

March 11, 2008



An interview with:

**COACH STEIN
AMANDA HANNEMAN
ALYSSA HOLLINS
JESSRA JOHNSON**

THE MODERATOR: We're now being joined by the Missouri Tigers, congratulations Coach Stein. This is the first time that a 12th seed team has won in the women's tournament so congratulations, if you would like to make an opening comment and introduce your players?

COACH STEIN: I would be proud to. Jessra Johnson, Alyssa Hollins and Amanda Hanneman, all three a critical part of our success today. I think that 12 beating a 5 tells you how strong our conference is. I felt like -- everyone kept saying, what are you going to do, because every time you come across is a Top 25. Our conference is so good, they made us a Top 25 team tonight, and that's all that matters!

You don't live for tomorrow during the tournament unless you take care of today, and I'm just really pleased. We had a lot of great plays from a lot of outstanding young women today, and it was great to see everything connect today.

THE MODERATOR: Did you want to comment about your players?

COACH STEIN: Gosh! Amanda Hanneman to my left hit a big 3, did a great job, and Amanda played a smart ballgame today. That shot was a tremendous play! A smart play! Alyssa Hollins, in between the two young ladies and Alyssa, I gave her a minute break today, and I think that that's the most she's had in probably 10 games and does a tremendous job. We've been riding her shoulders all year.

And Jessra Johnson, who took a few hits out there today, played very physical, a physical game for her today. And obviously she gritted it out just a tremendous fighter, and all three of them had a great hand in today's success.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach, we'll take questions.

Q. Amanda, what about the 3 you hit? You were right in front of me, took the pass from Alyssa, and it looked like you were thinking about it and then stepped back and shot 3. Did you feel like there was a second where you weren't quite sure, or from the second you took the ball you knew that's what you needed to do?

AMANDA HANNEMAN: I was actually going to go for a lay-up, but then I remembered we were down by 3, so I stepped back and shot it.

Q. Jessra, you got beat up out there today. I don't remember which twin it was, but somebody landed on your head. What was it like banging against them all day and still getting what you needed for offense?

JESSRA JOHNSON: This is what you look for: I played like there was no tomorrow and came out victorious, so I would do it again tomorrow if we had to.

Q. Alyssa, you took the game over time and time again, talk about that.

ALYSSA HOLLINS: There was a feeling in our huddle that we weren't going to lose the game, and Amanda stepped up and got on the boards. And I was like, I need to do something, and I got a couple to fall in overtime and, I'm so proud of this team!

Q. Both of you struggled a little shooting early on in overtime; I don't know if you missed. What was it like being able to shake that off, knowing you guys were still standing when you were down and coming out and managing to shake that off and start hitting in overtime?

ALYSSA HOLLINS: I think you have to have a short memory. I wasn't thinking about those misses in the game! I was just hoping to knock down shots and they went down.

JESSRA JOHNSON: When you're that close, you have to keep doing what you're doing and come out victorious.

Q. Alyssa, obviously the Paris twins had a good game, but you guys did a good job of shutting down Oklahoma's supporting class on the perimeter. What did you guys do defensively to do that?

ALYSSA HOLLINS: Courtney is an all-American and she's going to get herself, but we were just looking to cover her and staggering off other players and be active with them and disrupt their offensive flow. I think we did a good job. So.

Q. What are some of the first thoughts that go through y'all's mind when you hear this is the first time a 12 seed has ever won?

AMANDA HANNEMAN: We are just smiles all across everybody's faces and we made history!

ALYSSA HOLLINS: With the season that we've had, we're going to keep fighting. Knowing we made history, it means a lot for the future, even tomorrow and talking about next year, so it means the world to this team!

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you very much. We'll see you tomorrow. Good luck.

Coach, did you want to say anything else?

Q. Love what we heard from these three, but I want you to talk about the play of some of the people that weren't here, five steals and four assists for Toy Richbow, doesn't get talked about a lot, but made a real difference in what she did and talk about what Shak did today.

