

On how the regular season affects the NCAA Tournament...

"I think we've tried to do that with our non-conference schedule. We've tried to make it as tough as we possibly can. I don't think there's a night that we can go out and feel like we can take off. Some of those teams that we play, the Tennessee Tech's and Austin Peay's. They're old OVC rivals and we're their big game to come in and knock off Middle Tennessee. So those type games, we've got to be on point. We can't go in thinking that's going to be an easy game. That's not what our philosophy or strategy is about anyway."

On preparing a team that has a lot of players returning...



"We've already talked about that in the fact that we felt we were a good team. Now we need to move this thing to where we're a great team. To be a great team, you've got to go into the NCAA Tournament a little farther than we've been going. Something that's within our reach is a 30-win season. Very few teams get to that point. We feel like this basketball team that we got this year, if we take care of business and improve, stay healthy, get a little luck, we got a chance to do that. That's something we've talked about in practice."

On the first season of women's basketball without Pat Summitt...

"We're part of the women's basketball scene and Pat Summitt was as big a part of that as anybody in the game. Yes it is sad the fact that we are opening the year up across the country and Pat's not part of that. You can bet that she will always be part of that. The legacy that she's left, the footprints she's left with coaches and programs around the country and basketball in general. Pat will always be part of that. Not many people have won over 1,000 games."

On the frontcourt...

"I've thought about tinkering with our lineup, but we won 26 games last year. Ebony (Rowe) and Icelyn (Elie) are tremendous athletes, offensive and defensive players. They have come back with burn in their gut that they want to do more. Both are undersized as far as height is concerned, but not undersized as far as heart is concerned. The leadership that they've already exhibited in practice, I'm excited. I've enjoyed going to practice every day. I told my coaching staff yesterday that it's going to be exciting this year to watch them play because they all have a burn."

Junior forward Ebony Rowe *On having a go-to player on the team...*

"I wouldn't necessarily say there's a go-to girl, but I would say that Coach Insell expects us to bring leadership to the court. Like he says, coaches aren't going to be able to be on the court with us. So in gametime situations, we need to make the decisions. We need to get people into the right place. I would say it isn't one over the other. I feel that Me, Kortni (Jones), and Icelyn (Elie) all bring leadership, but in different ways. So it's kind of the best of both worlds, you get leadership from three people instead of one."

On the pressure of the season...

"I guess every year there's always pressure, just from expectations. I think it comes down to the fact that Coach has really been harping on we're playing against ourselves, and every day we're playing to get ourselves better and not playing against opponents. So that's what we focus on. We don't really focus on what everyone expects us to do or what teams we need to play or beat. We just focus on how we need to get better."

On Coach Insell's expectations...

"He expects a lot from us because he knows we're capable of a lot. Once you've been under Coach Insell, I don't think any other pressure is worse than that."

On being the conference's biggest game on the road...

"We know going into it a lot of times. We are going to be their biggest game. We just can't focus on our opponent, whether we're playing someone in our conference or playing Kentucky or Xavier. We just try to go into every game with that mental aspect that we're playing against ourselves and we're playing to get ourselves better. I think that kind of eliminates that pressure."

Men's basketball head coach Kermit Davis

Opening comments...

"We've got 11 of our top 13 guys back and a lot of experience. We've had a lot of fun coming in the gym with them every day. I like our team. It's the most mature and experienced team we've ever had.

It'll be one of the most challenging non-conference schedules in basketball."

On RPI...

"We have set up a tough schedule, and they understand winning is obviously the most important thing. But, sometimes, you can have really good losses by playing a tough schedule."

On expectations...

"We have high expectations and we enjoy that, but we don't embrace the expectations. That's for the fans and for selling tickets. We've just got to try and get better every day. I love going to the gym with our team. We've got a lot to work on in a lot of different areas, but I think that's fun to be talked about in that matter, especially at our level."

On team chemistry...

"I'm a firm believer that each team, no matter how many guys you have coming back, creates its own, or recreates its own identity. We've got six seniors, and all six seniors have started games. Not many teams in college basketball that can say they've got six seniors, and all six have started games."

On excitement for the season...

"I don't think I ever had (this much excitement). I enjoy college basketball, this is my 30th year, but I really have. The main thing is not so much that we have to prove ourselves, but just the guys I know that were coming back on our team. We're not perfect by any means, but it's just a lot of fun going into the gym with those guys."

Senior guard Marcos Knight

On importance of being the No. 1 guy...

"Not at all. We're a team, we go to the gym every day as one big family. We treat each other like brothers."

On last year's identity carrying over...

"It carries over. Like coach said, we've got a lot of seniors coming back and guys who have played a lot of minutes. Our identity for this year is going to be the same as last year. Basically, we've got to defend and share the basketball, and try to win games."

On pressure...

"I think it's a good pressure. We thought we were an NCAA team last year, and in the NIT we had a really good run and beat Tennessee. We're not trying to prove ourselves to anybody, we just go out and play hard every night like last year and win a bunch of games as well."

On taking constructive criticism...

"Coach Davis is going to be on us every day hard, and whenever our coaches get on us, we take it as them helping us be better players and not just coming down on us all the time. Being coachable is something we talked about in the off-season as well, just saying yes sir, no sir anytime they say something to us."

On playing with his brother, Trantell Knight...

"It's really special. He knows me like the back of my hand, and I know him like the back of his hand. I expect more out of him, and he expects more out of me."

Ready to get going with the season...

"We've been working hard the whole summer and have been through a lot of individual work. Everything we do is to get better than last year."

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