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An Interview With:

TEXAS TECH COACH PAT KNIGHT

PETER IRWIN: We're joined by Pat Knight from Texas Tech University. Welcome, and your comments.

COACH KNIGHT: I really don't have any. I'm here for you guys. So let's just open it up for -- I kind of do things a little different. What do you want to know? That's what I'm here for. I'll answer anything you want to know.

PETER IRWIN: Questions.

Q. Talk about your two junior college kids. If I'm correct, they both came from winning situations and what kind of an impact do you see them having?

COACH KNIGHT: They're both going to start for me. I can tell you that. We don't recruit a junior college kid unless he can play for two years. He's either a starter or first guy off the bench.

And we needed some help, I thought when I took over, for my guard situation and obviously size. And Nick Okorie comes from South Plains Junior College, was an All-American in junior college, won the national championship. And those are some things that are hard to come by.

You want kids that come from winning programs, have been coached. His coach, Steve Green, is actually a good friend of ours since we got to Lubbock. But he knows how to coach. I don't have to do a lot of things with this kid to teach him. He knows the fundamentals.

He knows my personality. He can take an ass-chewing, which is important in the way we go about things at Texas Tech. So there's not a lot of things I have to teach this kid. He comes in knowing what to expect and can play right away.

And then Darko came from Seward County, went to Hutch, the nationals, finals, big kid. We like all our big kids to be able to shoot. He can shoot from the three-point line, spreads out our

motion offense. He brings a personality we haven't had a long time from a really big guy. He's an energetic kid. People really enjoy him when they come to practice.

My assistants kind of wish I'd tell him to calm down a little bit, but I'm letting some things go because I like that energy. I like that personality.

He brings something to practice we haven't had. I mean, guys are actually kind of scared when we do rebounding drills now and when we do our screening drills. And so game time I will have to have a talk with him because he'll foul out in the first two minutes.

But I really like those two kids. And for us to be successful at Tech we have to recruit junior college. I understand the situation we are at. We can get very good high school kids, but I don't think we can get enough of them just to recruit solely high school kids.

Plus, I like the junior college kids. They come with a chip on their shoulder. They haven't been coddled, haven't been playing summer ball. They kind of appreciate what you have to offer to them. They haven't been flying on private planes to Las Vegas, Los Angeles, to New York. They're not influenced by the shoe companies, and so you'll always see me every year probably signing anywhere from two to three junior college kids.

Q. Expounding on your approach to recruiting, how different will your program be under your guidance and your father's and the manner in which you play everything just about?

COACH KNIGHT: Recruiting-wise, I'm out all the time. I'm actually more out more than I ever was as an assistant. And I think that's going to help the program a lot. Not that my dad didn't go out. But it gets to a point where you coach 40 years, you're burned out and you don't want to go out.

So our recruiting has gotten better every year. That's been our goal. I don't try to compare my recruiting to what my dad did. We did a good job at Tech. We got better every year with the

recruits we've got.

I have to compare myself to the guys in this league. So I don't get caught up in that. I think our recruiting will be good underneath me because I do go out. They want to see the head coach, and so I'll be out like I was as assistant. But it means a lot more now that I have the title.

So I don't think we're going to miss a beat at all in recruiting. I just expect our recruiting to get better every year like it has been since we got to Texas Tech. And just from the standpoint of how things will be different, I don't know. I really don't think about that. I have to have a focus of winning games. That's my concern.

I actually -- when we met before practice I promised my team I would not make a decision based if my dad would do it or I need to do this because he wouldn't do it.

That's going to get me in trouble. Every decision I make has to be made is this going to help my team win. My dad was good with me before I took over these last couple of years. I studied a lot of guys. Why were guys successful taking over for guys and why were guys not.

And I came up, I think there's two type of guys that were unsuccessful. One is the guy that tries to just be just like the guy he took over for. And then the second is the guy that tries to do everything different and try to forget about the guy he took over for. So I think you have to have a fine line.

You have to respect why you got there. I know why I'm here, because my dad. But then, again, I can't be him because I'm not him so there will be things I do different. So I have to have a fine line to be successful.

I think there will be things that I do you'll be like, hey, that reminds me of your dad -- greatest compliment I can get. But, naturally, there will be things he would never do that, which is fine too, but I have to ride a fine line. I can't get caught up on either or because that's going to sidetrack me and I won't be doing these press conferences anymore, I'll be not in coaching very long.

Q. Looking at the Big 12 South, seems to be deep and wide open this season. Can you talk about the challenges playing in such a tough division conference and what it would take to emerge from that victorious?

COACH KNIGHT: Gotta win on the road. First, you've got to protect your home field, per se. You've got to win your home games, but you've got to find a way to win on the road. We didn't win on

the road at all last year. We only won once up in Colorado. And we've got to find a way to win on the road.

We're trying different things. We scrimmage in our practice gym where the acoustics aren't very good trying to make them uncomfortable. We're going to go play at SMU in a closed scrimmage.

But we've got to do better on the road. And the teams that have done well, not just in the South side, even the North side, they win some big games on the road. And for us to make a breakthrough this year we've got to win on the road.

Because everyone plays well at home. It's not a given but you're more comfortable at home. We're trying to figure out a way how can we play better on the road. And so to me that's the key. Whoever wins on the road is going to do the best.

PETER IRWIN: Thank you, Coach.

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