



ROCK CHALK JAYHAWK QUOTES

// 2019-20 KANSAS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Head Coach Brandon Schneider

On the rebuilding of the team...

"I think it's different every situation, when we took over at Emporia State, we inherited seven seniors. When we took over at Stephen F. Austin we inherited seven seniors. When we took over here, we inherited zero seniors and six freshmen. Six of those freshmen, some of them, were part of that class of eight that just graduated. I think that type of turnover is different than transfer turnover. You know, turnover through graduation is planned for. I think what's really difficult is the average was almost three, we had one transfer. And the average at the power five level is almost three per team. That's difficult to plan for because most of the time you aren't notified of that until after the season and often times after both signing days have gone past you. I think you always plan for some attrition and you always have to have your antenna up. Once we have the majority of the players that are part of the program being kids that we recruited we have low turnover. I think that is part of the relationship building that takes place in the recruiting process. We are there now, this is the first year. This year every player that is part of our program is someone that this staff recruited."

On the optimism of the rebuilding of the team...

"I'm optimistic. I was very optimistic about our team a year ago, we were 10-1, and I thought we were playing very well, coming out of Vegas with the tournament win. Then the injury bug bit us in about four different areas, it affected four different players. This effects our line up."

On establishing the culture that he wants...

"I don't like using the term 'your players.' When you take a job, they are your players and I embrace them as such. I didn't recruit Kylee Kopatich, I would like to think that Kylee and I's relationship is going to be as strong as any players I have ever coached. I think that anything that has impacted our power of progress and where we would like to be, number one would be in injuries and number two sometimes you don't always get it right in recruiting."

On Brooklyn Mitchell and Aniya Thomas' roles...

"I expect them to increase significantly and I know we haven't gotten into our freshmen, but we are going to have anywhere from three freshmen and two sophomores who are going to play the bulk of our perimeter minutes. We will be very young there. We are very excited about some of those individuals and already what they have shown throughout the summer and in our practices. We are on the perimeter, we are significantly more athletic than we have been. I think a year ago when you saw Brooklyn and Aniya go into the game, you saw two elite level athletes and we have added three that also fit that bill."

On about all of the seniors that left the team...

"We had a turnover of nine, and we have seven new players and five are freshmen. We graduated about 72 percent of our offense, this has been a critical offseason for us. Dating back to when [the players] in June. We're relying heavily on the leadership of our returners, while also trying to quickly develop some of our young players."

On the returners...

"I would start with Mariane and her development especially as it relates to her health, she is just so much healthier than she was a year ago. I think when you look back to a pivotal point in our season a year ago, we were 10-1 right around the low thirties in RPI then [Marinane] went down with a knee injury and missed the first three weeks of Big 12 play. I thought that hampered us and [the] rhythm we had with our team. Right now, [Marinane] looks healthy and is moving with a lot of energy and pace in practice. [Niccolly] is our other senior and we all can remember the energetic moments she provided our team a year ago. Whether it was a defensive scramble situation or it was being a great teammate. We're excited to see what those two do for us. Our two young guards, Brooklyn Mitchell and Aniya Thomas we have high hopes for both of [them]. They are extremely athletic and their offense skill set has improved."

On Chisom Ajekwu...

"[Chisom] will bring physical presence is the first thing [you notice] when you meet Chisom. She is blessed with a terrific build, especially when you're talking about an interior player. Now it just coming into work every day and learn as to what this planet is about and the pace and energy you have play with every day. That's the thing every young player has faces. I think to this point she has been a sponge and extremely coachable; she missed a few weeks with an ankle injury that why she didn't participate in [Late Night]. We're excited about what the future holds for her."

On the three point shooters on the team...

"Zakiyah Franklin is going to be a really good player at this level for a long time. She will play major minutes for us at the point guard position starting day one. I don't know if she will be the starting point guard but she one three state championships in high school. The kid is just a winner."

"I hate to compare players because sometimes that can put a lot of pressure on them, but I see a lot of Kylee Kopatich in Holly Kersgieger. We are excited about what she is going to bring, she is naturally very gifted."

On the post play on the team...

"Brittany Franklin has continued to grow and develop and last year she got to learn what it takes to play at this level during conference play. We are hopeful to get Chisom Ajekwu accustomed to this level in non-conference play so she is ready to contribute. We expect Tina Stephens to come in and contribute at the power forward spot."