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An Interview With:

KATHY McCONNELL-MILLER

PETER IRWIN: Kathy McConnell-Miller has joined us. Welcome, Coach, from Colorado.

KATHY McCONNELL-MILLER: It's great to be here. Extremely excited about the third season at the University of Colorado. It's a joy to coach Jackie McFarland, I think, coming into this season with her as a senior, her leadership, her skill and her ability to help this program make great strides over the last two years has been an experience for both of us. There's no doubt when you take over programs there's ups and downs, but we feel like we've been progressing consistently over the past two years, and feel like this is another year with the addition of some recruits and the experience of some returners, that we feel like we're going to progress even more.

This is the first year that I've been here that they've talked about -- postseason they've talked about the past, they talk about the future, they talk about where they've been and where they want to go.

Q. A lot of folks have been talking about post seasons and moving on, and the strength of the league. Everybody knows how tough it is. But just how important is it that there is that -- it's a tangible, real feeling of what you were just talking about as opposed to a team coming in here and just saying that?

KATHY McCONNELL-MILLER: Well, I think that the excitement about this conference, you know, I've been in a lot of conferences, but most recently at the University of Tulsa, and everyone would talk about how many teams can you get in. That's a one-bid league. You get one and the rest of them just pray Sunday night that they get a call to get in the WNIT. For a conference like the Big 12, the strength from top to bottom is exceptional. And I have said it, I don't care who hears it, I don't care who agrees or

disagrees, from top to bottom you cannot look at one team and circle that and say that's a W, no matter where it is, at home or on the road. And I've played in the ACC, I've coached in the Big East, I've coached in the Big Ten, I've coached in a lot of conferences, and top to bottom it's strong. So the opportunity, I think, strategical scheduling is important in the non-conference because you know you're going to be strong in conference and you've got the potential to go on runs. You've got the potential to beat some strong teams because of the balance in the conference.

I think it's exciting that Kansas thinks they can get to the tournament, Colorado thinks they can get there. Oklahoma knows they're going to get there. It's just a matter of the preparation that's gone in and how you prepare.

Q. You mentioned Oklahoma. Courtney Paris, everybody says, is going to be better than she has been because of her maturity and because of her experience in international competition. Is that kind of scary to an opposing coach to think that Courtney Paris is going to be even better than she has been?

KATHY McCONNELL-MILLER: I don't know. I think the questions that I always get asked, is she one of the best players to ever play in the Big 12? Where does she rank up with players like Sheryl Swoopes or Diana Taurasi. And I think her legacy and what she does is going to be based on the success of OU. And what she does for that program. I think points, rebounds, there's no doubt. I mean her numbers are good and she's strong. She's physical. She's very, very difficult to guard. But as coaches I don't think any one player makes a team. She makes the biggest difference in any team in any conference. There's no doubt about that. But I don't think -- yes, there's room for improvement, I don't know how much room because she has dominated the league since I've been in it, since she's been at Oklahoma. But it's going to be exciting to see where she takes that team.

Q. You have four starters returning, but six newcomers coming in. Could any of the newcomers start?

KATHY McCONNELL-MILLER: Our strength is in our front line. I think we've got an extremely talented front line, from Kara Richards to Jackie McFarland, the one player that we feel like that could come in and probably make the quickest impact is Brittany Spears. She's 6-1, maybe 6-2 and she's just a player. She is a great basketball player. She's aggressive. She's talented. She has fun on the floor. Of all the players I have, she goes to the floor first. She goes to the floor the quickest. She's the quickest to get the rebound. She's athletic, and I think she will be one that we will rely on immediately. As far as how we go, whether we go big, and Brittany Spears at the 2, and decide on a point guard or we put her at the 3 and go a little bit smaller, it just depends on what happens over the next couple of weeks. But I would say Brittany Spears is the one that's made the quickest transition.

Q. You're a couple of years following Ceal Barry at Colorado. Would you have any advice for Gail Goestenkors in that situation, and do you feel like you're really -- it's fully your program now or are you still adjusting a couple of years in?

KATHY McCONNELL-MILLER: I guess my advice would be to utilize Jody Conrad as much and as frequently as you possibly can. Ceal has been a great friend to me, probably didn't utilize her initially as much as I should have. But to this day we talk frequently. I would consider her a very good friend of mine and she's helped me in so many ways at the University. But I don't think you ever replace Ceal Barry or you replace Jody Conrad. You hopefully begin to put your personality and your strengths into that program. And that's one thing that I've focused on is that I'm not looking to replace Ceal or change anything that she's done. My objective is to put my stamp on the program and get to the point where that looks like my team as opposed to Coach's team. And I think Gail will have an easier time than any because of her experiences domestically and internationally.

PETER IRWIN: Good luck to you on the season.

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