

March 13, 2004



OAKLAHOMA STATE COWBOYS

COACH EDDIE SUTTON JOHN LUCAS JOEY GRAHAM

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the *Oklahoma State Cowboys* students *John Lucas* and *Joey Graham*. Questions for our student-athletes.

Q. Joey, three straight games you guys played down to the last shot, up three, other team can tie, you hadn't played a lot of tight games all year. Can this kind of situation help you prepare you for the NCAA?

JOEY GRAHAM: It definitely does help us. In a tournament there's always going to be close games unless you just sit down and buckle up and just blow a team out. Down the stretch, especially in the NCAA tournament there are going to be close games. It definitely prepares us for some of the close games down the road.

Q. Joey, you're named tournament M.V.P. Have you ever had a game though where you had seven turnovers and got a reward for it?

JOEY GRAHAM: Never had seven turnovers in my life. It's a learning experience for me. I definitely won't make that mistake again, Coach Sutton.

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: Good. (Laughter)

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by *Coach Sutton*.

Q. This building has seen a lot of big basketball games. This is probably the last Big 12 tournament game in this building. Is there any sort of a special feeling that you will take from winning that last game here?

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: Well, this building has had some great basketball games going back to the *Big 8* and the *Big 12*. It's probably more meaningful to me than maybe it is to the players, but it's seen some great games.

I know our fans have always loved coming to Kansas City and we have had some good fortune here especially this year because -- what they did the last two years, these guys, they won. Out of the four things that are important in a conference, we won three of them. Two tournament games in the regular season last year and we stubbed our toe, maybe we could have at least tied for it this year, but Kansas City has always been a

wonderful place to come. Our fans love to come here. I think some of us, as coaches maybe are excited. I tried to lobby the best I could to get that new arena, but this arena has been good for the *Cowboys*. It's been good for college basketball.

Q. Talk about the doubt of course you went through in the second half coming out of that. That speaks well for you guys persevering and coming through?

JOHN LUCAS: Coach kept telling us in the huddle that our shots are going to fall. We were in a drought, seemed like somebody just put a lid over the goal. We were missing layups and also jump shots that were wide open. Coach just told us, 'don't get frustrated, keep playing and your shots will fall.' It did when it counted.

Q. Did you guys feel that the game, when you were up 10, 51-41, seemed to be a moment where you didn't score, they didn't score, if you could have gotten a 3 you could have pushed them over and instead they went on a big run?

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: You are exactly right. There was a two-, three-minute period that neither team could score. We thought if we can get it to 15, I think we were up 11, maybe at that time, that we could break the game. But the ball didn't go down then we quit playing defense and continued to foul them.

That was one of the biggest keys in the game is don't foul those guys. They are as good a free throw shooting ball club as any team in college basketball. I think they outscored us 17 to 2. It's been a long time since a team scored that many points and we only got one field goal. But we didn't play a good game. That's not to take anything away from *Texas Tech* because I knew Bob would have his team fever pitched because they have won two good games up here and beaten two times before. That doesn't happen to him very often.

We turned the ball over way too many times. We didn't shoot the ball well. Biggest thing was our defense wasn't very good. Wasn't anything like Kansas -- I am not sure the game didn't take a little bit out of both of us. When you play a third game in a short turnaround sometimes you are not as sharp.

Q. As many times as you told the players you thought the shots were going to fall were you starting to doubt? That's 10 --

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: I was more concerned about getting some stops. I mean, get 17 points on you, and you only get one bucket, I knew we could win. I kept

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Oklahoma State - 3.13.05 (Quotes)

saying we need some stops. The ball will start dropping for us but we have got to stop them.

I am really proud of the ball club because when they got up six and they had all the momentum going for them, it would have been easy to say, boy, this just isn't our day. They just played with a lot of poise and a lot of courage and fought back and I think that goes back to having a mature basketball team and to have been in some tough games before the last two years. So I am really proud of the ball club for pulling out of that tailsipin and walking away with the Championship.

Q. Coach Knight said his team, even though they made it to the Final, would have benefited more by resting. How much does winning the tournament benefit you guys going into the NCAA's?

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: I hope the fellows in Indianapolis will see fit to stay a little closer to home. And maybe we get to go to Oklahoma City. I think even though they all probably, in all likelihood, have the spots filled that's one of the disadvantages of having our game on Sunday afternoon because they probably already have those seedings pretty much in place regardless of whether we would have won or whether we would have lost.

Q. Noting your concerns coming in and the way your guys have played these last few days you are going to get some rest. In general how do you feel about this team now as the big tournament approaches?

