

March 6, 2007



An Interview with:

**COACH JODY CONRADT
ERNEISHA BAILEY
EARNESIA WILLIAMS
TIFFANY JACKSON
KATRINA ROBINSON**

THE MODERATOR: The Longhorns have now joined us at the podium. Coach, congratulations on the 900th win in your career.

COACH CONRADT: Thank you.

MODERATOR: And if you would make some comments about tonight's game and then anything else you'd like to make comments about.

COACH CONRADT: First of all, I have the seniors on this team with me. I thought it's their team, it's their wish to extend this season, and I thought they had their team ready to play tonight.

I thought we were really terrific in the first half. We controlled the tempo. We pushed the basketball and we really made a statement about how we can play.

Second half, we sputtered around a bit. It hurts us, obviously, when Carla Cortijo gets fouled. We have no options at the point except for Tiffany to move up there. And she does a good job with that. But we're really trying to keep some kind of offensive flow going when that happened.

I thought Katrina -- and I wanted her to be here because I thought she made a difference in the game tonight. I thought when she came in, Riddle had a lot more difficulty scoring and our team is about defense. I don't think there's any question about that. We have to be really good defensively to win, because we have offensive limitations, which I think are pretty obvious.

But when we push the basketball, shoot lay ups, shoot 60.5%, then we've had a really good night.

The last thing on my mind is 900 wins. I didn't even remember it, because with this team, you have to think about the next possession. That's all you can focus on.

Q. Jody, you said yesterday, "We need to win. That's what we need to do to take care of our post-season." Is it still just tell your team, we need to win, keep winning, or do you feel good?

COACH CONRADT: I think that's obvious. I'm not going to feel comfortable about anything in the post-season. I don't think we can control anything. It's been the same story for quite some time now.

We pulled out all stops, so I think we have the only three people in the state of Oklahoma who are willing to be our hostess and we're Texas, and they showed up. And today they did their part. They took us to practice at a church.

So we're doing everything we can to extend our season, and hopefully some of it will work.

Q. This is to the coach and Tiffany. How good is it to have support when you look up and see your teammates getting double doubles for at least four or five out there with you?

TIFFANY JACKSON: I think it's huge. There's several people on our team that have that capability. It's something that we can expect that can happen every night. It's just a matter if we go out and do it.

So it's really exciting to know, and I think it's good as far as the trust factor, I think everybody can trust everybody now, and that's huge.

Q. Coach, you may not have been thinking about 900 wins, but how nice is it to get it and also get it behind you?

COACH CONRADT: Well, again, you know, I thought for a while, when we were having so much trouble and people kept reminding me of it, I thought, well, everybody is going to try to get 900. I don't know how many people are going to

try to get 899. That might have been more unique.

But obviously this was a big win, because it extended our season, because we keep playing. And regardless of what this team has gone through, some ups and some downs, they've been a really good group to try to stay focused.

Every day they come to practice the same way. They work hard. They try to do what the coaches ask them to do. And they need to have some success to be rewarded for what they have gone through this season.

Q. Katrina and Tiffany, can you talk about your play on Riddle, because I know for a while she had like 16 points, and then you all basically shut her down to what she eventually had.

COACH CONRADT: That's when Katrina went to guard her. You're exactly right.

Q. Katrina, can you talk about that.

KATRINA ROBINSON: When I went into the game, I made sure I played my principles. And Riddle is left-handed. I play on her right shoulder because she would come right to me. If she got the ball -- I was trying to make it where she didn't get it, but if she did get it, I made sure I played on her right shoulder and tried to play good defense.

Q. Jody, could you elaborate on the church thing?

COACH CONRADT: Well, because the game started at noon today, everybody had 20 minutes on this floor. We needed longer than that, so our hostess had told us last night that there was a very nice gym that was relatively new at a church and it was an Episcopal church. I think you call the ministers there father, too.

He showed up. It was something that you sort of look at it and say, okay, maybe there is an omen here. Maybe there is something that will help us out. I couldn't get back there. We didn't leave bread crumbs or anything.

But it was across town and we had a very nice preparation with a little more time than we would have gotten had we come.

Q. Also could you elaborate on your pregame speech. Your team seemed very focused and relaxed.

COACH CONRADT: I don't think that I said anything profane or profound. I think it was about this is win or go home. And we talked about everybody here is going to be playing one and done. So ours started a little bit earlier than everyone else's, and I haven't had to say a lot

about that to this team. I think they're smart and they understand that we have to win.

