

October 17, 2013



An Interview with:

**UTAH
LARRY KRYSKOWIAK
JORDAN LOVERIDGE**

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

COACH KRYSKOWIAK: We are very excited to be here, Jordan Loveridge and myself. And year three, which I think is the situation for us: Year one for the University of Utah was a little bit like survival; year two we learned how to compete; and now, I think with the roster, the current roster that we have, some of the experience back from last year, gaining a little momentum at the end of the year in the Pac-12 Tournament, certainly pleased with the way our players are coming together.

There's an awful lot of talk about culture from a basketball coaching perspective, and we have got a great group of kids that are buying into what we're doing. And a nice little mixture of returning four freshmen from last year that played one-third of our league minutes, combined with three junior college players and a nice freshmen class.

I really feel like we have got the foundation in place to take it to the next level. And in year three we're hoping to win a lot more ball games.

So with that, open it up for questions.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and take questions.

Q. A lot of the chatter about the Pac-12 this offseason has been about the improvement of teams all across the board, from top to bottom. Utah is certainly a part of that. You talked about the first year of survival,

last year as competitive. Can you talk more about the process of how your program has tried to become more competitive and improve during your tenure.

COACH KRYSKOWIAK: Well, I think that we have to remember that my opportunity to coach the Running Utes coincided with our entry into the Pac-12. And fans are excited, certainly the university community, the city, everybody's excited. But what needs to happen, I think, is that your recruiting needs to catch up to that league.

We had a lot of player turnover the first year, and at the end of the day, it comes down to the caliber of player that you can draw to your school.

The guy sitting next to me was a person I think that stepped out and made a statement, being a Utah kid, that he believed in what we were doing, and I think that he's helped us set the tone for a lot of these new recruits coming in. And he's a program guy. We have got another class that I'm really fond of.

And you can talk about all of the peripheral things that go into it, but the talent level needs to improve. Certainly we have got a responsibility to coach the young men, but I think that's the thing that's happened more than anything.

Having said that, with the talent level, it often goes unsaid, I think, that playing hard is a talent. And I know the previous two years the players that we have had on our basketball team had to play hard, because maybe they weren't overly talented. But we could always count on that as a coach.

And our challenge now as a staff is going to be a group on paper that may have a few more stars behind their name and that type of thing, which we don't pay a lot of attention to, but we have got to teach those kids how to play hard. And then I think that it becomes a nice combination when you have a talented player that learns to play hard consistently. Then I think we can start making some noise.

Q. Coach, are there going to be any

changes to the way you play this year as opposed to last year? And who are some of the guys that you are excited about that are on your roster that are new or that are returning from last year?

COACH KRYSKOWIAK: Well, as I mentioned, I think it starts maybe with the four freshmen that played a number of league games for us in competitive environments. I'm really pleased with Renan Lenz, who most people aren't familiar with. He's our only senior on our roster from Brazil. Renan in a struggled a little bit in his initial year from junior college. He's a young man that's lost 20 pounds and is in the best condition of his life. I think he's poised to have a big season.

Delon Wright, junior college from San Francisco, right here down the street, I think is going to be a person that garners a lot of attention and gets people's attention as our season goes on.

Princeton Onwas is a really dynamic wing from Navarro. And then big Marko Kovacevic, unfortunately right now -- he's 6'11" -- he suffered a wrist injury. He's in a cast for a while.

But we have got the players, I think. The biggest thing I noticed is here we are at elevation at Salt Lake City playing at over 5,000 feet, and we're one of two teams in our league, Colorado being the other, that can take advantage of some of this.

And we want to run. I think if you ask kids on any level, high school to NBA, hey, do you guys want to run this year, they're all going to probably dislocate their shoulder putting their arm up because they want to run.

But the thing that needs to go with that I think are two things, is the discipline to get yourself in shape, which we have done, and then you have to have some depth. And I really like our team and that we have got two players, I believe, in every position.

So you got to have a little bit of a hammer as a coach when somebody's not giving that effort and not doing what they need to do. We can look down to the end of the bench and there's somebody willing and able to come in. I think that's going to allow us to play a lot faster tempo than what you've seen previously.

Q. Who would you have play yourself in the crime fighter movie, "Coach K: The Crime Stopper"?

COACH KRYSKOWIAK: Oh, my goodness. I think I already mentioned that in my Twitter account. That would be Barney Fife.

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(Laughter).

Q. Why?

COACH KRYSKOWIAK: I just always liked Barney. But David, he got his gun and thought he was something special and always managed to step in a little pile of something, it seemed like, whenever he had an opportunity.

It was a fun week for us. We got a couple of thieves, a bike thief and then another man that had stolen 17 laptops from our athletic department. And we -- with the practice changing a little bit, having six weeks to get 30 practices in, it allows your coaches to step out and take on some other career opportunities. So we had an awful lot of fun with that. It's good to have people behind bars.

Q. If you look at the rise of teams like Oregon and Colorado, do you see any common thread and is there anything that you think that you can look at those teams to turn things around for your team?

COACH KRYSKOWIAK: Well, you mentioned two of those programs. I've got an awful lot of respect for those coaches, both Tad, certainly, and Dana. And I start thinking about some Spencer Dinwiddies and I start thinking about some of the players that are on those teams. Again, having a marquee guy that you can kind of build the program around.

Those teams both play consistent defense. If you look statistically, Colorado and Oregon are really hard to score against, and they play awfully hard. And that's a pretty good blueprint, I think, to try to follow both of those programs.

Q. Jordan, have you managed to step into maybe a leadership role as one of the four freshmen that Coach has been talking about and with I believe seven newcomers on the team?

JORDAN LOVERIDGE: Me and Coach talked this offseason, and I always last year tried to sit back and didn't lead verbally, but I tried to lead by example. And me and him kind of -- we talked and he challenged me to lead more verbally. I understand what he wants and how he likes to play and everything like that.

So I think -- we just took a team retreat, so I feel like just starting even from there and as we have started practice, I feel like I've been doing a better job of leading more verbally and becoming

more of a leader on this team.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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