

**March 9, 2007**



**An interview with:**

## **KANSAS**

CHARLIE FISS: We're joined now by Coach Bill Self of the Kansas Jayhawks. His student athletes will be along shortly. We will call on you for your thoughts on today's victory over Oklahoma.

COACH BILL SELF: Well, I thought it was a grind-it-out game. Neither team was great offensively the entire game, but defense was pretty good. We were pretty still the first half.

I thought the second half at least we rebounded the ball better and our defense led to easy baskets which kind of gave us a little cushion.

**Q. Bill, we've heard you talk many times about how you wish at times Brandon Rush would be more aggressive. That little spurt in the second half I assume is the way you like to see him play and if the answer is yes, what does that add to the big picture for you guys when plays like that?**

COACH BILL SELF: Well, we're not going to be a real good team unless we have our best offensive players stepping up and making plays or taking shots.

He shied away from action the first half, I thought. We talked about that at half time. The second half, he was more aggressive. We still didn't shoot the ball, worked the flip. When he is aggressive, he gives us a whole different dimension because he can get an easy basket getting to the rack or he can make three or four threes in a ten-minute stretch. He just wasn't looking to do that at all the first half.

**Q. Bill, it seems your players do a wonderful job on the sideline with their demeanor, not ever talking back to an official. It appears that you have stressed that. Would you address that?**

COACH BILL SELF: Well, you know, we don't stress probably anything different than anybody else does, but that's just something you don't do. If you are focused you are always thinking next play. And I probably talk too much, but if players are focused, they can't let what just happened affect what's getting ready to happen.

Shady can tell you the same thing, I thought our body language wasn't good at all the first half. Body language, and if you look at our team, you should never be able to tell what the score is by looking at us. And so we don't do a great job at that, but we do a pretty good job with it, I think.

**Q. Bill, are you concerned -- how concerned are you of your free throw shooting?**

COACH BILL SELF: We talked about as a staff on the bench that we weren't going to talk about free throw shooting. But to answer your question, yes.

So, you know, 11-22, we got better shooters than what we shot. But I don't -- you know, we're not going to talk -- sometimes the more you talk about missing short putts or free throw shooting the more it gets in your head. I still don't believe it is in our head yet to the point where it's -- you know, we got a phobia about it or anything.

But, you got to make free throws in the post-season. Unfortunately today we didn't have to.

CHARLIE FISS: We are now joined by our two student athletes, Darrell Arthur and Sherron Collins.

**Q. Sherron, had you a couple scoreless games heading into this game. Did that weigh on you at all? How nice was it to get the ball in the bucket a few times?**

SHERRON COLLINS: It was nice to get going, to get started. It had no affect on us trying to come in and do -- as I normally do.

**Q. For both players, could you both**

**talk a little bit about what it means to you guys, when Brandon plays really aggressively like he did in the second half?**

DARRELL ARTHUR: It means a lot because he is like our number one scorer and we look for him to score a lot. When he is doing good, the whole team just follow him and do good along with him.

I think he is like a good motivator on the court. When he gets going, the whole team gets going.

SHERRON COLLINS: Like I said, when he gets going, we got to look for him and get him the ball early, get him in the game, give him extra shots. He is a good shooter and a good scorer.

From him scoring to get going, generally it just goes to the whole team and gets us started.

**Q. Can either of you talk about this wasn't a home court game for them at all with how the fans turned out? What do you think about that?**

DARRELL ARTHUR: Our fans have been supporting us the whole year, they come during pre-season. They came to a lot of away games and they have been supporting us real well. That's what motivates us, too, on the court. Hearing them out there makes us play harder.

**Q. Darrell, can you just talk about whether each team, I guess, Texas Tech or Kansas State, you know, give us your thoughts on both.**

DARRELL ARTHUR: Both of them are good defensive teams. We play Kansas State, they beat us up pretty good. We got out with some wins. And Texas Tech is a great team. Probably one of the best teams in our league right now.

