

**October 28, 2011**



An Interview with:

**LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK  
DAVID FOSTER**

DAVE HIRSCH: Please welcome Utah coach Larry Krystkowiak and David Foster.

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Yeah, first off, it's obviously a very exciting time for our basketball program at the University of Utah heading into the new conference alongside Colorado. We've had a fairly sizeable amount of turnover with our roster, but it also allowed us to go out and find some guys late in the spring time. Players that want to be a part of Utah basketball.

So we've got eight on our roster right now we've got eight new players to go alongside of four returners, Dave Foster and Jiggy Watkins being two seniors on the roster.

Dave, obviously, a 7'3" center, and Jiggy being a point guard, who is one of the top point guards in the Mountain West Conference last year. So those two bookends kind of anchoring what we're doing, providing a great deal of leadership for our program over the last two months since we've started school. And we're making some pretty good strides.

Chris Hines, the shooting guard, and Jason Washburn, the 6'10" power forward, the other two of the forwards that are returning. Then we've got a combination of junior college players and freshmen, and two transfers, and we're just trying to mix it all together.

But we've had, as I said, we've had a great two months in the weight room, and conditioning, and just getting acclimated and trying to get this thing started and rolling in the right direction.

**Q. With this being a year of firsts for you and your team, what is the main thing right out of the gate that you're focusing on with your players to make an impact and put you on the Pac-12 map so to speak?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Well, it's kind of a tempting time to make it complicated. But for us, it's very much in the early stages and the word culture gets mentioned all the time. But with the coaching change comes a culture change. We're just not going to take any shortcuts initially. We've had attendance, perfect attendance, of our student-athletes going to class. We're on time. If we're lifting weights at 6:00 in the morning, we're on time for weights.

Not to be full of cliches, but we're focusing on what we can control and trying to simplify it. We're going to be accountable in all aspects, and we're going to be a hard-working group.

It's unbelievable what we've been doing in the weight room and on the track, conditioning in the two months leading up to our season. Just trying to encourage our guys to understand to be successful you have to have that work ethic and bring it with you daily.

**Q. When you first heard that you were coming to the Pac-12, what was the first thing that went through your mind?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: When I first -- well, see, it was interesting timing for me because I was an assistant coach with the New Jersey Nets when that announcement was made, so I was well aware of where we were when I was involved with the job.

But I think for a player, for a coach, anybody involved, even you guys, it's fun to be a part of an elite conference. Players want to play at an elite conference, coaches want to coach at an elite conference, and I think reporters want to write about top-level basketball.

So it's an exciting time for all of us, and it's challenging. You look down that schedule, and the 18 league games, you're hard-pressed to find where you're going to pencil in the W. But it's a great challenge, and we're looking forward to it.

**Q. Coming from the pro ranks back to college, do you think that gives you an edge over the other coaches in the Pac-12?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Oh, I certainly

wouldn't want to go on record saying I have an edge over any coach in the Pac-12. There are some great coaches in this league. I've been afforded the opportunity to coach at different levels and also play at different levels. I played for some great coaches in the NBA.

But I think everybody's got their own story and their own path to where they are. I don't break out the scrap book very often when I'm dealing with the student-athletes in terms of maybe where I was before. But you can't help but learn a little bit about the game when you've been involved with 80 to 100 games annually.

I did half of the scouting reports last year for the New Jersey Nets and probably watched four or five games in preparation for each team we played. So when you start doing the math and you see all the different ways to do things basketballwise, I have a pretty soiled understanding for it. But the other 11 coaches in this league certainly do as well.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about Dijon Farr and his improvement during the off-season coming into this season?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Yeah, Dijon Farr, a junior college player that's joined our program. We had a red-white scrimmage the other night. Dijon is probably the guy on our roster that I've probably seen the biggest improvement in terms of his conditioning, came in and worked as hard as anybody.

Extremely versatile player. He's going to be able to play some small forward for us, and I think at times some undersized power forward. But he runs like a deer, and he's been a joy to be around on the court.

A lot of junior college players may be a little bit behind in terms of catching on, but he's been doing a great job picking things up. He's a person that you never have to tell him twice about a mistake, and sometimes that's the case with players.

But you tell him something one time, and he's moving on to the next thing. That's not to say he won't make a different mistake, but he's been very coachable and fun to be around.

**Q. Can you talk about the attitude and the culture that was at Utah when you first got there? You said you wanted guys that wanted to play Utah basketball. How long do you see it taking to have your stamp on the program take over and the kids to play the way you want**

**them to and to be part of Utah? How long does that process take?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: I don't think anybody really can put a time limit on that. I'm not trying to buy myself any time and say that we're going to need two years or four years or whatever the case might be. Dave Foster here to my left may be a better person to ask that question in terms of what's changed.

