

March 9, 2006



An Interview With:

**OKLAHOMA STATE
COWBOYS**

**HEAD COACH
DESIGNATE SEAN SUTTON
TORRE JOHNSON
MARIO BOGGAN**

COACH SEAN SUTTON: I thought the first 25 minutes is maybe as well as we played all season long. We went through a period then where we relaxed a little bit, the defensive ends lost a little bit of our aggressiveness and then offensively we weren't aggressive in getting the ball inside and let the shock run down several times, allowed them to come back into the game.

We did the things we needed to do to win this game. We wanted to establish an inside game. These two guys had, I think, 29 of our 47 points at halftime, and then rebounding, when you're able to rebound the basketball. When you play Ohio State, you can't turn over a lot. We had 18 turnovers but we had 22 assists. I thought that was a big factor that we passed the ball pretty well all night long and got pretty open looks and pretty easy shots.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach. Questions now for our two student athletes.

Q. Talk about just your mindset when they whittle it down to two, then you twice turned up the heat defensively and ran away with it at the end?

MARIO BOGGAN: Well, like Coach said, we struggled a little bit down the stretch. But, I mean, we just manned up and really got out there on the defensive end and got a couple of turnovers and finished at the offensive end and put pressure on them. So I mean we finished up real strong.

Q. For both of the players, the first half looks like you could do anything you want to do. What did they do defensively so that you guys didn't get the ball as easily or as good a shot in the second half?

TORRE JOHNSON: I think they pressured the ball more, made it harder to get into the post. Basically saw one -- easy just to make a post entry as it was getting in the first half.

MARIO BOGGAN: I agree. I think they pressured the guards a little bit and made them to -- drive decisions, throwing it down there, having an easy opportunity throwing it down the post like the first half.

COACH SEAN SUTTON: Sometimes it's hard to figure out what they are in because they play this matchup zone that you don't see very often and you see guys running through with cutters and it can -- I thought we got a little confused at times.

Q. Mario, you missed one shot tonight, 9-9 at the line, 7-8 from the field -- seriously you had good games before just in a rhythm in the first half especially to where you are getting good looks, why tonight was better as far as knocking down everything?

MARIO BOGGAN: I think because I started out aggressive. I kind of -- Coach told me to go in there and just finish, finish strong, so I started off with offensive rebounds, put-back that kind of gave me a little comfort level and I just started going aggressive and strong to the basket. So I mean, that's all I can say.

Q. Would you talk about what a lift Torre has given you throughout the year off the bench and what he did specifically in that first half?

MARIO BOGGAN: Was great. He always comes off the bench and provides us good baskets. Like they say, he's instant offense, that's another part of bench production, he can come off and he can score. He's a good player for me to play with because we can both complement each other both there in the post.

COACH SEAN SUTTON: We told him if we were going to have a chance to make a run

and win this tournament he was going to have to be a big part of it and a big factor. I thought he responded tonight.

Q. Obviously feel better after last week. How much more motivation was it for you to come out and play well tonight after missing that game against Baylor?

TORRE JOHNSON: Still not feeling well, but you know, with the tournament and everything, one game away from going home, got to play through whatever is going on, just basically, like Coach said, he told me I need to get back in offensive mind and help the team out as much as possible, so that was my mindset.

And basically he told us in the scouting report that defense and low post weren't that great so attack them much as possible. So that's what did I. It worked for me and it worked for the team.

Q. Everybody said how would you guys handled Stinson and Blalock. Looked like how they were going to handle you too. Is that the matchup you guys feel you need to exploit all night long?

TORRE JOHNSON: Coach made a key emphasis, get the ball inside and work our way from there. And basically if we got the ball inside, open outside shots for the guards and in the first half, majority of the second half, we went with that and it helped us out a lot.

MODERATOR: Questions now for Coach **Sutton**.

Q. Byron Eaton was a little injured coming in. If you can give us his status, and his numbers weren't really good and he's really played well, particularly since you have taken over.

COACH SEAN SUTTON: Well, he hurt his ankle in the Baylor game. I think he tweaked it again tonight a little bit, but I think he's fine. He should be okay tomorrow.

He didn't play as well tonight as he's been playing and I think part of it is the fact that he's back in his home city and he has a lot of family and friends here and sometimes what happens with any player, regardless if they are a freshman or senior, you put added pressure on yourself. And I thought tonight he pressed a little bit and I think tomorrow he will probably be a lot better. I kept telling him just relax and just settle down, and he made some positive plays down the stretch for us.

Q. You talked about coming down here trying to win four games, but you were part of that team that tried to do that and you guys just kind of died in the second half. Are you going to try to not play guys as many minutes so that if you do get through anyway you can put those two together and still win?

COACH SEAN SUTTON: I think you got to worry about winning, number one. And if that means keeping your best players out there, X amount of minutes, I think you got to worry about that first.

I think the one advantage that we have is we've got 10 players that can play. I was encouraged with Roderick the first half and I didn't play him the second half, but I thought he made some good plays.

But to win four games you got to be able to have depth, you got to be able to rotate guys in and out, and it's something that we'll try to monitor, but at the same time, you have got to try to win. In '99 we got to the Championship, played Kansas, last 20 minutes we had nothing left. That team only played about 7 players where this team plays nine consistently and sometimes ten.

Q. Can you talk about how big it was for JamesOn to step up and hit that shot after you cut it to two and also was not getting the ball inside against Iowa State, your big regret first time around in the regular season?

