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## What makes this season a success/failure?

Posted by CMJ - 2009/12/23 16:04

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I was thinking today about what would constitute success this season. Even with our injuries to DJ and Hogans, we still have the talent to do great things THIS year. Anyways, sol was hoping to get a gander of some of the guys I respect the most.

My own list:

Winning at least 12 conference games  
Winning a Western title  
Making the SBC conference title game(Obviously a tourney win would be amazing)

Failure would be:

Finishing 9-9 or less in conference  
Losing first round of the SBC tournament

A satisfactory tho, somewhat disappointing season would be:

10-11 conference wins  
A semi-final or less appearance in the SBC tournament

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## Re:What makes this season a success/failure?

Posted by SUMG - 2009/12/23 19:10

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To me it'll be a disappointment if we don't go to the Dance. Sorry, but that's the way I feel. I know it's not easy to do that. We know that we have two more opportunities....until we have a huge rebuilding job. So, if we don't go to the Dance this year....

And one more thing: This is my main complaint about Coach Jones....it's always win the SBC tourney or else. We never have a good enough year to be considered for a Dance at large or a NIT.

And this year, as usual.....we're looking at having to win our tournament.

I'll be there every step of the way though.

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## Re:What makes this season a success/failure?

Posted by TheTastyGreek - 2009/12/26 14:46

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I'll be disappointed if we don't make the NCAA Tournament, too.

But unless we pretty much win out on the season, we can't get there without winning the conference tournament... And that's always a daunting task for any team.

So while I'll be at least a little disappointed personally, I think that if we can secure an NIT bid, the season won't be a disappointment. Postseason bids haven't been abundant in our program's history, and it's a positive for us if we get one to a non-CBI/CIT/whatever alphabet soup tourney starts up this year. It's not as big a step forward as I'd expected for us this year, but it would still be a step forward. Especially if we can win a game or two, which isn't inconceivable against NIT competition.

I still think we can win it all in the Belt. Honestly, I still think we can get through the season with just 6 losses, particularly now that I saw us bounce back against SELA.

I still don't give Denver credit for fixing their main problems from last year: Holding on to leads late and Winning on the road. The only respectable road win they have is over an 8 loss South Dakota State team that seems to be down significantly. And I'll believe they can finish a game when I see it. I saw their epic meltdown at the Pit last year (a great day for miraculously improbable results) and I saw them choke in an even more critical situation against UALR in Hot Springs when they couldn't work the clock or hold their lead through the Princeton offense. They've got talent and they're more experienced than last season, but I refuse to worry about them as a viable threat to win the Tournament yet. To carry over a relevant joke: Can they? Legitimately, yes. Will they? Nothing I've seen or read yet makes me believe

they've solved their main problems... So: no.

At the same time, I'm not overly worried about USA, either. And I don't think anyone was more optimistic about their prospects before the season than Quoner and I were, based on the little fundamental things that Ronnie Arrow obviously drills into his team. But the very real issues that led everyone to discount their prospects before the season started are all still there. They're still young. They're still inexperienced. They're still weak in the frontcourt, at least from a traditional perspective. They seem to rely on the same sort of tweener G/F undersized approach that WKU is using this year. Don't get me wrong, they're still a talented, well coached team. But I think their issues will catch up with them and they'll cool off during conference play. And I think we match up with them exceptionally well. We're deeper than they are at guard, and a steady diet of George and Eric inside should allow us to control the game. Anyone who saw USA's ESPN2 game against a much weaker than usual UALR team saw the dramatic difference from half to half once Mike Smith was out of the game. There's no team in the conference that I'd less like to play in a tournament situation this year, even WKU. But if we play to our abilities, I think we beat USA 7 or 8 times out of 10.

As for WKU, the Kersch injury really hurts them. MTSU couldn't get it done last year with Yates and Kanaskie... Montario Haddock and George Washington the Third (or whatever his name is) aren't going to put them over the top if Kanaskie couldn't do it. Troy... Who the hell knows? I don't think Maestri even knows what that team is going to go out on the floor and do on any given night.