Them going against each other will probably be a real good game.

(Loud noise.)

COACH BILL SELF: Coach Knight have been here, he would have walked out right now. (Laughter).

**Q. Coach, was the half-time speech that you gave to your team today similar to the one you gave against Texas in the regular season? Because your team came out in the second half with a fire lit under them.**

COACH BILL SELF: No. Well, I mean, I just told them we could play better. And, you know, against Texas, it wasn't from lack of effort. It was they just whipped us.

Today, I didn't think we played with as much bounce and energy as we did in the Texas game, per se. So, you know, we were talking about more -- more about you know, playing with bouts of energy and that kind of stuff.

But, you know, first game, 11:30 game, we hadn't shot in the building yet. I think that it didn't surprise me how we played the first half, to be honest. I shouldn't say we played poorly because I thought OU really defended us well.

**Q. Bill, is this the first time you have seen since Oral Roberts that's entirely your team, guys you signed and brought in?**

COACH BILL SELF: If you say entirely, I haven't been at very many places very long. At Illinois we had Cook. My last year that was it. Last year we just had Hawk and Christian. I felt like this is -- I felt like this has been my team since the first day I got on campus.

People make too big a deal out of that. I thought it was my team at Illinois right off the bat. But certainly, you know, we've had time to recruit to our needs and recruit to a way we want to play, and our coaches have done a good job of going out and getting guys.

**Q. Do you remember ten years ago this week you get an N.I.T. bid, you were overjoyed to get it at Oral Roberts? Kind of compare what it was like to be a young coach then, ecstatic to get an N.I.T. compared to the pressure that's on you now.**

COACH BILL SELF: Well, you know, if we didn't want pressure we probably should have never moved to Lawrence. We like that. You want -- I love being at a place where there's expectations because that means you can usually get good players. But going to N.I.T. at Tulsa was a big deal -- I mean at ORU, that was a big, big deal.

I hadn't even thought about that until you mentioned it. But, you know, I think, relative speaking, at that time, that was every bit as big a deal as what we are going through now. The stakes are so many higher. There is just so much talk about it. It really is what coaches dream of, I think, and what they live for to be in positions like this.

**Q. You guys were able to beat Kansas State twice this year. You lost when you went**

**into Lubbock to take on Tech. Do you find yourself pulling one way or the other either for your team's matchups or what might be better for the conference as these two teams both sit there on the bubble?**

COACH BILL SELF: If I told you what I really, really wanted, that would be bulletin board material for everybody else.

I will tell you this, we know we will play a good opponent tomorrow. And the K-State game in Manhattan, we were fortunate to win and Tech has already beaten us.

It will be a very hotly contested game either way.

**Q. How important is it for Sherron to get his three-point shot back and can you live without it?**

COACH BILL SELF: The way we are, it is usually a different guy or different guy's night tonight. We need to get all of our best players playing well. Of course shooting the ball is a big part of that. We have been so inconsistent doing that.

I think it will come back. He's not scared to miss. So he has got confidence to make them. I think he will make them. Certainly it was good to see him make a couple of layups today because the lid has been on the basket for about a week.

**Q. Bill, I saw you out there and I asked this, but I would like to get your complete answer here. You're not unlike other coaches around the country in that you play players late in the game of a win. You left -- I guess your primary players came out at 3:40 and 1:30 in the game. What is the thinking of playing them that long?**

COACH BILL SELF: Well, the only reason -- the only primary player that was in the game late was Julian and Julian hadn't played the whole game. I wanted him to at least see something good happen. That's all that was.

But I don't -- I thought we got our guys out pretty early and then I put everybody else in to sub and we didn't get a stoppage, that's why I called the time out. There is no rhyme or reason. We didn't try to score the last four minutes of the game either. There was no rhyme or reason. We weren't doing anything to try to embarrass anybody.

