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NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

CHARLIE FISS: We're ready to begin with the Nebraska Cornhuskers and Coach Doc Sadler and his two student athletes, Ade Dagunduro and Aleks Maric.

Coach, your thoughts on tonight's game?

DOC SADLER: I think it was a game of two halves. First of all, I couldn't be more proud of my basketball team. They gave me every ounce of energy and effort that you could give. And that's what it's about. I mean, also we wanted to win the game. We came into this game thinking that we could get it down the last five or six minutes and have a chance to win.

You know, the first 20 minutes went that way. You know a team as good as Kansas that second half is going to come out and just try to knock you out that first five minutes. And we just -- they hit us hard and we didn't respond aggressively. That's when the game kind of changed a little bit.

And, you know, physically, as you play 40 minutes and we're having to play some different line-ups because Ryan Anderson really couldn't play tonight because of his ankle, even though we tried, you're so small. And after 40 minutes, you know all of a sudden the offensive rebounds take place, the turnovers take place. They're such a good basketball team, that can happen. Again, I couldn't be prouder of the way we played.

Q. Aleks, can you talk about comparing this game to the previous four games you played Kansas. What was different and when did you realize that you could play with these guys?

ALEKS MARIC: I mean, it was a big difference. I think we definitely -- we brought it to them in the first half. I mean, you know, we didn't take a step back. We brought it to them and we gave it everything we had.

Q. Ade, would you answer that question as well? People outside look and see that you guys lose by 35 and 31 and you're ahead of these guys at the half and take it to them most of the game. How does a team effect such a change?

ADE DAGUNDURO: It was just a matter of us hitting them in the mouth before they hit us. Coach told us we got to play with confidence and that's what we did for the most part of the game, pretty much all of the game.

And they responded well early in the second half and they took the lead and we couldn't bounce back like we wanted to.

CHARLIE FISS: We'll let you go back to the locker room. Now we'll take questions for Coach Sadler.

Q. Did you do anything that was much different game plan-wise than the other two games against Kansas?

DOC SADLER: I think, again, going back to the Texas A&M game where I think we started controlling and understanding tempo and things like that, when you're playing against a team that is, you know, deeper and more talented maybe -- I don't know -- and you have some success, you get that idea and then you follow it up with some games.

So I think it was easier, kind of like your question yesterday, the step -- you know, is there some positive steps? I think it is easier when you have some success doing something that way for them to follow it and not lose -- not get impatient and understand that, you know, you may end up taking a bad shot with two seconds but that's okay. It is a 40-minute game.

And then, you know, the first half we hit some shots. More than anything, it's not that we strategically did that much more, I just think that guys did a better job in shot selection as far as time management.

Q. Ade said we had to come out and punch them in the mouth. That's what you

wanted them to do. Did your guys play maybe a perfect game in the first half and what happened in the second half?

DOC SADLER: I don't think so. Again, you know, I thought we played well the first half but I don't know that we played near perfect. But I thought there were some big plays there that could have helped and we didn't make those plays.

The second half I mean, I think more than anything it's just a physical thing. Those guys are so much more athletic and bigger and, you know, our guys got wore down. We gave up four offensive rebounds the first half and 10 the second half and we turned the basketball over quite a bit more often in the second half. And we didn't shoot it quite as well.

You know, at times, guys, we had four guys, 6' 1" or smaller on the floor. You got to give our guys credit for fighting. Paul Velander was guarding Darrell Arthur and doing a nice job because he is just tough.

Q. Doc, you look at the stats, you make the same number of shots. In essence, you lose it at the free-throw line. Is that part of a byproduct sometimes of how aggressive your guys have to play?

DOC SADLER: I think so, you know. Enough said.

Q. Coach, you talked about the effort that you applauded earlier. From a grander perspective, I guess, throughout the whole season, how much do these guys buy into what you are trying to do and how much can they build on that heading into next year?

DOC SADLER: I don't know. I mean -- I think that -- I think we're playing pretty good basketball right now, so obviously I think they've bought in what we're trying to do up there.

We're not close to being where we need to be. But I do think the guys we have in the program understand what toughness can do for you and so we'll be all right. We'll be all right.

Q. If there were ever a loss that you feel good about, would this be it?

DOC SADLER: No.

Q. Why is that?

DOC SADLER: I'm not one of those dudes that get much out of losing. We didn't come

into this game tonight to play close. So, you know, so ...

I'm sure there are some people that look at a close loss and what we've done from January to whatever that date was to now as that we've improved as a basketball team, but we've got to get to the level that no matter who we're playing we want to win. We don't want to play close. So ...

Appreciate y'all. Thanks so much.

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