

March 13, 2008



BIG 12 CHAMPIONSHIP

MISSOURI TIGERS

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with the Missouri Tigers, Coach Mike Anderson and his two student athletes, DeMarre Carroll and Matt Lawrence.

Coach, your thoughts on tonight's game?

COACH MIKE ANDERSON: First of all, I wanted to say I was very disappointed in our performance today. I thought coming over I thought we would be amped up and ready to play. We had the opportunity to play in the tournament here in Kansas City, but for some reason, just seemed like what you saw today has kind of been a synapse of our season. To me that's the way I look at it.

But one thing our guys did, they went down fighting, and you got to give credit to Nebraska. I think the game was played at their tempo and they were able to come out with the win, but it wasn't because of lack of effort. It just seemed like we couldn't throw it in the ocean today. When you get to tournament play, we scored 56 points. We scored 55 points, 56 points in the half. It just wasn't our day. Again, you got to credit Nebraska in doing a good job. But we had opportunities. Again, I will just talk about the inconsistencies we have had throughout the year, with players in and out.

But, again, I thought our guys continued to fight.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

Q. Matt, if you could talk about how would you describe your team's mood at halftime?

MATT LAWRENCE: Well, I think they went into the half, they knocked down a shot and it was a little bit of a momentum swing but, you know, we knew that the game was 40 minutes and we went on the second half and we wanted to get after them for the first five minutes. But credit to

Nebraska, they came out. They had a game plan. Slowed us down and we let them do it.

It was just kind of -- the first half seemed a lot like the second half. We never really could turn it, you know, get the lead in our favor. And it is just a credit to how well they played.

Q. DeMarre, those last two minutes you pulled within one, what was the difference in the game and the last two minutes that helped Nebraska pull away?

DeMARRE CARROLL: Well, I don't think it's nothing Nebraska did. I think we just beat ourself. Every time we got close, we shot ourself in the foot by getting a turnover or making an easy layover or looking for the refs to make a certain call. I think we shot ourselves in the foot. I didn't see the energy today. We just didn't have the energy.

Just one of them days. Hopefully our young players, we can regroup and come back next year and try to win this thing.

Q. It reminded me a lot of the end of the game at home this year when you guys lost to them by four. You were close at the end. Is there something about Nebraska, with their dispensing switches or any of their game plan that has made it hard for you guys both times to get over that hump and take the lead back late?

DeMARRE CARROLL: Like I said before, it's nothing Nebraska did. I think it was us, we just shot ourselves in the foot. We like to get the game up-tempo up and down. When we get it up-tempo, we get closer and closer and then we will make a missed turnover or easy lay-up or looking for the ref to make a certain call.

Give credit to Nebraska, they're a great team. I think it was more that we did that really made us not do the things that we should have done out there tonight.

Q. DeMarre, you brought it up, you spoke of next year. Has it sunk in that this year

is, indeed, over?

DeMARRE CARROLL: Well, you know, once we get back, you know, Coach will give us time off and we got to really think about this year.

But, you know, this year there has been ups and downs. There has been a lot of stuff going on. You know, I think for us to come this far, you know, with all the stuff that's been going on, you know, I'm still -- it is not the best season, but I'm just happy we made it this far 'cause we really didn't have to make it this far, all the stuff that went on, given credit to our coaching staff. They really kept us in tune and they never lost, you know, the dream, the road, the rainbow down the road.

So hopefully we can continue and get better next year.

Q. DeMarre, how important to the outcome of the game was the fact they had 13 more second-chance points than you guys and 11 more rebounds than you guys?

DeMARRE CARROLL: Like I said before, it was energy. I just didn't see the energy in our guys. Yesterday we was hyped and jumping up and down. Today I don't know if it was nervousness or jitters. I just didn't see the energy.

You know, it is one of them days. Hopefully we can just regroup.

Q. Matt, I wanted to follow up on a question with DeMarre. How long has the season felt for you?

MATT LAWRENCE: Well, it's been a roller coaster ride. There are parts of the season that I will always remember. You know, times when bad things have happened to our team, but we came back and got a huge win, Kansas State. We started out the season beating Texas. I mean, you know, it is a credit to guys that have been working hard all year.

You know, the season didn't finish out how we'd like it to, but, you know, it has had its ups, too. I think we're going to move forward and celebrate our seniors and then like I said, just move forward.

THE MODERATOR: We'll let you go back to the locker room. Thanks for coming. We'll take questions for Coach.

Q. Mike, what are reasonable expectations for next season?

COACH MIKE ANDERSON: Well, I think my goal every year is to be at the big dance, is to

have the opportunity to win a national championship. The only way to do that is to be in the NCAA tournament.

