

March 11, 2006



An Interview With:

KANSAS JAYHAWKS

COACH BILL SELF DARNELL JACKSON RUSSELL ROBINSON

COACH BILL SELF: I don't think we played with the same energy we did last night. We made shots. You make shots. You always look better offensively. These two guys played great, Russell a fabulous second half. We did what we needed to do, but certainly can improve in a lot of areas before tomorrow.

Q. Talk about the change in intensity, what it was like trying to get into the flow after the big game last night?

RUSSELL ROBINSON: Came out, made some plays early. Mario came in, hit some shots. Just tried to feed off of that. That's what happened the rest of the game.

Q. How much are you looking forward to playing Texas again? Why do you think this time it will be different?

DARNELL JACKSON: It will be a lot bigger because we went to their house timid. Julian played great for us. We're going to need Julian. **C.J., Sasha**, we're going to need all them tomorrow to help us bang through **Marcus**. And Buckman down there at the post.

Q. What does it mean to you to have a chance to be the first Kansas team since '99 to win the conference tournament?

RUSSELL ROBINSON: Pretty big opportunity. This is something that we have been looking forward to this whole season, and now we have the chance to go out tomorrow and play with a lot of intensity and do the things that we need to do to win.

Q. You had a fairly big advantage inside, and you guys go at the Cornhuskers in waves whereas they only had one guy. Talk about the edge you guys had inside?

DARNELL JACKSON: On first side we were playing kind of soft. I shot a fadeaway jump shot, that's not my game. I'm a physical player, so I love contact. They get in foul trouble. They knew they couldn't foul or they would have fouled out of the game. So the only thing they could do was wall up and it gave the big man's a chance to turn around and shoot a jump up.

Q. Can you follow up on the Texas question, we were beaten on the boards much more so than we have in other games this year. Is that something as a big man, and the four big men kind of hurt a little bit more than other factors, other statistics, and you think it can be different tomorrow?

DARNELL JACKSON: Yeah, I think it could be a lot different. This is going to be a good game tomorrow. Especially for me because when I went down there I was scared because it was a big game. I had the jitters and now tomorrow I am just going to have to play my game, rebound.

Q. Your thoughts on the rematch with Texas?

RUSSELL ROBINSON: They got us pretty good the first time. But we learned a lot from that loss and just going to come out tomorrow just try to make up for the rebounding loss we had last time and just try to bang with those guys and be physical, try to come out with a win.

Q. Texas had to kind of fight for their win this morning. How much of advantage is it for you to be able to lay off in the second half there?

COACH BILL SELF: I don't think that's an advantage at all. We had to fight for ours last night. So the league is balanced and we said all along that there's not that great a discrepancy in the teams but I do think it's great that Texas and

us get to play one more time and they certainly whipped us the first time, no excuses.

And we're going to have to play at a lot higher level than we did that time in order to have a chance to play with them. As far as advantage, disadvantage, I don't think they shot it good today, we didn't shoot it good. We shot it good, they didn't. That doesn't have anything to do with tomorrow. I think both teams will have energy and get a good night's rest and be ready to roll.

Q. How much of a factor will playing in a neutral court have to do with tomorrow since last time in *Austin*?

COACH BILL SELF: Home court always plays a role, but we have been a decent road team. We actually played better on the road this year a lot of times than we played at home. We can't say that because it's on a neutral floor we'll play better.

Be honest with you, everything is different. *Oklahoma State*, we won that game by 15 at their place and on a neutral floor, it was a one possession game. I think, you know, I know the first time we played them there was a lot of energy in the building. I know they really fed off of that much like we did last year when we had game day at our place. I think the home court is worth something, but be honest with you, I don't know that that will be a factor one way or another tomorrow.

Q. The 3 point shot helped you guys pull away a there in the first of half. Talk about Chalmer and *Hawkins*?

COACH BILL SELF: Yesterday we made three shots outside of six feet for the game, 3. Today, if we did not make shots, the game would have really been an ugly offensive game for us because they played boxing one and played zone the majority of the time. You have got to make shots when teams do that.

