

**June 16, 2009**



An Interview With:

## **COACH MIKE BREY LUKE HARANGODY**

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to thank everyone for being here in attendance today and for those on the line. Today's press conference with Mike Brey and Luke Harangody is being streamed live on und.com and will be archived about an hour after the conclusion of today's press conference. Also there will be a full transcript available on-line about two hours following today's press conference.

What we're doing to do first is ask Coach Brey and Luke Harangody to make a couple opening statements. We will then turn the questions over for those who are on-line on the telephone and then those have attendance here can ask their questions. With that being said, Luke, if you want to make a couple statements and then Coach Brey. Luke?

COACH MIKE BREY: Well, I'd like to make the first one. Yesterday when he said he was coming back, I told him we'd have to come back and deal with all of you guys Tuesday, and he said, "I changed my mind again," because he had to deal with you today.

Certainly we're thrilled to have him come back and we'll talk a lot about it here over the next 30 minutes. It was a great and very productive process for him and one that two months ago we sat here and talked about taking full advantage of, and I think he certainly did that. He's better for it, and at the end made a decision that was gut feel to come back and be a college basketball player and a college student and pick up some unfinished business. But certainly we're thrilled to have him back as a senior.

LUKE HARANGODY: Well, first of all, I'm just glad to be here back. It feels great. The first person I see when I walk in is Zach Hillesland, so it makes my decision feel even better. It was a decision as Coach talked about that came down to me, just wanted to be a kid again, another year of

college, and definitely I look back and didn't want to go out on the year we had last year. We have high expectations for this year with Ben and Scott coming in, so it's an exciting time for me and the University going into next season.

**Q. You said you wanted to be a kid again. What was it during the process that you saw or that you understood or went through that said, you know what, I don't know if I'm ready to handle this in my life just yet?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I wouldn't say I wouldn't be able to handle it, but it was obvious to see that the NBA is a business. It's not like being at Notre Dame around the group of guys that we have. I realize it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be with a group like this. Definitely you get to see that and come back to a great group of guys. In the NBA it's much more a business, very cut-throat, so that has a little bit to do with it, too.

**Q. Was there any point during the process where you thought, maybe I have played my last college game, or were you coming back the entire time?**

LUKE HARANGODY: The whole time I went through the process, like I said before, it was going to be 100 percent, so I went into it thinking that I did play my last college game because I'm here trying to get a job. But when it came down to it, I realized that my time wasn't done here yet.

**Q. What did you learn about yourself as a player over the last eight weeks?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I couldn't be any more confident in my game right now, I learned so much. I think that's one of the biggest reasons I went into it. Even when I put my name in, why is he doing this, he has no chance of doing this or that, and I proved a lot of people wrong. I made myself a serious name in discussions and things like that. I gained a lot of ground throughout the process and learned a lot about my game.

**Q. Do you feel more confident coming into this season and feel like you've grown even more after this past week?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I believe I have grown. I played against some of the best players in the country, every different workout. There was first-round picks involved, and I definitely did more than hold my own. So yeah, I feel very confident.

**Q. How big of an influence did last season have on your decision, that you wanted one more last shot at the Big East?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Yeah, definitely. Like I said, I'm not going to get a chance to do this ever again. Last season didn't go as we wanted, and I feel with the additions we made to the team this year and with the freshmen coming in we have a strong nucleus to make a run in the Big East and even the NCAA Tournament, and that's why I came back. I have goals in mind for this year, and I feel like we can set them.

**Q. You said it was an easy decision. I think you were saying you were 50/50, you could go either way. Did anything change in the past week to make it an easier decision?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Actually I'd like to restate that. It wasn't the easiest decision in the world (laughter). But I think just I spent a lot of time by myself, even away from my parents, kind of shut my cell phone off, and I just thought, what would make me the happiest next year. I realized the NBA is always going to be there, there's always going to be a professional career, but as I said before, Notre Dame is not going to be there, so I decided to stay. That would be just too much to miss.

**Q. Can you sort of pinpoint or ballpark the time that you really kind of came to the realization that this was what you wanted to do?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Probably came down to Monday at 2:00 when I made a decision, right then and there.