If I had to lay odds today on the SBC Tournament in March, I'd have us as significant favorites to win it all, even without Dominique.

- NT- 40%
- USA- 20%
- WKU- 15%
- Denver- 10%
- Troy- 5%
- MTSU- 5%
- The Field- 5%

WKU obviously goes up if Kersch comes back without losing a step.

Some of you guys will think I'm out of my mind, especially after the FIU game. But I think that in the long term, that game may help us more than it hurt us. Back in the 06-07 season, we had that infuriating habit of not closing out games. The early and mid season problems led to that big "Finish" thing that Johnny used to focus the team when we most needed it: SBC Tournament time. We lost games we should have won during the regular season, but then when it was do or die, we won a tournament we arguably shouldn't have.

If the team starts to get complacent or overconfident this season, he's got the FIU game as a teaching tool to humble them again. I'm still very frustrated by that loss... But given that it happened, something good can still come from it.

Anyway... Back to the original question. With this team as it stands today, I'll be personally disappointed without an NCAA bid, but the season isn't a disappointment as long as we make the NIT. I think we can win a game or two in the NIT, but an NCAA berth is a one-and-out deal.

If we don't win the West, that's a disappointment. But it's a disappointment that can be overcome with an SBC Tournament win and an NCAA bid.

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## Re:What makes this season a success/failure?

Posted by GrandGreen - 2009/12/26 17:39

Based on pre-season expectations anything less than a NCAA bid would be disappointing. NT was not only returning 5 starters but all five are good basketball players. The loss of Johnson and to a lesser extent Hogans have really hurt this team. The recruiting class was disappointing to me in that it did not get that one player that I thought would get this team over the top. Instead, it got a couple of Juco complementary type players and a couple of high school players that would have to develop. Not a bad strategy until injuries to Johnson and Hogans. Forcing White into the full time point position and having to rely on completely unproven players as front court substitutes are huge obstacles for this team.

So far the results have not been good. White although playing adequately is not nearly as effective offensively playing 35+ minutes at the point. If Odufuwa or Tremial minutes are shortened by injury or just fouls, the team is in trouble. They have actually been playing the 6'4" Shorter at the two because lack of depth in the paint. Spencer is an average defender at best and has no offensive game, which at this point is a better option than Holman. Holman is thus far, poor

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on defense and hurts the team with his suspect shot selection. Knox had a few good moments in the early season, but has looked scared in his few minutes in recent games.

I do believe that NT still has the talent to get to the Dance, partially because of what appears to be a relatively weak Belt and because JJ's teams have a history of substantially improving around Belt Tournament time. A tournament win three years ago, and losses to the very strong WKU team in the last two; I hope are indications that NT can win this year. I think that possibility is primarily in the hands of White, he either advances as an offensive minded point or this team will remain what it is today, a mid level Belt Team.

JJ has bet NT's basketball future on this year and next year teams. Only duplicating their success level over the last two years, will be very disappointing. Even with the injuries and losing only Tremial next year, I still think this is NT's best chance for a breakout year.

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### Re:What makes this season a success/failure?

Posted by CMJ - 2010/02/26 02:50

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I wanted to hit 2 out of 3 before I call a season a true success(tho I suppose if we had won the SBC tourney without getting the other two I woulda been thrilled), and we've now hit one mark. Twelve league wins is our most in belt play and we still have 1 yet to go. Should we win that you can cross off that Division title as well.

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### Re:What makes this season a success/failure?

Posted by CMJ - 2010/02/28 01:31

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Even if we lost in the quarters, I'd still call this a successful season. We just went 12-2 at home, 8-6 on the road(6-3 in league play). I fprget our record in close games, but it's pretty remarkable. All of these are signs of championship teams. Championship teams win on the road, the win close games, the dominate at home.

What a ride it's been from the start of practice till now. This year has been alot of fun.

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