

October 16, 2007



An Interview With:

## KIM MULKEY

PETER IRWIN: Coach Kim Mulkey from Baylor University is here. Coach, welcome and if you'd like to make a couple of opening comments.

KIM MULKEY: I'm glad to be back. Last time we were here we won a national championship, so Kansas City has been good to us.

**Q. Can you sort of talk about at the end of last year you said, and your kids said, it's painful a loss as you guys have been there. How much do you think they learned from that and are carrying that a little bit in a good way over to this year?**

KIM MULKEY: I hope they've carried a lot of it. I think when you end the season, you have the basketball in your hands, the score is tied and you don't win the basketball game, you feel that you let one slip away. And I said then, and I'll say it again today, that locker room was as devastated a locker as it was the year we lost to Tennessee on the controversial call. And hopefully the players that were in there will never forget that and they'll have that memory in the back of their head and fight through the tough times, because there are going to be tough times for us. And hopefully they'll be able to say I don't want to ever feel like that again.

**Q. Coach Fennelly was telling us this morning he thinks that women's basketball used to be immune from things like the need to bring in revenue, which increased the pressure, which increased the likelihood that coaches will get fired. He sees that as changing, and they are no longer immune from the pressures. Do you see the same thing?**

KIM MULKEY: No, when you you're in this profession, you're judged by wins and losses. And

regardless of your salary, the stress and pressures of trying to win ballgames is there. I understand his comment about there's more money being put into women's programs across the country, but I've never felt that my salary makes me feel any more pressure or anything like that. I felt pressure the day I was hired at Baylor. I felt pressure when I was at Louisiana Tech. If you're a competitor, you feel that pressure. It's self-imposed, it's not something from somebody else. The pressure to win is enormous, but it's also rewarding. If you're not tough minded and thick skinned you don't need to be in this profession.

**Q. You have four games preseason in a row against teams that won tournaments last year. Can you talk about your philosophy in scheduling the non-conference tournaments?**

KIM MULKEY: I fired the coach that did that. I got rid of him quickly -- no. This is the beginning of my third year at Baylor. We took over a program that had only won 7 games the previous year. The thing you need to change quickly is the mindset of losing. Losing is contagious, just as winning is. We scheduled a lot of non-conference games that would allow us to build a program and start thinking on a positive note and those players started believing in themselves and thinking they were better than they were. Once you started doing that I told the fans when we're at a program where we have established an identity, a reputation that's positive and losing won't devastate you, then you can play tougher opponents. And that's what we've done.

I think if you look at our non-conference schedule this year, I don't know how many of those we'll win against those top teams, but we're now at a point where our program is not going to be devastated by the loss should we lose.

**Q. There's a big rivalry, Baylor and Oklahoma, can you talk about that and also about the impact of Courtney Paris on this league?**

KIM MULKEY: Well, I think there are a lot

of big rivalries. You have to remember we're in Texas, it's a big rivalry with Texas and A&M, I don't look at OU any different. Courtney Paris, what can I say that hasn't been said? I can't think of another adjective that would describe her that hasn't been written, talked about or said. And she's just -- I guess the best thing I ever said was she literally is the Shaquille O'Neal of our league in women's basketball in the most complimentary of ways, you can't stop them. All you can hope for is that the rest of them around her have off nights.

**Q. If you look at coaches in the south, Gary, Gail, Kristy, you, Sharon, all have been to the Final Four. You won a national championship. Just talk about those kind of match-ups with coaches who really have reached the peak of their profession?**

KIM MULKEY: I'm young, but I've been around the game probably as long or longer than a lot of people. I've been doing this at the top level at Louisiana Tech and with Pat Summitt and the Olympics, and you watch and you learn. As you become a head coach you emulate some of the people that you observe. I can think of two or three leagues across the country that as you do scouting reports and you watch their teams play, you pick up coaching ideas and little tips along the way. And so to think that I get to coach against those types of coaches that you talked about only makes me a better coach.

**Q. Can you talk about your depth? You only have ten players this year, and is that a concern?**

KIM MULKEY: Well, your concern is injuries. I remember Coach Barmore said, "You don't need but five, Baby." Obviously you would like to have more for practices and drills, and if you can stay away from injury you're in great shape. But we'll make it work. And I'll look at the quality of players that are in those ten uniforms and we have some quality players in those uniforms that can play. Four of those players -- well, actually six of the players were major contributors to us last year, and they were tied for first place going into the last part of the season. They've been in the battle and know what it takes to compete. We have to stay away from injuries, and I have to be a smarter coach. I have to make sure I don't wear them out in practice, shorten the practices, and to make sure I'm also getting in good work. It will be a challenge for us, but there won't be a problem with playing time, they'll all get to play.

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**Q. Will this team be a little bit more of a team that's led both emotionally, leadership-wise, by the point guard maybe as opposed to the last few teams where your post players maybe had to take more of a leadership role?**

KIM MULKEY: They may be led by the fact that the perimeter players returning are more of an emotional type of player, Jhasmine Player gets emotional and excited. Angela Tisdale is the one with the ball in her hands and directs traffic out there. Maybe from that perspective. But I think that Rachel Allison inside is just really a player that people don't talk much about and she's won a lot of big basketball games for us. I think Danielle Wilson and Jessika Bradley are the two post players, they're now going to have the opportunity to play. And they're going to be humbled somewhat, being sophomores and being thrown out there every day. But it's only going to make them better down the road.

**Q. What about writing a book, what was that experience like for you?**

KIM MULKEY: Well, I'm glad it's over. Right after the national championship Peter May with the Boston Globe approached me about doing it and I told him no. Then he did like a lot of you sportswriters do, don't understand the word no, and kept bugging me and kept going to my athletic director and different people and telling all the reasons why I needed to do it. So we kind of battled back and forth. And I finally gave in. It's just basically my life story. It takes you from the time I was born up until I guess this year, this year's team. It's boring, if you ask me, but maybe there's something that you guys find in there amusing or interesting. But it's done. It's over. It's been a two-year process, and the title of it is *Won't Back Down*. That title came from the Tom Petty song, I love that song. It kind of describes me. I'm just not going to back down. I'm a fighter, I'm a competitor, that's how we came up with the title.

PETER IRWIN: Thanks very much. Best of luck to you for the season.

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