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An Interview with:

UCLA COACH STEVE ALFORD KYLE ANDERSON

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach.

COACH ALFORD: Well, Kyle and I obviously are excited to be here and representing UCLA. We have had 14 practices and healthy to this point, other than Wanaah Bail who just got eligible which will really help our depth. He is not practicing yet because of an injury.

But other than that we have gotten through kind of the segment of the season that's new to all of us, because usually this start date is tomorrow. So we got a lot of things like a lot of coaches have already.

But we're excited to be here, be a part of the Pac-12 Networks and be a part of Pac-12 Media Day.

THE MODERATOR: And we'll take questions.

Q. Do you have any reaction to Andy Enfield's little dig that was in a local paper, I guess, where he said if you want to play fast come to USC; if you want to play slow, go to UCLA? Do you take that seriously, or is that just part of the local rivalry that you're learning about?

COACH ALFORD: No, I've got great respect for Andy. He had a very good season last year, and respect what he's done. Wish him all the best. We're -- it's UCLA. We're concerned about building a model program. UCLA's always been about that. And that's our interest. That's my job. That's my undertaking; that I'm trying and our staff's trying to develop young men on the basketball court, develop young men in the

classroom, develop young men in their character, and try to fulfill dreams that these young men have. Because that's what happens at UCLA. It's around you wherever you walk at UCLA you see that.

So whether that was motivation or whatever, it's not -- we have already labeled Kyle as -- I mean, your nickname is Slow-Mo. It's not like all of a sudden his nickname is Turbo. But you're going to be hard pressed find a better player in our league than Kyle Anderson.

So we know what our style is. We're going to be up-tempo. We're going to be fast-paced. Kyle would tell you how we play.

And the numbers -- if you look at my six years at New Mexico, those numbers will emulate that. Our worst year offensively was last year, and yet we still won 29 games. It was the worst shooting year we had had in six years, and yet our offensive efficiency would be ranked higher than a lot of the places that you may want to dive into and look at.

But over the last six years our numbers speak for themselves on our style of play and how we play and how we teach the game. And that's what we're looking forward to and those are the things we're trying to control.

Q. Kyle, did it bother you at all, or what's your reaction?

KYLE ANDERSON: No, I think that it's just up to us to focus on what our team has to do. Pretty much what Coach Alford said, we know how we play, so we're not taking offense to that or anything. We've just got to focus on what we've got to do and control what we can control.

Q. You have both of your sons -- you have two sons on your team this year. Tell us a little bit about what people can expect from Bryce and Kory on the court and what's it going to be like to coach them.

COACH ALFORD: Well, it's a lot of fun. One, we have got to be a unique program in that we have got two sets of brothers. We got the

Alford brothers and the Wear brothers. So I don't know of anywhere in the country that kind of has that. So it's kind of a unique deal.

I was a coach's kid. Coach Schilling, who is on my staff, was a coach's kid. Coach Knight coached his kid. So there's a lot of people that I can lean on as we go through this.

But my oldest son, Kory, has been with me at New Mexico for the last two years, so he's been a part of the championships that we have won in his first two years, and he understands how we do things. He's a walk-on. He's wanting to get into coaching. So he's a part of a group of walk-ons that we have. And he's doing a great job.

And Bryce is somebody that had a very good high school career and somebody that I think that will really help us in a lot of ways. He understands how to play. He's got a very good basketball IQ. He's going to know his role of where the ball's got to go and who has got to get it, because it's a similar offense to what we have had at New Mexico. And he's been practicing with our guys at New Mexico over the last two years.

So how much input and what he does, obviously that's going to be up to the production that he has. But I think he, like our other freshmen, have done a really good job through 14 practices.

Q. What do you feel may be the most challenging aspect for your team going into this season?

COACH ALFORD: I think just making that blend of the veterans and the newcomers, because -- and we're getting ready to take a retreat and those type of things that we're going to talk about. Because we kind of just jumped into the season. Because being on quarters, we got back to school and then immediately started practicing. So it's a little different than being on semesters.

So we'll take this weekend to really dive into some things and talk about that.

But I think one of the big things that's going to happen is like the leadership of the Wears, Norman Powell, Kyle, Jordan, Tony Parker, the six guys that were a part of a championship last year and have played in the Pac-12 and have played in national schedules, they got to do a really good job with these newcomers, because the newcomers are going to have to be asked to play.

With only six returning players, you're going to have to get some good input from some of these new guys. And so the better job they do leading and the newcomers understanding their

lead and accepting their lead, I think that's going to be a big part of our success or lack of. If those things mesh together, we have got the talent and we have got the pieces to have a very good year.

Q. You have a very unique skill set. What role with the team do you think gives the team the best opportunity to be successful?

KYLE ANDERSON: Well, I don't think that there's a specific role for myself. I think that there are a lot of things I can do on the court like getting -- I'm a very good passer, I can get guys open shots. We've got a lot of guys that can score the basketball in many different ways.

Some games I'm going to be asked to score the ball more or go inside and rebound more. It's just a lot of roles I think that I would have to take on during the season. And I'm willing to. Just based off the group of guys that we have, it makes it so much easier for me to do my job. And that's it, really.