**Q. Can you just talk about the difference in your team next year with him?**

COACH MIKE BREY: Well, I think I feel like there was unfinished business because you want to keep working with him. I think our track record with him here has been pretty good. He's gotten better every year, he's added things to his game, and I think that was always in the back of his mind that he could make improvements individually. But I remember having one discussion with him, and a lot of it has been written about where he is with the records, and he cut me off quickly.

He really doesn't care about any of that stuff, and that's I think what's makes him very special. Here it's team stuff and leading a group back to the NCAA Tournament, being a senior captain, something I think I talked to him about that I thought not only was important next year but important for his career and maybe his life, to be a real true -- the real, true leader of our team.

But certainly with him back and some of the new faces, you feel like you can make a run at one of the bids in our league. That's realistic. I talked to him about this at the end. I said -- before we put his name in, we sat here two months ago, I said, we have a nice nucleus of guys and freshmen coming in, but if we didn't have the two kids getting eligible, I would have told him to stay in the draft. I think it would have been smart because I think it would have been too much of a risk with us rebuilding with a lot of young guys. I don't think I could have looked him in the eye and been honest, but I do think with the progression of our guys and the addition of those two guys, we have a chance to continue to play similarly how we played with the nucleus, those four guys that just left.

**Q. Did you have any sense of where you might have been drafted if you had decided to stay in?**

LUKE HARANGODY: You know, there was a lot of talk about where I was going to go. There was a strong chance, a handful of teams interested in me in the first round and then early second round. But nothing is guaranteed. I mean, the way people were talking about the draft this year, no one really knows what they're doing and it was a pretty unsure thing. I felt like if I was going to keep my name in it, it's going to be -- I was going to be taking a big chance because I had no idea where I was going to get drafted.

COACH MIKE BREY: I'm going to add to that since I've spent a lot of time with these guys. Starting at 23 with Sacramento down to 30, I mean, on draft night there's a chance he could have popped up on one of those, but there's also a chance that so many things would have happened. I actually sat with the Sacramento scout, they picked 31, first pick in the second round on Sunday at his workout, and boy, they would have been very interested. But there's just so many unknowns right there. And I think what it comes down to is you certainly have a pretty sure thing here, more of a sure thing here than all of that stuff.

The one thing that he did is really helped

his status. I don't understand these NBA guys. You just watched him play against pro front lines in the Big East for two years, and we know the damage he's done. But I think the two areas, the two specific areas when I sat at the pre-draft camp and then talked to guys, physically, athletically, seeing him in person that his bounce and his running and moving, they were impressed with that. And then his shot-making ability from a lot of different spots. He started shooting from different spots and even threes for us. Those are two areas that I think really impressed guys.

He's not in the draft, but he leaves with guys are up on him as we go into next year and into next season. So from that standpoint it was a great experience.

The interesting thing about this experience, you've got to be selfish, and you're kind of on your own. I was thinking, you probably haven't set a screen in two months, and you haven't passed it -- but you can't. Everybody is in a mode of, even though it's a team game, for two months you're in a mode of my game, my footwork, my shot. And for a guy who's been such a team guy, I think it's really refreshing to think about being back with a team and certainly what is the essence of the sport.

**Q. Did you get any sense of what part of your game you need to work on? Was there any talk from the GMs or along those lines?**

LUKE HARANGODY: With the players and myself, it's more of just my physical abilities. I'm 6'8" in shoes, I'm not your prototypical NBA power forward, so it really didn't have anything to do with the development of my game, it's just how they view me and kind of the stigma of me being undersized in the NBA.

COACH MIKE BREY: The tone that came out of so much was he's going to be a 10-, 12-year guy in the league but maybe not this year. That was a bit of a theme that kept coming back. Of course I answered a couple guys, why not? Flip Saunders, for example, I sat with him in Chicago. He said he's going to be a 10-year guy, going to be a heck of a pro, but maybe not this year. I said, why not? Why can't you get it started now, which is the reason you go into this thing and maybe go for it, which is where his head was at at times and had to be.

So I think, again, he's leaving with a heck of an impression -- one of the themes he and I have talked about, too, is you come back to improve -- he may never be picked where he deserves to be picked, but there's a lot of guys in

that league that after three or four years people have said, boy, we missed the boat on that one.

Now, the other side of that could be true and he could play his way right into the first round next year, which I think there's an excellent chance of happening, given how he's left off this two-month experience.

