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An Interview With:

CINDY STEIN

PETER IRWIN: Coach Cindy Stein from Missouri, is up here with us. We'll let her make a couple of opening comments.

CINDY STEIN: Well, I think the first comment is I am so happy to be back in Kansas City. I love the fact that the tournament is here. Our team is really pumped up about that. We have a lot of players from around this area. And I'll tell you what, our team is really excited about this year, regardless of what everybody thinks we're going to do. This is a great young team that is not going to use youth as an excuse. They're very energetic, they want to do things the right way. We're doing a lot of teaching. But it's something that as a coach, that's why you coach, is working and developing with kids and we're getting a great opportunity to kind of go back to the really sound, basic fundamentals. We're excited about it. Our kids are really responding well. So we're very excited.

We do have five of our 11 young ladies that are new to college basketball. We have one senior, and we stole her from volleyball. She's a 5th year senior, done with her volleyball eligibility. I saw a tall young lady serving food during a football game. And I saw it was [] Nicole Wilson. I asked her if she had any eligibility left and that's the start of the story. And we got her to our practice as soon as we could. Now [] Mike Olden is mad at me, because he liked having her around, because she's a great young lady. I'm excited about her.

Obviously the four freshmen, very talented. We have four sophomores, and then two juniors. So it's going to be interesting. You may see a different look. And you may want to keep your hands up when you're on press row.

Q. You talked about teaching, there's a new staff in there and I wonder what role they're going to play. Also the role in teaching the other players that Alyssa has?

CINDY STEIN: We do have two new staff members and Lynnette Robinson, who's our associate head coach, who comes from the University of Michigan, also had been at Missouri State when they went to two Final Fours. She's also a former teammate of mine at Illinois. So it's someone that I trust extremely well and someone that brings a lot of knowledge, a lot of experience in recruiting, just a very good defensive-minded coach, which obviously those of you who have been around our program enough know that we emphasize defense a bit. And we hired Allison Guth, who brings in an amazing amount of energy. And also some great recruiting tools in personality. That's something that complements our staff. We know with youth you have to keep their attitude up and their energy high, and kind of play with that exuberant style and energy and relentlessness, and I feel like I have that in our staff. I think they have great knowledge. They're very good recruiters, and recruiting is the name of the game. But they also bring great basketball knowledge, and the teaching ability, and the communication skills that you have to have with today's teams.

Q. Talk about the improvement in Amanda?

CINDY STEIN: Amanda Hanneman, I love her to death. She has a stress fracture, and she's out a couple more weeks. We need Amanda on the court, if we had her on the court right now, practices would even be better, just because she provides so much for us. She's one of those people that is always going to have a floor burn, because she's always diving after the ball, she's a tremendous scorer, did a lot this summer, that probably put her in a situation where she did get that stress fracture. But she's one of those people that are always going, going, going. I think people saw her improve last year towards the end of the

season, and the key for us is keeping her healthy, but she's someone that for us to be the way we want to be, and very good, is the fact that we're going to need Amanda Hanneman on the court.

Q. What was your immediate reaction when you learned of the coaches preseason pick for Missouri?

CINDY STEIN: You know, that's a great question. I'm not sure it's one that I can honestly answer. I would say that last year, I used to have a really bad swearing habit. And so my players tease me now because I say like jiminy, holy smokes, geez, and just to keep myself from saying something else. And none of those words came out of my mouth. I probably reverted back a little bit. But I had to gather myself, because I understand why, but I don't like it. I think that -- I've never believed in these preseason polls. I don't think you should ever short change any teams, because I think that every night is a tough night. So that's my belief, and maybe people think that I'm sour grapes because we got picked 12th this year, but those people that know me know that I would say if I would say that if I was picked 5th on. I want to be the No. 1 pick, and that's what we're striving for.

Q. How do you think the leaders will take that ranking? Do you think you're going to use it as a chip on your shoulder for motivation or do you think it really doesn't matter?

CINDY STEIN: I don't think it matters at this point. I know they don't like it. And really the only thing that ranking does, it helps other schools use it against us in recruiting. That's what that ranking does. That's the only thing that ranking does for us. Now our job, obviously, is we've already done an outstanding job of recruiting, so we feel good about that. The players mind frame is more of let's just get better day-to-day and see where we can go. We're still going to go out and try to win every game. That hasn't changed, because of the type of attitudes and personalities we have on our team. We don't want to feel sorry for ourselves and we don't want to make excuses, and we have already kind of instructed them, that's how we need to be. Once they start being able to use an excuse that's where you accept losing and we'll never accept losing.

Q. You could take concern with the lack of experience, at the same time you're

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going to come back in a year or two with a whole bunch of seniors with a great deal of experience because they're going to get to play in a season like this, where there's not seniors in front of us. Do you look at that as an opportunity -- I know you're going to be focused on this season, but doesn't that also present an opportunity that gals are really going to have a lot of experience?

CINDY STEIN: I think our future is extremely bright. Our last few recruiting classes have been outstanding, and have been ranked nationally. And that's helped with the opening of the Mizzou Arena, and something we're extremely proud of. We feel that that's going to really ignite us into some great things. The Mizzou Arena, we can recruit a different level athlete. Not that we didn't have good players before, but it gets you in a lot more homes.

Q. One of the issues for you guys this year might be height. How do you plan on dealing with the fact you guys don't really have that many players over six foot and one of your tallest players is in fact a volleyball player?

CINDY STEIN: That's another great question. I'm glad you're doing your homework. That's why you guys are No. 1 in journalism in the country, University of Missouri. I would say that the key for us, because of the lack of height is I guess we can't let them cross half court (laughter). I think that our defense is going to have to be something special.

PETER IRWIN: Thank you very much. We wish you the best of luck. Have a great season.

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