I know Coach Boylen is a tremendous coach. We know as coaches you do your very best job. It didn't work out for him. I'm not sure about what culture he had. I just know again, to reinforce what I said earlier, we may not win every game.

But it's not going to be because we're not in shape, and it's not going to be because we don't play together and do those kind of things.

From 12 days ago when we had our first practice, I think our goal and our challenge right now is to make sure we're getting better. We're on a steep learning curve. The players don't know a lot of my terminology. We don't know a lot of the players' strengths and weaknesses from having limited time with them.

I do believe we'd be -- of the 12 teams in the Pac-12, I'd be really surprised if a team made more progress than we have in the last ten days. That's our goal is to try to get better from one week to the next, and one month to the next. Whatever that happens to be, when the time comes, it's hard to say. Let's just try to get a little bit better today and we'll see where it all ends up.

**Q. You guys are a beneficiary of all the conference expansion changing, whatever. There's been so much football driven. Does it surprise you how football driven college sports is? Did you realize that even as a basketball person? And where does basketball fit in to all of this do you think?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: To answer your question simply, I don't pay attention to what's going on in football. I love Coach Whittingham. I think they have a great football program. The politics is not one area that I'm very strong in. I just try to focus on basketball. I know a little bit about basketball and being around the game.

So if it's football -- if football is the reason we're in the Pac-12, then I'm a really big fan of football. But beyond that, I'm happy to be where I'm at. I think our basketball team's happy to be

where they're at. And our football program right now, it's interesting on that note is yet to win a Pac-12 game.

But I've witnessed three of those losses, and it just kind of reinforces what a turn over here, what a turn over there can mean. Because we've turned the ball over a number of times down on the 5-yard line, and all of a sudden you're 0-4 when you very easily could be 3-1, if the ball bounces a little differently. So that is about as much as I know about football.

**Q. You guys still play BYU once in the non-conference. But do you think going forward Colorado could be a rival for you guys?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: I think that's the plan. Geographically it makes sense. We're travel partners. A couple of institutions that have been around for a long time in that region. You can't really create rivals. I think that's something that just kind of takes care of itself over time.

But certainly there will be a lot of excitement those weeks leading up to our games with Colorado being the single Pac-12 game. Some of the excitement that's generated should be positive.

**Q. Coach, you talk about all the preparation and the things that you did in the NBA, what do you think the biggest adjustment or maybe I should say readjustment is going to be coming back to college for you as a coach?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Well, NBA-wise it's pretty cut and dry that it's all about basketball. A prime example of that is in the summertime. You, as a coach, in the NBA can be on the court working skill development, trying to improve players, being around the game 12 months out of the year.

There is not a period where anybody's telling you can't work with your players. It's very much let's get our players as developed and skilled as possible. Let's figure out how to win the next game. There are so many games, but it's just it doesn't have a whole lot to do with maybe building relationships with young men.

Obviously, you don't recruit a lot of the guys that you coach. It's funny, somebody asked me this morning what do you think about the recruiting? Isn't that a real pain? And my thought was I can remember being involved with the NBA and complaining that I don't have any say over who I coach.

Then it's one of those situations where you better be careful what you wish for, because now as a college coach, you are solely responsible for who you coach.

So there is good and bad to that. There is obviously a lot of work involved in recruiting players, but it's also very rewarding when you find the right couple of guys, and I think found some young guys to join our program that you can build it together.

But recruiting, probably dealing with the NCAA are some of the secondary things that are on your plate. It may be not as focused on basketball, but it's more like being a general manager for the basketball corporation where you're trying to piece everything together. It's been very rewarding, and I love being back.

**Q. Do you think defense will be your focus going into the season?**

DAVID FOSTER: Definitely. Like you said, defense is what I love to do. I love blocking shots and rebounding the ball. But over the summertime I've been working a lot offensively to improve on that side so that we can have more threats on the offensive end because the ball is what scores.

We've just got to put things together. Like I said, with Jiggy Watkins and myself being the bookends on the team, we've got to keep improving on that end of the court too.

**Q. Can you describe what the changing culture has been, and also what you as players have done with such a large turnover along with the new staff of kind of getting to know each other and establishing some sort of chemistry?**

DAVID FOSTER: It's been a great opportunity for me just because it's something that I've been able to experience with multiple head coaches in the past. Because I've seen the turnover in the past, and the opportunity to help these young players out, and also to help myself understand how I can be more of a leader and a voice on the team.

