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An Interview With:

TEXAS LONGHORNS

COACH RICK BARNES LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE A.J. ABRAMS

COACH RICK BARNES: Obviously have a lot of respect for Texas Tech. And the fact is that we felt like they would do what they did and force us in taking a lot of perimeter shots. We felt like certain guys they would lay off of, being very conscious of really trying to work around the basket area.

I thought our guys did a good job of staying aggressive last couple of minutes. We probably didn't make as good decisions as we need to be making in that situation, but overall, when they made their run and got back in, we stayed with it. Pushed it back out there and made some free throws at the end.

I would probably be pretty happy with it. The fact that we only had 7 turnovers, good day there and the job we did on the board, I thought these two guys -- **Marcus** was really terrific today, what he was able to get done down low and stepping out doing a lot of different things he got really aggressive on the offensive boards. A.J. missed some shots he normally makes, but I thought his demeanor the way he came in was really important to us.

Q. Talk about pretty much taking over second half, just your overall performance going?

LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: Just lately Coach would tell me just being more aggressive and want the ball more. He tells me that he can't tell the guys just -- I have to do it is with my body language. I was trying to be active today and keep moving, looking for the ball.

Q. Did you expect the game to be as close as it was? You beat this team twice by 55 points. Do you remember the regular season obviously much closer today?

A.J. ABRAMS: Coming in, I think it was going to be a close game, tough to beat a team three times in one season. First two games they figured out our stuff for this game. We knew personnel coming in. Playing for the third time, you always know it is going to be a tough game.

Q. Talk about playing in Dallas. How much did that inspire you today?

LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: It feels good to be back home. My mom is in the crowd, brother and things of that sort. Just coming into this tournament, this is my first **Big 12** tournament so was just excited to be on the court and to be playing right now.

Q. Can you discuss about the possible or probable rematch tomorrow?

A.J. ABRAMS: Any way it goes it's going to be a tough game, but if we happen to get matched up with A&M, I think it will be a good game. I think we're going to be very fired up for them. I think we didn't do some stuff well the last game, coming off the next game I think we'll be more prepared.

LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: Just what A.J. said, we know we didn't play our best performance, but A&M, they did play great, we watched film. We know what we did wrong, just trying to build on that and just go out and just play hard.

Q. Having a little trouble there early you got some offensive rebounds, couldn't seem to get them down. A little nervous there or what was going on?

LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: No, just trying to get -- our coach said try and get quick ups, whatever, so I want to give defense time to rotate over. I was trying to catch them, put them as quick as I could. I wasn't really putting them in right.

Q. You seemed to be shooting from a little further out today. How far is your range that you haven't showed us?

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LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: (Laughs.) I mean, I am comfortable shooting to 17 foot, but I never really will to up to now. I think Coach and I work on it all the time, just shooting and driving to the basket and things of that sort. So I think I am very comfortable out there.

Q. Do you sense any lack of urgency in the fact that you already know you are going to be in the NCAA tournament? Did you notice if that translates on the court?

LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: No, I don't think we feel that way at all. Coach said this is a whipping time and just because I think you think you are in the tournament, anything can happen. We're not just trying to get in the tournament, we're trying to win every game from now to the end of the tournament. So I don't think anybody came out just thinking, oh, we're in the tournament so we don't have to win. I think we're trying to win every game from here 'til the end of March.

A.J. ABRAMS: I think Coach put it well today. He said in a perfect world we have -- we'll win 9 more games. If you can't get prepared for those nine games and play hard, then you don't deserve. We're going to be prepared for every game and work hard because we want to go out and get what we want.

Q. You guys went a little lighter in practice to -- did you feel fresh legs today especially with the way you guys dominated the boards?

LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: Yeah, I think just going light and taking some time off I think I felt pretty good tonight. I am excited to just be playing right now. So I think I will be all right because I never played a post-season or whatever, so I think I will be all right.

A.J. ABRAMS: I like a little light practice because we know what we have to do. No reason to go and work hard this late in the season because it's all mental now. That's how Coach puts it. If you don't have it mentally, then you are not going to have it physically. So going out there, working on little nitpicks in practice will help us more for the game.

Q. As you are going through this, do you guys allow yourself to think about the 1 seed and having that out there?

LaMARCUS ALDRIDGE: I think it's always in the back of your minds. But I think we're concentrating on one game at a time because you can't never really look over anybody because anyone can beat you on any given night if you are

not focused or ready for the game. So I don't think we just think about that too much right now.