COACH SEAN SUTTON: That's what got us in trouble first time up in Ames we start settling for 3-point shots, jacked up 24 of them. The whole emphasis this week had been on getting the ball inside and played the game inside out and we were able to do that for most of the game.

Second half we came out, hit, I think, three straight 3s. Built the lead up to 18 points and then allowed them to get back in it. But -- and didn't take as many 3s tonight. Prep really offensively, that's the way we like to play. Then I thought down the stretch we stayed aggressive against the press. We weren't as aggressive against the zone but we got behind the press, I think, two straight times and then the shot he made was a huge shot because they had all the momentum and to cut it to two points. And he shot it with confidence. If he had not have made it, and they went down and possibly scored, then you know, no telling what might have happened.

Q. Is that the type of game that you envision from Torre after talking to him earlier in the week?

COACH SEAN SUTTON: You think the one thing he has got to do is score some points for us. He had that stretch in the middle of the season where he was just, you know, on fire and then he kind of tailed off a little bit, but he's a guy that's got -- score the basketball. He has got really good touch around the basket, and told him this week coming down here that you have got to be productive and you have got to be a big part of this if we're going to have a chance to win. We can't ask Mario and David to carry the load up front. You got to help in that regard. I thought he responded.

Q. One of the things playing this team all year long has been put games away. They got back within two for a change. You guys finished it off down the stretch. What does that do for this ballclub --

COACH SEAN SUTTON: I think it should help their confidence, the fact that we lost so many close games throughout the year, six times in the last possession, last two games, really we will fight it out the last two minutes and that's one of the things we talked about the time out, I think there's two minutes to go, four point game that who is going to rise up and make some plays and I thought we went through a period, I think we stopped them four straight times when they had cut it to two, I believe -- (inaudible)

Q. How about tomorrow, should be a fun game to watch?

COACH SEAN SUTTON: Well, I think that Coach himself has done a good a coaching job as there's been in the country. His team has made unbelievable improvements since December. I thought in the first time we played them we were really good defensively but we were lousy at the offensive end, turning the ball over, over 20 times, shot a bad percentage, but it's the type of game that you want to be involved in. **Oklahoma State**, Kansas has always been a great game and I think our guys are excited to be a part of it tomorrow night. Last year, the game at Lawrence, when they won by two points, might have been the best regular season game that I have ever been a part of and the game in Kansas City, I would put in my top 5 of all time. Both teams played so well in both those games and played at such a high level.

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An Interview With:

**IOWA STATE
CYCONES**

**COACH WAYNE MORGAN
CURTIS STINSON
WILL BLALOCK**

COACH WAYNE MORGAN: I thought that our energy level and intensity in the first half in the beginning of the game wasn't high enough. I thought that **Oklahoma State** came out and they played with the intensity and energy that you would expect in the first half of a tournament game.

Q. Any thought that Johnson Number 55 and Boggan Number 4 had great first halves, the two of them together had 29 points, which is just far, far too much to give and then to overcome?

COACH WAYNE MORGAN: Obviously in the second half we played with the energy and the intensity we needed to but it wasn't enough.

Q. When you scored the four straight points to make it a two-point game did you think at that point that you guys were on your way and had them?

CURTIS STINSON: Well, yeah, when you make a run like that, you feel like you get the game close it's anybody game now. We thought we had it. They just made plays down the stretch when -- they had fast breaks, layup, whatever, they executed well. We had to play catch-up. We put ourselves in the hole. We just had to play catch-up. It's hard to do that in tournament time. Give credit to **Oklahoma State**. They played well and executed down the stretch too.

Q. How do you feel that their inside game hurt you more this time than it did the last time at Ames, do you feel like they put more emphasis on that instead of pressuring the guards on the outside?

COACH WAYNE MORGAN: Is that question for me?

Q. Anyone.

COACH WAYNE MORGAN: I thought that would be a part of their game plan to really go inside, especially get the ball to Number 4 Boggan. **Johnson** is a really good player and he had a fantastic first half, but even before the game started we had indicated those two guys that would be a part of what they were doing.

At the same time you have to give them credit. They executed, made the shots and they did what they needed to do.

Q. If you are invited to the NIT, is that something you would like to see this team do, continue to play at this point of the year?

COACH WAYNE MORGAN: If we had an opportunity to play in the NIT, I would like to do it because I think we have a lot of young players who can benefit from the experience. If we had an opportunity to play in the NIT I think that would also give us maybe a platform to get into extra springboard into next season. I think that any experience that we can get that would help us prepare for the future is positive.

Q. Talk about the rebounding situation, obviously kind have been frustrating all year and again tonight out rebounded, kind of talk about that a little bit.

COACH WAYNE MORGAN: Well, it's something that we have been working on all year and it's something that we're going to get better at. We're going to get bigger, stronger and we're going to get more tenacious. I can't offer any excuses for it. We were out rebounded tonight. The thing that also is upsetting is that in every game that we have either competed or out rebounded our opponent we have won. We know that that is a key component that we have got to get better at.

Q. Shawn Taggart didn't play at all in the second half. Was that your decision and if so, why?

COACH WAYNE MORGAN: That was my decision. I just didn't think he was getting up and down the court as fast as he needed to. Pretty quick game and one part of their game plan was to beat us down the court for quick scores or layup. I just didn't feel he was getting up and down the court fast enough.

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