

October 23, 2014



An interview with:

**COACH HERB SENDEK
JONATHAN GILLING**

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to introduce Arizona State head coach Herb Sendek and student-athlete Jonathan Gilling.

Herb, provide an opening remark.

COACH SENDEK: Really excited about Jon Gilling. He's been a terrific and integral part of our team for the last four years. He basically has been a four-year starter except for the fact last year he discovered he loves to come off the bench. He's our best sixth man.

Jon has a very high basketball IQ. Our offense is always more fluid when he's involved. Our defense is better positioned when he's leading his teammates and giving instructions. He's made a lot of big shots for us. I think he's had the best off-season and pre-season since he's been at Arizona State.

He's a senior from Denmark, an outstanding student, a great representative and ambassador for our program and university. It's with great pleasure that he's with us here today.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and take questions.

Q. What do you make of the fact that the polls have you projected at number nine in the conference?

COACH SENDEK: I mean, I could see where Arizona would be the unanimous or almost, I hear, unanimous number one pick. I think that's clear-cut. As for the rest of the league, you could probably put everybody in a hat, shake it up, have just as good a chance at predicting the order of finish as we are able to do sitting here today.

Last year literally one basket separated the third seed from the ninth seed in our league. Very few people have watched maybe more than the

one team in their area practice, so there's so many unknowns, a lot of basketball to be played.

We all know at the end not only will the league standings be close, look how many teams were tied last year, but beyond that the games are going to come down to the final possession.

So how anybody short of Nostradamus could sit here today and predict like there really is a difference between ninth and tenth or eighth and ninth just is unreasonable.

Q. Jonathan, your sister plays at Washington. What was it like for you to come over to the United States from Denmark, if you helped her make that decision? How often do your parents get to see you guys play here in the States?

JONATHAN GILLING: I actually have three sisters, one older that started the trend coming to America to play basketball. I came here. My youngest sister wanted to play basketball over here, too, so she came and went to Washington. I have a younger sister that's a freshman at Cal State Northridge. I think my oldest sister just started the trend of coming over here. We're taking over the West Coast kind of (laughter).

Q. You do have a lot of new players that most of us haven't seen yet. Who has stepped up for you?

COACH SENDEK: First, let me say I'm really excited about the guys we have returning. I think to a man they've had a good off-season and pre-season. They've come back improved.

But to your point we do have a number of newcomers. We would expect many of them to have important roles and contribute immediately.

Early on in practice, a freshman point guard we have, Tra Holder, has done an outstanding job of distributing the basketball. He's really been impressive.

Willie Atwood is 6'7", versatile forward from Memphis. Has given us the kind of player we haven't had in recent years. He has some really unique attributes.

Gerry Blakes, the California Junior College Player of the Year last year, 6'4", combo guard, is blessed with terrific talent.

Likewise, Roosevelt Scott, 6'3" guard who has extraordinary quickness and athletic ability, really helps the energy of our team.

I could keep going, but that's a brief overview of some of the new guys, the injection they're providing for our team right now.

Q. A fan question for you. Could you give an idea to the 942 Crew Curtain of Distraction, what would it be and what has been your favorite distraction?

JONATHAN GILLING: That's a tough question because I'm usually not looking at the distraction while I'm on the court.

I think I saw a picture with I think Miley Cyrus that was kind of funny.

For an idea, I don't know. They seem like they have all the ideas, so...

They're doing a really good job with that. They should continue that.

COACH SENDEK: I would echo Jon. During the game, I don't have the opportunity to watch the Curtain of Distraction very much. Our 942 Crew has done a great job for us, breaking student attendance records, they keep setting marks each and every time we play. We're really appreciative of all their support.

Q. Over the last few seasons, tempo has been something we've talked a lot about. Is that going to be emphasized?

COACH SENDEK: Even more so as our personnel has continued to change, we're clearly playing an up-tempo, fast-breaking, attack style of play. Last year we not only lead the conference in three-point field goals, but free throw attempts, two statistics that would support that kind of statement.

We think we have the personnel to continue to move even further in that direction this year.

Q. Coach, you called Jonathan Gilling the most cerebral player you ever coached.

COACH SENDEK: One of them.

JONATHAN GILLING: He said 'ever'.

COACH SENDEK: I misspoke, I apologize (laughter).

Q. Could you expound on that comment.

COACH SENDEK: Sure. First, you have to find something nice to say about Jon as he sits here next to us. But he just has a great feel for the game. There's certain things as a coach that you can't teach. Some people just have good instincts, they have a good feel. Other guys you could watch film with them every day and point out the same thing, but things then happen at real-time speed and they don't have those instincts. It's really hard to give them that gift.

I think Jon has that gift. He has a great feel for the game. He knows how to play. He plays the right way. He's really a fun guy to play with on offense because when he's on offense, he helps the ball move, he creates action with his movement, and then he also now has had a great deal of experience, so he's seen everything at least once and is able to help our players know what to expect, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports