

# Bill Self enjoying post-title life

BY LEE BARFKNECHT  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

It's true, Kansas basketball coach Bill Self says.

Winning a national championship really does change your life, or at least it has in the short time since the Jayhawks knocked off Memphis for the title last month.

## **B'nai B'rith Banquet**



Kansas coach Bill Self said he was never contacted about the Oklahoma State position. "I never even talked to my wife about it," he said.

"The biggest thing I've noticed," Self said Monday, "is I'm a little more recognizable."

In public, that's not always positive. But in recruiting, Self said, it has boosted Kansas' already historic reputation.

"There is an instant interest level that probably didn't exist before the tournament," he said. "Kids are emotional, and right now there are emotional thoughts about us that we need to take advantage of."

One example:

Kansas just got an oral commitment from guard Royce Woolridge of Phoenix, son of former Notre Dame and NBA player Orlando Woolridge. Royce Woolridge is a high school sophomore.

Self, the main speaker for Wednesday's 54th B'nai B'rith charity sports banquet at Qwest Center Omaha, also has found other ways to maximize benefits from KU's first basketball crown in 20 years.

First, he secured a contract extension and salary hike of still undisclosed terms, a situation speeded up when the job at Oklahoma State — Self's alma mater — came open during the NCAA tournament.

Self insists that the OSU job talk was no distraction to him or his team.

"There was no courtship," he said. "They never contacted me. They never had a third party

contact me. They never had a booster call me. I have an attorney, and he never heard from them. I never even talked to my wife about it."

Self eventually met after the season with Oklahoma State Athletic Director Mike Holder, but Self said no and returned to Kansas with new muscle to flex.

Projects to upgrade player housing, academic affairs and a practice facility got jump-started.

"There were some long-term plans," Self said. "What we've been able to do is go to respective people and make all those short-term plans. Instead of being on the books for five to seven years from now, now things are going to move real fast."

Does all that mean that Self, 45, wants to coach at Kansas until he's 75?

He responded by asking at what age Tom Osborne stepped away from football at Nebraska. When told 60, Self said:

"That's still a long time. I think you'll hit the wall eventually. You've got to run at a pretty fast pace for a long time. To keep getting good players and having success, you've got to live in the fast lane for work.

"I see myself being a long-timer, but not a real-long-timer."

Coming back to Omaha for Wednesday's banquet sparks good memories for Self.

Qwest Center Omaha is where Kansas played the first two rounds of this season's NCAA tournament.

"Omaha is a cool city," Self said. "I didn't have much time to get around, but all my family and our fans said it was really cool. And I was really impressed with the Qwest Center. That's a heck of a place."

Getting back to the national title game next year would take one of Self's better coaching efforts.

The Jayhawks lose five seniors and have had three other players — junior Brandon Rush, junior Mario Chalmers and sophomore Darrell Arthur — declare for the NBA draft.

"There's a great chance all of them will stay in the draft," Self said. "We're preparing like we're not going to have those guys."

Kansas has signed seven players for next season, including a rarity — two junior college transfers.

"The reason I wanted to find a couple was that we would have seven freshmen otherwise," Self said. "That would be too big a class. You like to lose three a year, as opposed to potentially seven or eight."

Kansas' key returning players as of now are junior guard Sherron Collins and sophomore center Cole Aldrich.

"We'll be very young, and we'll have growing pains," Self said. "But I love our anchors coming back in Cole and Sherron. Having a point guard and a big guy is a good place to start."