Q. I know this is looking way ahead, but if you could just indulge me I'd appreciate it. Do you talk to your players at all about the potential history they can make if they win the NCAA tournament and be the only major school, at least as far as I know, that can hold baseball, football, and basketball titles at the same time?

COACH RICK BARNES: Well, I really don't have to talk about it because it's been brought up in the media. Now they have to deal with it. I don't talk about that with them. It's there. But I haven't addressed it directly to them about that. I know they hear it because the questions are going to be asked.

What I talk about 99.9% of the time is doing what we're supposed to do right now. It's not about winning or losing. It's about going for it. It's about playing every possession like it's your last. If you do that over the course of the game, if you really do that, you are going to win, if you are a better basketball team.

We have goals when we start the season. Obviously we want to be the best basketball team we can be. This team had set some goals but at that point of it would be nice, but that's a long way away.

Q. Can you talk about winning this game essentially without Brad because of his foul trouble?

COACH RICK BARNES: We can play a lot of different ways. **Texas Tech** is one of the hardest teams you will ever have to defend man-to-man. They do such a great job. And I have said before, Coach Knight is the best coach. I mean he's unbelievable what he gets out of players, and not easy team to guard.

Jarrius **Jackson**, I said it all year long, he's a terrific player, he single-handedly can do some things. He got it going into in the second half, started making some shots. I don't particularly like it when we go small, but the way they were guarding us inside, we needed to have a post guy that was going to work that mid-range area. And you know, P.J. gives as you guy that can do that and you go back to the way they guarded us today. They were determined that we weren't going to get the ball in there tight. They weren't going to force as many jump shots as we wanted to take.

On the other hand we want our guys taking those shots at the end I thought we took a couple

of quick shots that weren't good plays, but Brad never got going. Just never got into the game because of the foul situation. The fact that we won it played a couple different ways, you are going to have to have that because who knows what is going to happen from game to game. For a good basketball team you will find a way to work through some of those days.

Q. Can you talk about LaMarcus's work ethic and how much does he actually work on that? He was pushing it out a lot today?

COACH RICK BARNES: First of all, he really can shoot college 3s. I don't think -- that's one thing shooting them in practice and while practicing those players, it's another thing in terms of having the confidence to do it in a game. But he can shoot it. He's a very good shooter. We have actually tried to talk to him about it all year long. Very first play of the game was designed for him to shoot 15 foot jump shot because he spends a lot of time working on it.

LaMarcus hasn't even began to go where he's going to go. His mental makeup, the whole thing, he has got a repertoire of things he's not yet knowing how to use it all at the same time. That's his biggest -- other thing, we like to give him the ball every time down the floor, he has got to want it quicker. He was surrounded by **Texas Tech** team but he did a great job of he told me walk go down the locker room tonight that he'd like to get 18 -- 20 rebounds tonight, I said well if you remember you are going to have to go get it because they are going to keep the body on you. I thought he did a great job on the offensive boards spinning off going to get it.

Q. What were some of things y'all talked about in that timeout --

COACH RICK BARNES: I don't remember, what time was that?

Q. 12 or 13 minutes?

COACH RICK BARNES: The thing about playing zone when you play it again, you have to figure so that some point in time they were going to make some 3s. I thought we got too conscious of the 3-point line, I thought it hurt us. You have got to give Jarrus credit because he draws so much attention instead of getting in the middle (inaudible) we locked into one of them, left the other one open even though **Tanner** didn't have a good shooting day today, but it happens this time of year, when a team makes a run we said stay aggressive, try to get some stops, let us know where personnel is. This time of year it's about personnel, knowing

what you want to do, we just got stretched out too much. We kind of tried to rotate more into a 3-2 looks as opposed to 2-3. That was okay. Give them credit. They started knocking down some shots.

Q. Did you see the kind of energy you were looking for the --

COACH RICK BARNES: I think you come into a game like this, you as a coach, you are always going to be concerned about a guy like P.J. Tucker, who has just been named player of the year open, hoping that he doesn't do what he has done during the year to get him there. It's tournament time, really you are not sure how a guy is going to respond.

In terms of our lightening up we have done that every time this time of year. I think we have played more guys more minutes this year so I think that's important. But we have been into a pretty good flow with practice but **LaMarcus** can play all day long P.J. too, those guys can go out and play 40 minutes if they had to go out. Other players need more recovery time. We would do it regardless. This time of year is about being fresh mentally and physically, and I thought our guys played again, other than the fact that at the end, when we took a couple of quick shots when we should have been working the clock better; missed some layups tonight, we had some good looks right around the rim. I don't think we came in here thinking it was going to be easy. We had to earn it, but we got it done.