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: Well, I think we need some rest. That's why I think the tournament doesn't start in Oklahoma City until Friday if I am not mistaken. That would give us sometime where the guys can just have a couple of days off. This is spring break, so they don't have the responsibility of classes and I think that would help us a lot. We're not playing that many people. I know they are tired. I know our coaching staff is tired. So if we play like we did against Kansas yesterday we can play with most people in the country. I don't think there's anybody that we would fear. But there's a lot of teams just as good as us.

Q. John, after you missed that first free throw how much of a weight off you was to hit that second one?

JOHN LUCAS: It was a lot. Coach and them wanted me to go back and get the ball and because they know I am not a (inaudible) -- I was more disappointed in myself missing the first one, but you know, once I hit the second one coach was like don't worry about it now, we need to get a stop. That was our whole concern to make sure we got a stop and get the rebound.

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: We had a luxury of having two great free throw shooters. I don't know what we shot in the **Big 12** but it's unbelievable. I think it was

112 of 117 those guys shot. So you know, late in the game when the game is tight you want as best you can to get the ball in the hands of Joey or **John**. That doesn't mean we don't have a couple of other guys, but I think they have all the confidence in the world to step up there and hit that shot every time.

Q. Eddie, can you expand on of course playing Oklahoma City would be a great thing, you have done well of course back east, and perhaps maybe two Big 12 teams should get to go to Oklahoma City - your thoughts just overall?

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: I think that that was pretty much the thinking all along that we would probably get two teams to Oklahoma City. I hope that's true. You are right, we have had great success going back playing in the Meadowlands, and playing in Philly and some of those places; so if we get shipped east -- only -- I don't care where we go, the advantage is having your fans, especially college students where it's so expensive to travel where they can stay closer to home and you get those youngsters get to go to the games.

Q. Joey, between you and Oklahoma State, Oklahoma and Kansas, any one of you proved who the better team is in the Big 12?

JOEY GRAHAM: Well, we all are compatible in a lot of ways. But I think that this tournament proved, out of the teams, who persevered out of it. But I have a feeling that **Oklahoma, Kansas**, all those teams are going to do great in the NCAA tournaments so good luck to all those teams.

COACH EDDIE SUTTON: I think the three teams are pretty even. We split with **Oklahoma**. We split with **Kansas**. The two games with **Kansas**, whole game out at Allen Field House in the second half, yesterday, that's as good a quality basketball as two teams can play. That was a great game for anybody that got to see it. If you were neutral that was a great game to watch.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on your victory today and good luck in the NCAA tournament.

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TEXAS TECH RED RAIDERS

COACH BOB KNIGHT

COACH BOB KNIGHT: I think from our standpoint I think that we made a couple of plays at the end that weren't good. **Oklahoma State** made a couple of plays that were good at the end. But that wasn't the difference for us. The difference for us was the first half when we had 14 turnovers and that just put us in a bind to start with. I think that we came back in the second half.

As a coach, you have got to really be pleased for kids and with kids that get down as we did, 10 or 11 in the second half and come back and get the game in a position where now if we make the right plays we can win the game.

Well, at the end, they made better plays than we did at the end and consequently we ended up getting beat. But I think for us, in looking at this game and trying to improve upon what we had to improve upon, relative to really putting ourselves in this game the way we wanted to be, it would pretty much center in the first half. I think that we were able to -- you know, it's statistically a pretty even game and if you just go by statistics, as I said, a couple of plays they made at the end that were good; a couple we made that weren't, were the difference in the ballgame in the final analysis, but not the difference for us in terms of how we played over the course of the game.

The first half was just not good for us.

Q. What do you think it was in the first half that had your team out of sync?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: We just turned the ball over. It's not a miracle. We just turned the ball over. We made bad passes.

Q. Where do you think your team deserves to be seeded in the regionals?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: I have no idea. I am not on the tournament committee.

Q. Can you talk about the collective job that *Jarrius* and *Ronald* did in this tournament?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: Well, I think that our guard play has been a strength for us all year long. I have never really particularly wanted a team to revolve around guards, but that's where we were. I think those two kids and **Curtis Marshall** coming in from time to time, **Zeno Martin** as a third perimeter player, really carried us. And I think that they obviously did a really good job in the ballgame today with the exception of some turnovers, not getting the ball where it had to go, but I think our guards have been very, very good, not just in this tournament but over the course of the entire season.

Q. Do you think the last three games kind of got you ready for the tournament from where you were when the regular season ended?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: Oh, not necessarily. I think we would be far better ready for the tournament if we have rested. I think anybody would be. Okay?

THE MODERATOR: Okay, coach, thank you.

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