As far as the culture goes, we're working hard. I've been healthy. This is the healthiest I've been in my career here at Utah, so the opportunity to condition and workout every single day with the team has been great to help me improve.

**Q. You and your teammates, have you noticed the prospect of joining the Pac-12? Has that been a source of inspiration or motivation? Can you tell that the guys are excited about being part of this conference?**

DAVID FOSTER: Yeah, definitely. I couldn't say back in 2005 when I signed with Utah that I'd be having the opportunity to play for such a great conference. To get the news to play in the Pac-12 is an amazing opportunity. It helps with our recruiting and each day helping our team get better.

**Q. Can you talk about the difference in the kind of post players you're going to be going up against in the Pac-12 versus the ones you were facing?**

DAVID FOSTER: To be honest with you, and I probably should do more homework on this, I know a few guys. I know UCLA has some great big men. Arizona State has some height on their team.

But I'm excited to compete against whoever and whenever, and I'm looking forward to January, February, and March and to make an impact.

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: We spend a lot more time working on our own scouting reports trying to figure out who we have. Maybe not as much time spent on who we're playing.

**Q. How much did you know about Larry's intensity? About Larry, in general, coming in, and how long did it take to you figure out how intense he really is?**

DAVID FOSTER: When you go through that transition of finding a new coach, you always hear who is the athletic director looking for. When we heard about Coach Krystkowiak coming in, we all of a sudden started doing our research.

Just looking at his experience in the past, I knew this was a great fit. Him being a big guy and playing in the NBA could bring a lot of opportunity to the team. He's also very humble, and I've been loving practice ever since he's been here.

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: He has to say that (laughing).

DAVID FOSTER: It's true.

**Q. From a player's standpoint, you've got ten new, really 11 new teams to prepare for. Since both you and Josh are seniors, how have you guys given your expertise and experiences to the new freshmen coming in, in hopes of**

**getting them ready for this new venture that you're all on?**

DAVID FOSTER: I think the biggest thing we've been trying to do is making sure everybody's confidence level is there. Guys can't get down on themselves after missing a shot or turning the ball over.

So we just try to be there to lift them up and know that everything's okay and to move on to the next play, and that is the most important thing especially when we start playing conference games with all the pressure and the competition ahead of us.

**Q. You mentioned the difficulty in seeing where the W's are going to come in the first year here. Seeing the being last in the poll?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: A distant last as Dirk told me. How do you feel about finishing a distant last? I said, what exactly does a distant last mean? And I looked, and we're the only team with two digits.

**Q. What's it going to take in your mind to maybe make progress and surprise people in a new conference that you at this point don't know a lot about?**

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: That's a great question. Along with Colorado, we're a little bit of the unknown. Probably more so than Colorado just because they've got more of a nucleus back in their program. I keep kind of beating the same drum here, but for us, we've got so many internal things to sort out and try to improve on right now and learn that we really haven't had much time, maybe, like a lot of other teams to try to sort out where they might fit into the overall scheme of things.

Our goal is going to be to try to get better. We're going to compete every night. Every team that's on our schedule, we're going to go in assuming we can beat.

Just because we're picked last in my mind has no relevance to it. I made the comment earlier that there are always two or three teams in every league that exceed expectations. There are always two or three teams in every league that don't quite live up to expectations.

Now this is that time of year when there are poles done, and everybody has to make their predictions. But we'll be competitive, and we're

going to find some wins along the way.

I certainly hope we can be one of those two or three team that's exceeds some expectations. But further, we're in the foundation stages. The great thing about college basketball in my mind is whatever's broken on Thursday and Saturday night in your league, you get an opportunity Sunday through Wednesday and then again on Friday to fix it. We'll address some of those shortcomings, and continue to get better.

The one thing that was interesting on here, I was hoping somebody could do some research, because it says 12 -- I know all you guys are so smart -- but it says 12 times in 19 tries you've picked a winner, and I wanted to know how many times in 19 tries have you picked the bottom team correctly? Hopefully that's not quite as high of a number.

**Q. New league, new team, new cities, new players. Can you maybe talk about some teams and cities and arenas and coaches players you're looking forward to? I know you're going to say everyone, but maybe a couple of things to start with that you're looking forward to playing as a senior?**

DAVID FOSTER: I tell you what I'm not going to miss travel to go Laramie, Wyoming anymore. But definitely California schools. My family lives around Bakersfield, so they'll be able to catch both the Southern and the Northern games.

So any opportunity I can to get my family out to watch some of my games will be great. Then being able to play at Arizona and some of the schools that have the great tradition. Looking forward to playing at Oregon. I've never played on a court with a bunch of trees, so it should be good.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**