**Q. You succeeded in the most difficult conference in the country, yet you go to a place like this and you have to sort of re-prove yourself. Did that seem a little bit unusual to you, considering the body of work you've already established?**

LUKE HARANGODY: It was hard to come to terms with that. You play, you go on the road, and these NBA workouts, you played against all these guys in the Big East, in tournaments, and you put up numbers against them and you have to prove yourself all over again because they're the guys with potential, they're the guys with the athleticism and wing span.

I liked being in that position again. I haven't been in that position in a while where I had to prove myself. It was a challenge, and I realized going into this next year it's going to be the same thing.

I think that's going to make me an even better player.

**Q. I'm sure you talked to a lot of general managers. What kind of feedback were you getting throughout the process?**

LUKE HARANGODY: You know, everywhere I went, every workout was just positive feedback. They would make a statement, it would be a great decision if you left, but you have to think about coming back to school. It's never going to be there again. We all discussed that with every team, and what I have here and the team and the season we have coming up next year, that's never going to be there again, so that's kind of the stuff in my head.

**Q. Did you get a sense of what life in the NBA would be like from people?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Yeah, you sort of get the feeling, travel around, talking to different guys, and you know playing in college, it's half a season, there's a lot more traveling. Like I said before, it's a lot more business-like. You get a bit of a sense of that. I think it changes a lot from the college game to the pros. I learned a lot from Rob Kurz, Chris Quinn. But yeah, definitely got a little sense of that.

**Q. Does that concern you at all, what life in the NBA will be like, especially compared to the good situation that you have here?**

LUKE HARANGODY: It doesn't concern me one bit. That's life; it's business. It's like getting a job anywhere else. It's going to be different than college, though. Everybody has to deal with that, just not in professional athletics.

**Q. Can you describe the role that Coach Brey played in your decision-making process?**

LUKE HARANGODY: The whole time through, Coach Brey was great. At times when I needed my space, he gave me my space, and at times when I needed to talk, he was there. We've talked a lot through this whole process. Our relationship has probably grown a lot more. We talked about the other day how comfortable we are together since when I was a freshman and could barely walk into his office and have a conversation with him.

That's another great thing about this process. Coach Brey learned a lot about me I think through this process and I learned a lot about him, and our relationship is that much better for it.

**Q. How do you be cautious about selfishness and how do you keep yourself from thinking about I'm going to work on this now and whether this is good for what the team is doing?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Yeah, you realize players come back and they want to work on this and that, but I'm not in that position right now. I don't need to do anything in my game, change my game drastically. If I go out there every game and shoot NBA threes, it's not going to make me a better prospect. Teams know what I can do. I'm not worried about that now. That process is over. Coach Brey knows that, my teammates know that.

It's good to be on a team again with guys that are family, and I'm just looking forward to wins this year and not individual statistics.

COACH MIKE BREY: And one of the things he and I talked about before he put his name in, I said, you know, you need to do this, and as I told you two months ago, he was a little reluctant to get out and do this, and he needed to do this, but I said, if you come back and if you go out there, you've got to go for it like you're not coming back, or you can't attack it the right way. Then you've got to come back for the right reasons, and I want you to think about that, because two months ago, you're going to be going

through some things -- it was an unbelievable maturing and educating process for him, and at the end of the day -- I spent a lot of time with him this weekend because it was getting to be crunch time.

I think he understands why he's coming back with his team, and again, we talked about getting back -- at lunch on Sunday after the workout, we talked about our team and getting back in the NCAA Tournament, and for him to play in three out of four -- and the other thing his class could be the winningest class in our history, Jackson, Peoples, him. These are things he talked about.

At the end of the day I think he understood what he's coming back for and what he's doing it for. Like he said, it's not like they need to see him being our two man. He is who he is, he's got to keep doing what he's doing and he'll find his niche to make a living next year.

**Q. One of the questions was what position would he play. What did you hear from GMs about where they ultimately do see him playing?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I think they see me playing a forward. I think a lot of times were surprised, as coach said, how quick I am in person. I believe I can guard some of the forwards in the NBA. This year definitely I'll just try to improve on my quickness. That's one of the things that I can do on the defensive side of the ball.

**Q. You mentioned the confidence in your game. Can you give us an anecdote or to about a workout where you proved to yourself that yeah, I can make it?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I came into a group workout in Minnesota. There was a lot of teams there, and I felt that was my best workout, my strongest workout. I was doing everything right, coming off screens, shooting it, pick and pop, finishing at the rim. I realized that this is a possibility.