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An interview with:

## OKLAHOMA

CHARLIE FISS: Joined by the Oklahoma Sooners Coach Capel and his two student athletes, Michael Neal and Nate Carter.

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I want to congratulate Kansas. They are awfully good, very talented. They were just too much for us. We played a very good first half, had the lead throughout the first half and squandered it there towards the end.

We felt like we were in good position, didn't get off to a great start. Obviously we struggled scoring the ball in the second half. We have one field goal for the first 12 minutes or so and when you are playing against a team as talented as Kansas, you have to score.

I thought defensively we did a decent job and the team average was 80 and they scored 64.

But we didn't score the ball enough to win. So congratulate them. They are awfully good. Good luck to them the rest of the season. We're seal what happens with us.

**Q. For both you guys, do you think you have played your final game this year and in your career at Oklahoma? If so, what are your thoughts right now starting with you, Michael?**

MICHAEL NEAL: Hopefully not. I don't know how the -- how it works with the tournament selection. Just going to wait until Sunday to figure out if we are still playing or not.

NATE CARTER: You know, we already know what's going to happen. We still want to play, so we will have to wait until Sunday and see what happens.

**Q. Nate and Mike, Kansas did a good job of trapping tonight, forcing you guys to back up your offense a little bit. Maybe, Mike, I need you to comment on this, too. Talk about how that bothered the offense. It just seemed**

**like it took you a few more seconds to try to get into an offense.**

MICHAEL NEAL: I didn't hear the question. I didn't understand it.

**Q. Kansas was trapping you in the corner. Talk about how difficult it was to get into your offense.**

MICHAEL NEAL: It kind of throws off the rhythm. The things we do -- like we got things to counter that and we just didn't put it together today. In the second half -- I mean, the first half, we did some good things. The second half, they just kind of ran away with it and took the momentum.

**Q. Michael and Nate, if you guys can, if you can talk about the zone that you guys were in early, you seem to give Kansas a little bit of trouble, forced them to take some outside shots. As the game wore on, they kind of broke that down. Was there a change in the philosophy or the effort? I mean, what happened down the stretch there?**

COACH JEFF CAPEL: We just made some mistakes and they scored off of them, but they are a good team and they played real hard.

**Q. Guys in the second half when you just couldn't put the ball in the basket, it seemed as though Kansas -- I don't know if intimidated is the right word, but they altered a lot of your shots, it seemed. Do you think that's fair?**

NATE CARTER: They definitely didn't intimidate us, we just missed shots. We was attacking them. We was going at them. We just missed shots that we normally make.

**Q. Michael, just talk about this season in general, then, how has it been this season for not just you individually but as a team? First year under Coach Capel, have things gone the way you thought they would, not necessarily in wins and losses but just describe how the season has been.**

MICHAEL NEAL: It has been, I think, a

blessing. We're blessed to get a coach like Coach Capel who believed in it us. It could have been anybody, and brought a system that fit us and work with our personnel. And I think despite the wins and losses, we were a good team and we hit some shots, we get some stops, we can easily be looking at being in the tournament and stuff like that. But at the same time, I learned a lot and I just -- I really appreciate having a coaching staff like we had because it could have been anybody, you know. The seniors, me, Nate, our careers could have been over, you know, not playing as much as and stuff like that.

They believed in us and we did the best we could.

**Q. Jeff, do you believe this team has done enough to warrant to keep playing next week?**

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I would like to think so. I mean, obviously my biased opinion is yeah. You know, I think we are playing in one, if not the best conference in college basketball. If you look at what our teams have done this year in our league, I think so. We have been competitive. We haven't maybe had a signature win.

We did beat a top 25 team. They are not a top 25 team now.

So I think we have, but unfortunately it is not in my hands. We hope so.

**Q. Jeff, is it just going to be about recruiting to resurrect the program and get it back in the NCAA tournament?**

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Well, any program -- the lifeblood of your program is recruiting. You have to have players. That's the bottom line. You have to have players and the players that you have, they have to believe in you. They have to want to play for you.

