

2012 Atlantic 10 Conference Men's Basketball Championship  
Semifinal – Game 9 – March 10, 2012

#4 St. Bonaventure - 84  
#8 Massachusetts – 80

**ST. BONAVENTURE POSTGAME INTERVIEW**

THE MODERATOR: This is St. Bonaventure. We have Jordan Gathers, Demetrius Conger and Andrew Nicholson, along with Coach Schmidt. Coach, opening statement?

COACH SCHMIDT: You know, it was a great game, a nail-biter at the end. We didn't do a great job of finishing that game, but give them credit. I thought in the first half we played well, especially in the first half. When Andrew was on the bench with two fouls, Demetrius was tremendous. He was two assists away from a triple, double. I tell the guys all the time, you're a big-time player when you play "big" in big games.

For a freshman in that environment not to play a ton his freshman year, and to be able to play the way he played today showed grit, and Andrew was Andrew. He got in foul trouble, but he was there when we needed him. We found a way, missed foul shots, made it close but give UMASS credit, they're talented. You don't win 22 games without having talented players. We found a way to win and move on.

THE MODERATOR: Let's open it up for questions. First for Andrew Nicholson, Jordan Gathers and Demetrius Conger.

**Q. Over the final few minutes, tell us what's going through your head as they're gettin' closer and knowing that you need to make a play to close it out.**

DEMITRIUS CONGER: We tried to stay poised, basketball is a game of runs, and we just tried to maintain and stay focused through the whole thing.

**Q. Is it hard to battle the nerves or whatever you have going on in your head while the game is unfolding like that?**

ANDREW NICHOLSON: Yeah, because it's tough.

JORDAN GATHERS: It's tough, but we still have to stay mentally focused and take care of the ball down the stretch.

**Q. Can you talk about playing in the A-10 Tournament Title for the first time in the program in 11 years?**

DEMITRIUS CONGER: It's something special. It would be nice to look back on when we are old and to have those memories. It's real big.

ANDREW NICHOLSON: It's been a big goal for us all through the season.

**Q. Andrew, with four fouls, you don't seem to change your style of defense. You challenge, what's going through your mind there? Are you oblivious to the foul -- obviously not but seems like you are.**

ANDREW NICHOLSON: I'm just trying to block the shot!

**Q. Regardless, right? (Chuckles.)**

ANDREW NICHOLSON: Yeah.

**Q. Coach, can you talk about this run that you guys are on now and the fact that you are playing for a spot in the NCAA Tournament?**

COACH SCHMIDT: I just feel good for our guys, they've fought, we had some tough losses, had some negativity written about us, but we fought through.

We've been fighting it from the very beginning. My guys have continued to maintain focus, work hard in practice, we've improved and it's a credit to our guys, and I'm excited for them to be able to get into this position and hopefully we can play well tomorrow.

**Q. Coach, yesterday you guys got a big boost out of Ndoye, today out of Gathers, secondary-type guys, can you speak about their maturation process throughout the year?**

COACH SCHMIDT: Our bench is really good, Chris Johnson played well, today, too, with 14 points. They have played well. It's hard as freshmen to come in, and Chris is a junior college kid but that first year is difficult. As the season comes along, I've gained more confidence in 'em and they have really helped us. You know, Demetrius and Andrew get a lot of publicity, but we're here not just because of them but because of our bench and our young guys.

**Q. Jordan, can you talk about Demetrius and his overall play today? He carried the offense for you guys.**

JORDAN GATHERS: He gives us a lift in every game, rebounding, great energy, he's solid.

**Q. Can you talk -- Jordan, you've been starting the last few games. How comfortable are you getting in your position on the team?**

JORDAN GATHERS: I'm feeling the same comfort level, I trust in my guys to help me out when I'm out there, and I do what I have to do to help the team win.

**Q. Coach, do you feel that after you broke the press you could have been more aggressive --**

COACH SCHMIDT: Yeah, you're exactly right. We talk about it all the time and talked about it before the tournament started. There are two ways to approach it, one is to go out and play to win and the other is to play not to lose.

I think we had a tendency in the last 5 to 6 minutes to play not to lose, and that was partly my fault, and we should have let 'em go a little more but it ended right.

**Q. Demetrius, you're one win away from the A-10 Title but one win away from the NCAA Tournament berth. What would that mean for you guys?**

DEMITRIUS CONGER: That would mean everything. That's what we played for to get to the NCAA Tournament, so that's our goal, we will compete and do what we have to do.

**Q. Demetrius, great game, 22 points but a lot of that came when Andrew was on the bench in foul trouble. Talk about your mind set, looked like you were in an extra gear and attack mode for that.**

DEMITRIUS CONGER: It was team chemistry, gettin', like -- I don't know it's hard to explain, I don't know.

**Q. Did you feel like, okay, Andrew is on the bench now I've got to help keep us in front here?**

DEMITRIUS CONGER: I didn't feel like that, I felt like going with the flow of the game, you know, teammates was open, you know, they had open shots I passed the ball to them, I was open they passed the ball to me, it was the flow of the game. Just so happened I scored 22 points.

**Q. Demetrius or Andrew, UMASS brings a pace on the floor, their transition game, can you talk about dealing with that and trying to counter that throughout the game?**

ANDREW NICHOLSON: Just to maintain poise.

DEMITRIUS CONGER: Same thing he said. (Chuckles.)

**Q. Coach, what would it mean to you and the program to be able to get into the NCAA Tournament? It's been a long road back, some rough years.**

COACH SCHMIDT: It would be a great accomplishment for our team. You know, I said it yesterday, we said that we were going to rebuild this program and we were going to rebuild it the right way, bringing in good guys, kids that are going to class, graduate, keep their noses clean socially, and we've done it.

We've brought it back, and as I said yesterday, my staff, our players have done a tremendous job and, you know, to go from where we are to where we are today, it's a great accomplishment for our program.

I'm proud of it, I'm proud of our guys, we still have one more to go and if we can get that one tomorrow, it would be one of the greatest accomplishments, I think, in St. Bonaventure history.

**Q. Coach, when this year started there were lofty expectations with so many coming back, 19 wins is the most the program has had in over 10 years, the first conference finals in that time. In your mind what is success for you this year?**

COACH SCHMIDT: Success is improving. You know, you don't put a number on it because every year the schedule is different, you know, it's tougher, easier, you want improvement. Our goal was to try to get into the top 4 to compete with the elite teams in this conference and I thought if we could do that then it would be a successful season.

Getting to the final game doesn't say that we're successful or not. If we don't win tomorrow doesn't mean we aren't successful. I think in the whole picture, what we've done has been a tremendous accomplishment and something I'm really proud of. It's something that has been a positive for our University.

**Q. Coach, you guys shot 51% from the floor, five guys with 9 or more points, 16 assists, 10 turnovers. Can you talk about how well the guys played offensively as a team?**

COACH SCHMIDT: We talk about it all the time, the three phases, defending, they shot 41%, we did a good job; rebounding, we didn't do a good job today, and in the first half 10 assists and no turnovers. In the second half didn't do as well but when you do two out of three of those things well, you're going to have success, and if you do all three you're going to win by a bigger margin.

I thought we shared the ball well, shooting 51% against that length is a testament to our guys, how we shared the ball and attacked, and that was a big key, especially the first half. And we talked about when Andrew was on the bench for Demetrius to step up the way he did, that was a big key.

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