**Q. Who were some of the players that were there?**

LUKE HARANGODY: DaJuan Summers from Georgetown, Ahmad Nivens and Damion James from Texas for the bigs.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about what you think you're better at now than you were two months ago, what you learned about yourself or what you think you can do that you couldn't before?**



LUKE HARANGODY: I believe my footwork is a lot better, especially on the perimeter. I've dropped weight again, as people talked about. I've never been able to move this good. Guarding people at workouts, I wasn't guarding fives, I was guarding fours, so I had to move my feet. So I think that's gotten a lot better. It's just the way I shoot the ball, too. I've never felt this confident.

**Q. How much weight did you lose?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I'm down to 240 so it was about ten pounds.

**Q. What makes you think when you look around that you can be better next season?**

LUKE HARANGODY: You know, last season Coach talked about the Big East was just -- I don't think you're ever going to see a league like that again. The Big East was a lot. We talked about that, and with the addition of Ben and Scott, the freshmen coming in, and Tory and John, too, we feel confident. Ty Nash has grown as a player, he's had a big summer so far from what I've heard.

This is a confident group, a group coming in with an attitude, kind of a chip on our shoulder because this is going to be like going into last season where it takes something to start off in the top ten. We're not on anybody's radar right now and I think that's a good thing for us.

**Q. Can you talk about what your expectations are?**

COACH MIKE BREY: If we could play in the Big Ten, maybe that would help us a little bit more (laughter). We just want to fight back and get one of those seven or eight bids. I think with him back and what we have, we can realistically say we can make a run at one of the bids, period. That would be a heck of a way for him to finish his career. We get into that territory, then we'll see if we can make another run.

But certainly the league does change. It comes back to earth a little bit. There's no question about it. I think for us, for these seniors to kind of lead us back into that territory and be the all-time winningest class, it's exciting, because he comes back to break in the new Joyce Center, I think there's good timing there. And I think that's realistic for us, chase down one of the seven or eight bids. That's what we'll try and do.

**Q. What do you think you can be better at next season?**

COACH MIKE BREY: That's a good one. I'd like to see us get going a little better offensively

than we were this year. The year before or two years before we were very potent offensively, up in the 80s. I think we probably have that potential again. I think just looking forward to that, Ben and Scott are able to help us with that. We actually were the statistical champion last year in assists. This year we're the statistical champion in assists to turnover and least amount of turnovers. That's pretty good. Our basketball IQ remains to be very high.

(Tim) Abromaitis and (Carleton) Scott have become good basketball players for us, and when we ask more of them, it's their third year in our program, it's not like they're 18 year olds being added to the mix.

Certainly on the defensive end, can we get better there, can we rebound the ball better, that's always a certain, rebounding the basketball against the athletic ability in our league. We're not going to necessarily steal it from people but can we keep the field goal percentage down.

Those are things we think about. It's kind of neat, I think it's neat. I was talking to him, one other aspect of his year is to in a leadership role be a mentor to three young big guys who are really looking forward -- you would think those three guys would be cheering for him to leave because they'd get playing time. There were three young big guys that were very relieved with his decision yesterday and happy that they're going to get a chance to really -- they've watched him, will work with him, play against him, get beat up by him, be helped by him. I think that helps, too, to have that responsibility, to mentor some young guys and kind of adds a new dynamic to your locker room.

We lost four seniors who were such a key part of our fabric, it just changes the personality of the team, which is neat about college basketball. You always have new personalities to add.

**Q. Does it really mean nothing to you to go for personal records?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Obviously that would be great to have those records. I mean, you can't lie about that. But that's not the reason I came back to school. If I get the records, great; if I don't, great. I'm just looking to have a great season, like Coach said, getting back to the NCAA Tournament.

**Q. Obviously as you mentioned there's no way of knowing where you would have ended up, but if you did know or you were guaranteed that somebody was picking you if you were there, if you had gotten that first**

**round guarantee, would you have said, okay, I'm going to stay in the draft?**

LUKE HARANGODY: You know, if that happens, and that rarely happens, by the way, but I think you'd have to strongly consider staying in --

COACH MIKE BREY: He'd have to go. I told him in my office, and he is right about -- that's a real rarity of getting a guarantee and then feeling good about it on the night of the draft when all those things change. But I told him, I said, if you get to a great position, I'm going to be the first one to shake your hand. You've got to go.

