



**St. John's Head Coach Chris Mullin discusses the state of the program with  
CBS Sports College Basketball Insider, Jon Rothstein**

*Sept. 22, 2015 at NYY Steak*

**On the style of play St. John's fans can come to expect:**

"If I were to pick out a style, I would lean towards San Antonio [Spurs] where the ball moves and the body moves and it's more instinctual. Ideally, we are trying to teach these kids to play with the guy next to them. Make a play for your teammate. I don't want our guys looking at me to call a play for them. I'd rather have them out there feeling confident and prepared where they're playing with each other. That is what we're trying to install [here at St. John's]. We play 3-on-3 [in practice] to help sharpen instincts. A lot of games are won and lost in the middle with loose balls and fast breaks. The plays you set up, you are probably going to get a good shot but it's the plays in between like live ball turnovers, long rebounds, 50/50 balls that will make a difference. It is important for our players to be comfortable in those situations and to have some poise."

**On his initial impressions of the team:**

"I love the work ethic of this group. They're low maintenance and they're unselfish. They're picking things up that we're putting in each and every day, so it's been a joy. I told the guys to give me two months of consistent hard work. We're going to get in the best possible shape. Physical fitness and mental fitness go together. When you're physically fit, you're more apt to listen better. You don't get tired and turn the ball over as much, and you have a better attitude. So if we're mentally and physically fit, I'm going to live with the results. Now, I want to win every single game, but if they give me that [I'll be happy]. We have nine new players and that's unprecedented, even at the NBA level. We have good guys and we're working hard."

**On the state of the BIG EAST:**

"It's a very strong conference. Being small is better. You develop real rivalries because you play each other home and away. Players like Patrick Ewing and Ed Pinckney aren't staying four years like they once did. To a degree, I think it levels the playing field nationally. It's another change to the landscape of college basketball."

**One thing Coach Mullin would like to see St. John's achieve this year:**

"I'd like to see unselfish play. I want our guys to play for each other on both sides of the ball. If a guy is open in the corner that pass has to be made. If there is a pick-and-roll defense and they're double teaming through the full rotation, that guy is there. Probably the most important aspect of successful teams is that the guy next to you knows you're really his teammate."

### **On recruiting an NBA free agent compared to recruiting at St. John's:**

"There are a lot more similarities between the NBA game and the college game nowadays. When you sign NBA players to \$80/\$90 million dollar contracts, you still have to recruit them. A lot of those guys have several offers of that magnitude, so it becomes about the fit: the style of play, the relationship with the coach, exposure. All those different things we can deliver here in New York City. We're not trying to recruit everybody. I believe you have to find the right players that can handle playing here and will play the way we want to play."