

## 2012 A-10 Men's Basketball Championship Semifinal – Game 10 – March 10, 2012

#3 Xavier – 71

#2 Saint Louis - 64

### XAVIER POSTGAME INTERVIEW

COACH MACK: I thought the game was going to be a tough one. We had lost our two previous games to St. Louis in both instances, I thought our play was pretty good for one half and pretty poor for the second half.

Tonight I thought we really defended well. They came out and I think they had 8 points in the first TV time-out and you look at it and they get 23 for the first half, they scored 16 points in a matter of -- 13 points in a matter of 16 minutes.

We talked about it in the locker room, we have had that feeling before where you know you're in the NCAA Tournament and how much does this game mean to you? My former mentor, Skip Prosser used to say a "hungry cat hunts best", they're a gutsy team, they continued to battle but I'm proud of our kids.

**Q. Can you talk about what you think the difference is in this game and the first two and what it means to get to a championship?**

TU HOLLOWAY: The first time we played St. Louis we were still trying to put things together and when we went to their house the second time and we were up by halftime and we folded a little bit in the second half. I didn't play well myself, but now we're in the A-10 Tournament, new life, a lot of confidence and to be here in the championship I'm excited. Coach talked about it the last three years and for three years we fought for it but now we're here and we're ready for it.

**Q. Kenny, talk about the evolution of this team, the last couple of games when you guys look like you're playing with a new lease on life?**

KENNY FREASE: That's what I've been saying, all year, trying to play well together, our backs were against the wall over the last couple of games and we knew that we had to win or we were going home and I think that's when this team is going to thrive and I think today we were able to show that we were able to stay with it through the up's and down's, whatever it was, we were able to stay with it.

**Q. Kenny, can you talk about the job you and Walker did down low, the first time you got Conklin in foul trouble and how tough is it to play against a player who is so physical?**

KENNY FREASE: It's not just how quick he is, he's a quick player and skilled around the basket and getting him in foul trouble early helped us out a lot. He's a great player and in the second half we were able to sustain a little bit, he was able to get his basket off, but down the stretch we were able to keep him off the glass and I think that was a key.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned how hungry team can be dangerous, can you speak to playing St. Bonaventure tomorrow who is not right now a "bubble" team and who needs a win to get into the NCAA Tournament.**

COACH MACK: We don't know what we are, and we didn't come all this way to just "show up" in a championship. I have no doubt we will be ready. It's a little different against St. Bonaventure, with the teams we played in this tournament so far we have had great familiarity with it. I can't remember when we played St. Bonaventure, it was one of our early games so with an unbalanced schedule, there is not as much familiarity with teams you play especially early on, but make no mistake our guys are here to win it and that's what we're going to try to do tomorrow afternoon.

**Q. Dez, you said you think this team has what it takes, are you seeing that now and do you think the team is playing its best ball in the last few games?**

DEZMINE WELLS: I stand by what I said, the leadership we have on this team I feel is a spark. I look forward to playing -- (Away from mic.) I look forward to being coached by Coach Mack, and I stand by what I said, our leadership is strong and I believe in everything they have for me and they believe in me, too, so that's a dangerous team.

**Q. Coach, how big of a part do your seniors play, Kenny and Tu for this season?**

COACH MACK: Extremely proud of these guys, it's not easy when you hear what Coach Mack has said going on four years, you win, you lose, but they have become good leaders, do you players, down the stretch here, our backs were against the wall and for Kenny to go up to the free-throw lineup 3 points at the very end and misses that front-end of the one and one, a lot of pressure, it's still a one-possession game and Kenny knocks 'em down.

That's the mark of a senior. He's not the only one, we have other guys making big plays, include in freshman right here, proud of our seniors and the entire group, seniors all the way down to our freshmen and all the way down to our coaching staff for how much time we have continued to put in and how much we have continued to believe when others haven't.

**Q. Tu, you went up against Mitchell tonight. What does that say about the guard play in the A-10?**

TU HOLLOWAY: We're underrated, every time we go up against another Atlantic 10 team it's a challenge.

**Q. Tu, do you feel like you're in now or do you have to win tomorrow?**

TU HOLLOWAY: Every game is necessary for us to win. We came out here to get an A-10 Conference Title, so hopefully we can take care of St. Bonaventure tomorrow.

**Q. Kenny, can you speak about the challenges that Nicholson and others will offer you tomorrow compared to what you saw today with St. Louis?**

KENNY FREASE: It will be a whole different challenge. He's definitely one of the best players so it will be a challenge but I think we're ready.

**Q. Coach, with the program you coach a lot of success in the tournament the last ten years but how important is it to win the Conference Tournament? What would that mean to the program?**

**COACH MACK:** It would mean a lot, our first Tournament Championship since 2006. I was on the staff and none of these guys on the podium here were a part of that. It was probably one of most special feelings I had as a coach. Four times in four days, there is nothing like a Tournament Championship, being able to play right before Selection Sunday, it's going to be exciting. Our program is used to playing in March and I believe it's going to be exciting tomorrow.

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