I've been there before with Troy Murphy, and no one was more happy for Troy. Yes, you do have to go. If you have guys in that position I think you have to really -- it's time to move on, time to get on with the next phase.

But as he said, that's a tricky dynamic, and he was in that area where there's so many moving parts. It was dangerous.

**Q. Is there anything you could have been told by the scouts that would have convinced you, okay, that's enough for me to know I should stay in?**

LUKE HARANGODY: That's a good question. I don't know if you really hear anything like that that's going to make you -- in a position that I was in, so kind of right in the fringe between the first and second rounds, so it's hard for me to hear concrete advice where I say, this isn't a lock, I need to stay. For players in my area I don't think that really happens. If I was to stay in it was definitely going to be a question if I was going to go in the first or early second.

**Q. You mentioned earlier that teams know who you are. Do you think your stock won't change too much between now and next year, or do you think you can still be on the rise, or do you think maybe you'll be in a similar position because of those limitations that you have?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I think as Coach talked about, my stock is already on the rise. What I went through these three weeks, I don't think it could have gone better for me from what I've heard. It definitely was a positive doing this, and your stock can go up if certain things happen. But I'm not going to be worried about that now. I'm kind of just focused on the season.

COACH MIKE BREY: One of the aspects I talked with him about over the weekend was for getting where you're guaranteed, what spot you're going to be in, you need the next basketball challenge in your life, and if you do, go for it. We

support you 100 percent. And obviously you go into a mysterious area, but he's always played with a chip on his shoulder.

When he got here he wasn't supposed to be in this league and then he wasn't supposed to be -- I said, I think you've got to think about that, and if that is something you feel you need -- he certainly has dominated everybody in the Big East for a couple years, then I thought about that. I said, you may need to do that, and if you need to, I think you should go for it. I think that's something he thought through and really concentrated on at times.

**Q. What is it about this process that's going to help you be a good senior captain?**

LUKE HARANGODY: You know, I've learned from some great captains in the past, ever since my freshman year. I realized what kind of role I have to step into. These past four weeks I've grown up a lot as a person and realize me and Tory are going to be the voices of the team, and I need to step up in that role. I've always been the type of player to lead through action instead of my voice, but this year I need to be more vocal, and I've learned I've had to be. So I think I'll have a lot to do this year, as Coach said, with the younger players.

**Q. You look at the stats and your numbers are similar to guys like Tyler Hansbrough. Those guys have been talked about since day one at top 15, top 18. Is it frustrating to hear that and wonder why am I not mentioned in that same voice because my college career is similar to what these guys have done?**

LUKE HARANGODY: It is, and obviously it does get frustrating, because as Coach said, I've been playing against a lot of these players in the Big East for the past two years and I've been successful. My road is going to be a little more difficult. So be it. That's why as Coach said I have a chip on my shoulder.

**Q. What are you taking for summer school?**

LUKE HARANGODY: That's one thing I really wasn't looking forward to coming back to. I'm taking Spanish. (Laughter.)

**Q. Speaking of Tyler Hansbrough, I believe you spoke with him about going through the four-year process.**

COACH MIKE BREY: I recommended he

call him, but he never did.

**Q. Did you speak with anybody that was in a similar situation and faced with the same decision?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Not really.

**Q. Are you trying to stay in that range, become a three or a two now?**

LUKE HARANGODY: I'll be the same player I was last year. This is where my body feels most comfortable. As strong as I was last year, I've gotten even stronger. I feel like I'm moving the best right now. I think I'm going to play the one next year.

COACH MIKE BREY: He's got a shot to start.

**Q. You played on an AAU team with Scott Martin if I'm not mistaken. Can you talk about coming back and putting that relationship out on the court? Obviously you practiced together last year, but can you talk specifically about that relationship and what you're looking forward to this season?**

LUKE HARANGODY: Yeah, I've known Scott for a while, definitely through high school and AAU. What he brings to this team is such an important dynamic for us. He's going to be a key for us right away. I mean, I look forward to playing with him. Just last year in practice he had stints where he was unstoppable. We're excited to have him and we're excited to have Ben and Scott play because it seems like they've been here forever but haven't touched the court.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, everyone, for attending.

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