Q. Coach, just your thoughts on Oklahoma tomorrow.

COACH CONRADT: You didn't let me enjoy this one very much, right?

(Laughter).

COACH CONRADT: We know Oklahoma very well. Obviously this will be our third time to play them. One time we had success and one time we didn't. They're really good. I think they're a challenge and it starts with Courtney Paris. No question she's a unique player in our game now. And we have to do an excellent job of making it difficult for her in terms of second-chance opportunities in terms of getting where she wants to get on the floor.

And at the same time we have to guard their perimeter people. What makes any team good is that they have a strong inside-out game, and they do. And I think it's been well documented that they've made some lineup changes. And when they did, their perimeter game became a lot more potent, and we know that it will be a challenge for us.

We are concerned about our ability to recover but it is what it is and I believe this team will give their all-out effort to try to keep playing.

Q. Tiffany, scoring, rebounding, running the point, directing traffic out there, doing it all. How important is it for you to do it all right now and what does your last go-around bring?

TIFFANY JACKSON: I think we feel an acute sense of urgency, especially me being a senior and it's my last go around. After the Kansas, I think it was, I told my team I was committed to doing whatever they needed me to do regardless of what it was, and that's what I just tried to step up into.

Q. Coach, Brittainey scored double digits in the last three games. How has she progressed at the end of the season?

COACH CONRADT: I have some gray hair and a lot of these have Brittainey Raven's name on them. She's the little girl with the curl. Remember that one? When she's good, she's really, really good. When she's bad, she's not so good. I just don't know what she's going to do. If I could explain it, I would definitely tell you. But I know when she takes off, something is going to happen. I just don't know which way it's going.

But I think she's as explosive a player, as quick a player, has incredible speed. It's just we don't know how it's all going to turn out. But tonight it turned out, particularly in the first half, really well.

Q. Jody, I think you've called Tiffany the most versatile player you've ever had. Can you just talk about having her, her ability to move to the point and your confidence, I guess, in extending the season with a player like her?

COACH CONRADT: I don't want to slight anybody else in this program because I've had a lot of really, really good players. I have to say it might be 1-A and 1-B with her and Andrea Lloyd because Andrea was capable of doing the same kind of thing. But that was a long time ago.

And today we're talking about Tiffany. Tiffany is incredibly intelligent. Basketball IQ is very high. I've talked about that. So when you are handling the ball, which she has the ability to do, it's about making decisions, and it's about getting everybody else involved and making them better. And Tiffany does that.

And she really is our only option when Carla is not on the floor right now. It's hard to take her away from the bucket. It's hard to take her out of the paint because of her rebounding and her ability to draw the double team and create things offensively.

But if you don't get the ball down the court and get it in position to run an offense, it's not going to be good. And Tiffany has the ability to do that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach, ladies.

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An Interview with:

COACH CINDY STEIN EETISHA RIDDLE

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the Missouri Tigers, and, Coach Stein, if you would like to make comments about tonight's game.

COACH STEIN: I'd like to congratulate Coach Conradt with her 900 wins. She's an unbelievable coach. And obviously I wish we didn't have too many of those victories against us, but she's a great coach and a great asset to women's basketball.

But unfortunately tonight our chemistry was off. We struggled on the offensive end quite a bit. Finally figured out what they were trying to do on their offense, and I thought our kids came back in the second half and did a nice job, but obviously it wasn't enough. We had trouble scoring. And I think you have to credit their defense.

Q. Cindy, you talked about the chemistry being off. What was the decision behind kind of switching up your starting lineup for tonight's game?

COACH STEIN: The starters were 5 and 11 in the league, and they weren't playing very well together. We had started in holes. It was just a matter of trying to change it up. I felt like Toy and Marchelle had been playing very well in games and that they were playing very well in practice. And in practice we looked to put a starting group together for this game that was playing well together. And they were.

So that was a decision. I didn't feel like it was a demotion. I felt it was just trying to change things up, trying to get some chemistry back, and obviously we needed a lift off the bench. When we've had great play off the bench, we've usually won. And just trying to have a really bang off the bench.

And I felt Blair and Tiffany came in and played really hard and Jessra played hard. I thought we had key minutes from Amanda Hanneman and probably some others that I'm missing.