Q. Do you think you have to, quote/unquote, own Los Angeles recruiting in order to have success at UCLA?

COACH ALFORD: Well, I think it's all part of it. Obviously we're in Los Angeles, it's a big recruiting base and there's a lot of great players, a lot of great basketball talent in that city. And we're going to do our very best to make sure we're securing the individuals that are best for our program and that are going to buy into the way that we do things and understand the UCLA way.

I tell you, UCLA's not for everybody. You've got to understand, walking on that campus, what it's about. It's about excellence. Just about every academic thing you want to throw out we're top 10 in the country or the world. You look at the history and basketball, there is no greater history or tradition anywhere.

So there's pressures with that, there's challenges with that, but with that come incredible opportunities. And it's a blessing. We feel that as coaches. Kyle's from the East Coast. I'm sure glad Kyle's at UCLA.

So I think with -- at UCLA it's not just -- it starts in Los Angeles, but UCLA's a place that has always been able to recruit nationally, and we're going to continue to recruit nationally.

But the Los Angeles area and Southern California, obviously, is a very, very big part, an important part of our recruiting.



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Q. It's not often that a team -- that coming off a championship is replacing its coach. Do you feel like you're inheriting a finished-product kind of team where you can just kind of come in and try and uphold that, or is it a little different because you are taking over a program? And, Kyle, also for you, going through a coaching change after that kind of season, is that a surprise at all for you?

COACH ALFORD: Well, no, I think it's all new. Our systems, our styles, those things are all going to be new. The communication with the players. There's a lot of different things, obviously, that Kyle probably knows more than I would know in the six months that it's taken place. And it's not good one way, bad the other.

Coaches -- there are so many different ways to get to success, and coaches have different ways of doing that. And Ben has had tremendous success. Not just at UCLA, but Pittsburgh and Northern Arizona. His coaching career has been very, very successful.

So it doesn't mean that we're the same. It doesn't make it right or wrong. I've been in it 23 years now and had success everywhere we have been and building programs and doing what we want to do at UCLA and taking UCLA to the next step.

There's some key pieces gone. There's only six returnees. That's not a lot of returnees. That's why I say the newcomers and the returnees have to blend nicely.

But the six that are returning are extremely talented. And not only are they talented, they're great guys that have bought into the system. They have both feet in. They're good people. And you combine all those things and you think you got a shot.

But I don't think it's -- it's not just -- it's not a turnkey type of thing. There are a lot of changes that have happened within the program, from strength coach to all the things that we're trying to do and implement with our nutrition and our strength program, our individual workouts. Those things are different for the players. And, to their credit, they have bought in. They have done a very good job here in six and a half months.

KYLE ANDERSON: I wouldn't call it so much a surprise. I think we got some great guys coming back and we had a great staff come on. That first six months where we finally got a new coaching staff was huge. We developed a big trust fund with the coaches. They did a very good job

coming on to the staff and getting us what we need and things like that.

So I wouldn't call it so much a surprise, it was just great pieces to the puzzle, sticking them together.

Q. In deference to Kyle sitting on your left, you don't have a classic point guard currently on your roster, nor one seems to be forthcoming in the future. Do you say your offense can literally thrive under those circumstances when you don't have that kind of a player waiting in the wings?

KYLE ANDERSON: Absolutely. I think our offense could be a very good success with not really a classic point guard because our guards are so versatile. Jordan Adams, who can shoot the ball, can pass the ball, can rebound, can defend. Zach LaVine, Norman Powell. We have guys who are so versatile. We don't really have one-dimensional guards like that.

So due to our guards' versatility, that's going to help us -- our offense thrives in so many different ways.

Q. You've been a part of one of the most historic programs in the country and now you're on the other side taking one over. Is there a little bit of added extra pressure when you come to a program with such deep roots?

COACH ALFORD: Yeah, there's no question. You understand where the bar's been raised. Coach Wooden put that bar about as high as you can get it, ten national titles in 12 years and the success that they had. But he established a tradition at UCLA and a term that's used, quite honestly, every day on our campus of excellence. Our whole campus is that. 109 national titles on our campus, the most in the country.

It's just when you walk our campus, that's what you feel. And Coach Wooden started that.

So I understood that. I grew up in Indiana, so I knew all about Coach Wooden. And as I got into playing and then getting into coaching, the respect and the admiration that I had for Coach Wooden just continued to get better each and every day.

So you understand those pressures, but it's a tremendous opportunity. To be at a place like UCLA, to, it should be about winning national championships. You should put yourself in a position that you have a chance to win a national

championship every year.

And that's what Kyle and the group of young men that we're dealing with and coaching right now -- that's what's on their minds and that's what they're competing for. It doesn't mean we're going to win 10 out of the next 12 national titles. That's probably not going to happen ever again. But it doesn't mean you don't try to attain that bar that's been raised and the level of excellence that's on the campus of UCLA. You're working every day to try to attain that.

And with that obviously is pressure. But I would much rather be in a situation where there's pressure of success versus the pressure of not caring or trying to develop some kind of feel-good "this is what basketball's all about." This is the pinnacle of college basketball. This is the best of the best. It doesn't get any better than this.

And to be able to coach elite players and put a program together of elite players, that's what we're really looking forward to, and having fun with these guys.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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