I think some of the foundation, you know, you can see, some of it is laid. That's why we have the movement with our young guys with Keon Lawrence and J.T. Tiller, Matt Lawrence, Justin Safford. I think you saw that movement where those guys were playing quite a bit. Hopefully we can add on with the recruiting class we have. We have a young man sitting here, Zaire Taylor. We are laying the foundation about what we are going to be about.

This game in particular, I think depth was an issue. When you don't have guys have it going on, you got to have somebody come off the bench to spark you.

Even with that being said, we shot 30-some-odd percent and we still had a chance. I think the question was 2:00 to go in the game and that's the learning part of this game. We have to learn how to win and finish off games. We're doing it with other guys now.

So, therefore, you got to make plays. But, again, I think my expectation every year is to win a national championship. I don't know when it's going to take place, but that's my expectation. That's just me.

Q. Mike, have you been to a lot of NCAA tournaments at UAB. How does the talent here compare to that? Are you close?

COACH MIKE ANDERSON: I think it is going to take some recruiting classes, no question about it. I inherited a team. One thing about me, I never complain, you know, about what I don't have. I just work with what I got.

I think what you've seen, a steady improvement of players. When you look at Matt Lawrence, I think you've seen a guy that was sitting on the end of the bench really when I first got here. Even with Keon, Lyons, that's the key. We have always had the opportunity to develop players. As you develop players, you develop teams. How do you do that? You got to get better players, especially when you talk at this level to play consistently night in and night out. So no question about it, I think our talent level has got to go up. But I think we got a good class.

I think we got a pretty decent nucleus of guys that have played a couple years. So they know the expectation. Again, you can just look out

there on their faces going down the stretch and just see, we got some young colts out there, J.T. Tiller in particular. He gives us energy. Leo Lyons, I mean Leo before I got here, he didn't play a whole lot of basketball.

So now he's starting to put it together. But as I said, the season to me has been -- what you saw today has been kind of the up and down of the season.

Q. With some of the seniors, like Darryl and Marshall, they're playing time especially compared to last season sort of dropped off a lot. Was it just more of a problem with them not fitting with the system? What was it in your mind?

COACH MIKE ANDERSON: I think we had some other guys that were playing well. Again, I thought we went with the young guys, the guys that were leaving it all on the floor.

I mean, that's -- again, when we had the incidents that took place, we had some guys, hey, we're going to go with these guys and those guys were in different roles. At times they did -- they came in and filled those roles. But we had some other guys that I thought were playing better than they were.

Q. The talk is of next year. If the CIB calls, will you accept that invitation?

COACH MIKE ANDERSON: My expectation every year is to be at NCAA tournament, of course, NIT and that's how I feel. Right now we just had a tough loss.

Again, my expectation, no question about it, to be at the NCAA tournament every year.

Q. Can you talk about Leo Lyons' game and some of his struggles today as well as what you expect from his future in terms of coming back next year.

COACH MIKE ANDERSON: I think you saw what I talked about. We have to wait until the next game. We talk about consistency. I think -- there were only a few games where you saw our team click on all cylinders. Again, I thought Leo right here at the last stretch, I thought he put some games together.

And, hopefully -- he can see that there is a lot of work to be. When you talk about wanting to be one of the better players in our league, not only that in our league, in our country, so there is a lot of work to be done for Leo, not only Leo but our

basketball team in order to get better because, I think next time we play in this tournament, we're going -- we'll put on a better performance than we did today.

Q. We talked about the offenses and things that were disappointing. Tell me a little bit about some things that you did well today, particularly on defense because the Cornhuskers had maybe half a dozen games all season where they scored this few points, you had a 5-second stop late in the game and the defense obviously did some well things for you?

COACH MIKE ANDERSON: We did some decent things. When you talk about defensively, even as we went down, we still fought our way to get back in the game with the basketball with an opportunity to go up. Again, that's why I say, the inexperience of maybe attacking to get to the free-throw line. I think with a veteran player, they understand. You got to attack and make something happen. I thought we did some decent things. I thought the second-chance points were big. I think somebody made that comment. They got some loose balls. We had been getting those going down the stretch here and it makes a big difference.

Again, to me, it is just the inconsistency. You can see us turn it on, and then it kind of goes away. We start off the second half, which blew my mind, I don't think we scored a field goal until 12 minutes to go in the half and yet we're still right there. Again, there is the inconsistencies.

Again, with experience in bringing in some better players to fit what we're doing, I think the foundation is going to be laid and I think you are going to see us really, really improve, I think, as a team next year because, again, when you win -- to win in this league, you got to have players. You got to have very good players.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you again.

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