And recruiting is a big part of getting better in any program, certainly in ours. So we look forward to recruiting. I enjoy it. I have a staff that enjoys it. We have signed four guys we think are really good, and we look forward to continuing to do it.

**Q. Jeff, in the first half, did things go just about as good as you could hope for going in the first half with your game plan how you laid it out? When you went into the half time locker room, were you thinking, okay, we are right there?**

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I thought so except for the last 30 seconds. We wanted to try -- 44 seconds on the clock, we called time out. We wanted to hold for one shot. We didn't execute that play but we got it back on the out of bounds. I thought we shot quickly there.

But overall I thought in the first half we played very well. I thought our defense was good. We did some different things on ball screens. We mixed our defenses up some. But the bottom line is scoring.

To beat Kansas, you have to score. They average 80. They had 28 at half time. So our defense was very good. Offensively, we did some decent things but that's been the story of our team all year. You know, we have played pretty good defense for the most part.

I thought the difference in the second half defensively they got transition baskets. In the first half, I don't remember them getting one transition basket. In the second half, they probably got about 12 points -- about 8 to 12 points in transition.

I thought that was a big difference. Obviously, I felt we were a little bit deflated once we got down. They were getting straight-line drives on us, which not many teams have done that this year. Brandon Rush got one on the left wing when drove it right down the middle. Looked like Moses had a staff and the sea parted right there. That's disappointing. All year long these guys have fought hard.

We have tried to get better. We just unfortunately have been inconsistent with scoring.

**Q. Coach, along the same lines, how would you describe your first year? I would imagine any time first year at BCU, here, whatever would be special in some ways or however. How has it been emotionally for you as a coach in the first year?**

COACH JEFF CAPEL: It has been an honor to be here honestly, and to coach these guys, I appreciate these guys accepting us.

Our players have been through a lot. Any time you have a coaching change and you go -- and you are playing for someone that didn't recruit you, that's tough. I went through it as a player kind of like half a year. It wasn't anything like that. My coach was out my second year in school, and it is tough.

But these guys you know, you know, we appreciate the fact that they embraced us. We



worked.

There were a lot of areas where we have to get better, we have to improve. I knew that coming in. I knew that once I took the job and we started individual workouts, I knew that.

But these guys have displayed great heart and we fought all year long. There have been some teams we have played that are more talented than us. Kansas is better than us. Kansas is better than a lot of teams. But these guys have fought. I said at the beginning of the year, I thought this team would be a team that our fans would really get behind and embrace because I thought it was a team that would fight. We knew we were an underdog. We knew there wasn't a lot of expectations outside of our locker room and we talked about that. We talked about fighting and giving great effort every day, and for the most part, I think we did that.

**Q. Jeff, along those same lines, you talked about before the season started that you wanted this team to be the best that it could be, basically, I think in those terms. Do you feel like this team reached its potential, even though, like you said, you had limitations?**

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Yeah, I do. That may sound crazy, I do. Listen, I didn't come here to be close, to give great effort, to just do that.

I came here to win. That's what I know is to win. But I think you have to run your own race. We can't compare ourself to someone else right now. We want to -- we think what we have at the University of Oklahoma is very good.

And I think our team hit its ceiling. When you are playing with guys that really haven't played and with the inconsistency that we had, I mean, if you would have told me last night that Longar was going to come out and have a double-double and almost have a double-double in the first half, I wanted it to happen but I would have thought you were probably crazy to say that with the way he was playing.

We have a guy that -- our two leading scorers didn't score yesterday. Obviously, Mike didn't play. And then we have a guy like Nate Carter who had 6 points today. He had 22 or 24 yesterday. David Godbold didn't score. I mean, that's kind of been how our season has been. I knew who we were at the beginning of the year. We've tried to work. I think we have gotten better. I think we've improved.

But we just -- we have to improve in some talent. We do. I understand that. Our staff

understands that. And that's something that we look forward to doing.

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