But like I said, our chemistry was off the entire night. Especially on the offensive end.

Q. Coach, what do you think your post-season is going to look like? Do you feel pretty confident that you guys are going to play in the post-season?

COACH STEIN: I feel we deserve an NIT bid. NCAA, we don't deserve it. So we hope that we have that opportunity.

Q. Coach, all the lay-ups that Texas was able to get to, was that a byproduct of how many threes you took early or just not getting back?

COACH STEIN: You know, we've had a problem with five people getting back all year. And it's something we work on all the time. To me, it's a toughness thing. It's toughness getting down the court and getting the angle of the basket away. We had quite a few opportunities where we could get there and take the angle away and take a charge, and we backed out of it and it's just a toughness thing. And we've got to get a lot tougher.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about Amanda Hanneman and her play tonight? Obviously she's feeling much better.

COACH STEIN: Yes, Amanda is finally getting healthy. She's had back problems and all year long and she's a tremendous competitor. And she's been getting a lot healthier. She's been feeling better. Her quickness has come back and it's not quite all the way, but she does a lot of really good things. Now she's a tough kid. And we wanted that out there. She's been playing real well in practice.

And I don't think she really revealed herself on all the things she's capable of doing. But I think this is a good start for her.

Q. EeTisha, talk about toughness. Looked like you rolled an ankle on at least two occasions. How difficult was it to stay out there?

EeTISHA RIDDLE: It wasn't hard. I didn't want my last game to be sitting on a bench with a rolled ankle. Everybody rolls an ankle. I had to suck it up and run down the floor.

Q. Cindy, going back to the first half and the way you guys played in the second half, do you feel if you could have put the two halves together, it could have given you a chance to be in at least?

COACH STEIN: Sure. It's frustrating from a coaching standpoint, you go into a locker room and our kids feel confident they can play with Texas. It's not a matter of you're trying to build up their confidence; it's just for some reason this group it takes the first half to figure things out and then try to come back strong in the second and I think our kids always play hard and it just goes back to I've said over and over again. I put too much emphasis on ourselves and not always working together. They try very hard to do things, but it's not as team oriented, whether it's getting somebody else opened or being a little more patient to set up your defender.

Little things like that, they're overrunning things. And it's frustrating from a coaching angle because we don't do that in practice. And then we'll get in a game and it's like we're overrunning passing lanes and you're seeing things that you don't usually see. We've got to be able to figure that out.

Q. In the first half, it looked, you were posting up against Tiffany Jackson and Tiffany Brooks had the ball and you were screaming to throw it in to you and she threw it elsewhere. How bad did you want the ball tonight and how bad were you thinking about carrying this team like the first game?

EeTISHA RIDDLE: I always wanted, like, demand the ball because I know I get a lot of attention, and they were going to double and triple team me, and then that's going to leave a lot of my teammates open, and it's frustrating. It's hard being a post player because you depend on other people to get you the ball.

But maybe she saw something that I didn't see.

Q. Cindy, when you talked about the emphasis on the self and in looking for an

evaluation of the season, is that something that just the subtraction of a couple of players, key players from the previous team can affect? You talked about chemistry, is that just something losing a couple of key players can have that kind of impact?

COACH STEIN: I think we've had other kids step up. Obviously you miss two WNBA players, and that does have an effect on the team, but I feel the team has done a good job of getting themselves into a position to do things. It goes back to where, you know, Tiffany Brooks is able to create her own shot and EeTisha is able to create her own shot and Alyssa Hollins is able to create her own shot. And sometimes we rely on that happening instead of the flow of the offense. If you look through our games, which I've done, it's like we score when we move the ball real well. Our movement on offense is good, but when we get into a tight situation, we're a one-pass try to score. And like I said, it's tough because our patience needs to be in there in those times.

And it's something that we work on all the time in practice going eight passes before you can score, and it's just-- we've got a lot of game slippage, unfortunately. That is new people in those kinds of pressure situations, understanding what that takes.

Q. Coach Stein, could you talk about your decision to send Tiffany Brooks back into the game with four fouls with lots of time left and when she got her fifth foul?

COACH STEIN: Sure. We were down. We were basically 20 points down, if not more. And we needed someone aggressive. And she was getting in there, trying to be aggressive, and at that point you don't have anything to lose. You gotta play it all out.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, good luck for the rest of the season.

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