COACH STEIN: Shakara gave us great presence inside, and we wanted to make sure we were attacking inside. We wanted to go at the twins. Our whole mindset was they're a great team, but we weren't going to stand back and shoot jumpers around them, we wanted to make sure we were attacking. And Shakara definitely did that and Toy had a great game.

She picked up that third, it didn't rattle her. She came back out, was playing aggressively, as much as playing with three fouls, and controlled the ballgame and that's what you've got to have. Her maturation process has been very good leading into this game.

Q. Follow up. You I talked three or four times this season about the fact that we had these three players being such a big part of the offense. How significant is it that Amanda had the game she had and she was the one who hit that big 3?

COACH STEIN: It's huge for us. We've been talking about that with our team is that we've got to have five threats on the floor, and we don't want to be playing four on five, and Amanda takes that seriously.

She works hard at it and I think she plays very well in Kansas City. She loves playing in front of her family so they've got to go to every game now (Chuckles.) Because she hit a great one.

Q. Coach, I was wondering how you deal with Courtney down low, 16 points, 14 rebounds. The rebounds, there is no way she is anywhere near their size and still fighting for them.

And on the point, I don't know how she had anything left on offense. The few times she got knocked down, it didn't look like she was going to make it to the other end of the court.

COACH STEIN: Jessra is strong and that's what allows her to get the rebounds. Jessra is very explosive. She can position herself very well and her strength allows her to do those things against the twins, and she just really battles.

We knew for us to outrebound them, maybe it wasn't going to be there, but we needed to stay in the fight on every single rebound. We may not get it, but we got to be in the fight and not abandon ship. And Jessra was in there the whole time trying to put a hand on it, grab it, and came up with some big ones there at the end.

Q. Coach, you mentioned her aggressiveness, but what else did you see from Shak, especially on the offensive end taking it to an All-American player, especially as a freshman?

COACH STEIN: I liked her confidence. I thought she was very confident tonight, and she is a very good player and she's going to get better and better, and she wanted the basketball. I can tell you there are a lot of kids, when Courtney Paris is guarding them they, don't want the basketball.

Q. Cindy, they have 26 offensive rebounds in the game, but the one they didn't get was with 20 seconds in regulation. Three of your players converged to set up the Hanneman shot. Take us through that.

COACH STEIN: I would like to think I remember it, Brenda. (Chuckles.) Our kids battled and that's why I liked the entire game, is that they just battled. There was a two-minute spurt right before the half that I thought our possessions weren't very good, but on the defensive end, we went in there and worked hard and that's what you've got to do.

We were outsized and they have a lot more depth than we do, and we had to stay in there. That's exactly what they did, is we told them five people cannot leave that end until we get the ball.

Q. Cindy, talk about how Shak went so delayed in the second half without picking up a foul.

COACH STEIN: Isn't that an amazing thing? She's been playing really well positionwise. I said it from the start, is that this conference -- I think it's made us so much better.

Even though it doesn't -- our record doesn't indicate that, it's made us so much better. Especially with Shakara -- she has had to go up against so many great players. She has learned a lot. I think that's part of it. The things you saw today, she's learned. From a position standpoint, move your feet and go with what they're calling and go around some of those things and how to get open. She learned so much.

Q. Coach, Texas A&M tomorrow, can you talk about the challenge for tomorrow?

COACH STEIN: I think that's -- Texas A&M, as everyone knows, they're a tough team, great defensive team. I think that probably all their starters were nominated for defensive team members and defensive players of the year in our conference because they're that good.

So obviously our offensive possessions are going to be important and they have tremendous players and athletes and it's another challenge for us. That's how we look at it. We knew we couldn't -- we haven't looked too far at Texas A&M because we knew we had to get past Oklahoma, so we put everything into Oklahoma. As soon as we get back, we'll start concentrating on them, but they're a great team.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, good luck, we'll see you tomorrow.

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