That was obviously a huge factor when we weren't probably guarding like we normally guard at least in my opinion, to get out to a lead because we made shots. We didn't play a lot better than Nebraska we just made shots. Certainly that cures a lot of ills.

Q. As hard nosed as your kids are and as tough as you play, when you hear *Darnell* say being timid or being scared, does it bother you?

COACH BILL SELF: No, it doesn't at all because we have talked about this a lot. We

had a different feel that game than we have other games. I think the biggest reason is this -- that was the first big, big game that these guys saw as a game of that magnitude that they have ever played in a lot of them. So it was a first time experience for a lot of these guys.

Darnell was new. He was never depended on to win or lose a game last year. It was a different deal. And I really felt like from the look of our team, that we approached that game differently than we did the other games. When you say timid, I think that's probably an accurate response. We certainly -- I don't think that's a sign of softness. I don't think it's anything like that. I think it's just some young guys going through things for the first time.

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An Interview With:

NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

COACH BARRY COLLIER ALEKS MARIC WES WILKINSON

MODERATOR: Coach, opening comments regarding today's game.

COACH BARRY COLLIER: Well, I felt like that our team battled as we have the last couple of games. The key I think to start out the game was that Kansas made some shots against our defense from the perimeter and really had us spread out somewhat. Then they went inside.

Jackson had a great game off the bench. **Hawkins** did the same thing for them. Chalmer was a real key. And then on the offensive end, we weren't able to score with any consistency. Largely because of their good pressure defense.

Q. Talk about past two days then coming in today, obviously for any team to win four games in four days is a tough challenge. What was your energy level coming into today and looking at playing a good Kansas team?

WES WILKINSON: I felt like we had good energy today. We knew we had to play with heart because it's difficult to play three days, three games. It is a mental challenge. I felt like we were ready. Like I said, we just had to come out and play with heart and intensity and take it game by game.

Q. Talk about the athleticism that Kansas, particularly their young back court, showed out there today.

WES WILKINSON: These guys are a real athletic, talented team. They are really

good defensive team as they have shown, and on offense they can convert, run the court, they are real young, that's key. They have people that can shoot the ball. They are an all and all around good team.

ALEKS MARIC: They got all their players can jump through the roof. Very athletic. Made it tough for us rebounding, getting up and down the court. Obviously they can run up and down. Good transition team. That was the key.

Q. Discuss the spark that you got going down here in this tournament, how that can carry into the NIT, what you hope to accomplish there?

WES WILKINSON: We knew we could play good against *Missouri*. We lost that close one at Mississippi, they made a good run at us. Once we got that win, it boosted us a little bit with confidence. Once we got out of that first round, it was just playing hard and playing with heart, every day is a new day. We had to come out and play hard.

ALEKS MARIC: We need to carry this momentum on. We can't look at stuff today and put our heads down. Hopefully we'll be in the post-season come Sunday, so we need to carry the momentum.

I am very proud of my time, what we have done over the last couple of days. No one would have expected, outside of Nebraska, for us to accomplish what we have here, so very proud of my team.

Q. Talk about you guys didn't get out of here until so late last night. These guys probably weren't in bed until pretty early this Monday. Did that have any effect on your energy level in the game?

COACH BARRY COLLIER: We're not looking for excuses. It is a factor, but they played a game yesterday as well, and the one thing that you know is that as the coach of this team I know that they want to keep playing, so they found, I think, the mental energy. It is a difficult challenge, of course, but no excuses, Kansas outplayed us and they deserve to be the victor today.

Q. Do you expect to be the coach of Nebraska next year?

COACH BARRY COLLIER: As far as I am concerned, I am the coach of Nebraska until I hear different. I don't know any more than that. I don't really have much more comment than that.

Q. Seemed kind of a strange sight their athletic director is 15, 20 feet away from you in an open door and talking quietly to a bunch of reporters. How do you react to that, I mean did you expect him to say something in support?

COACH BARRY COLLIER: I don't -- I just try to coach our team and I am very grateful for the opportunity to do that. We're going to get ready to -- we're going to keep our fingers crossed for a nod on Sunday night to play. That's where my focus is going to be.

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