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OKLAHOMA SOONERS

CHARLIE FISS: We're joined by the Sooners of Oklahoma and Coach Jeff Capel. His two student athletes are Taylor Griffin and Blake Griffin.

Coach, your thoughts on today's game?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: The game got away from us very quickly. I thought we did a good job early. Going into halftime we knew we were right there. We tied it up at 36, and very quickly got away from us.

Texas is a terrific team. When they're making shots and 3s like they were, it makes them an extremely tough team to guard. Abrams got loose and was able to get some baskets, Augustin is a tough guy to defend. But we got some great looks, we just didn't knock them down inside, some shots right at three-point line, and when you are playing against a really good team like Texas you have to be able to knock more of those down than we did.

We're disappointed but we are excited about our post-season future, look forward to tomorrow figuring out where we're playing and look forward to the NCAA tournament.

Q. Blake, do you leave this tournament with a bad taste in your mouth after your performances yesterday and today or do you still feel good and positive about going into the NCAA?

BLAKE GRIFFIN: A little bit of both. We need to definitely learn from these two games, learn what we did wrong and improve upon it. But at the same time, we need to forget it and concentrate on whoever we're playing next and not let how we played in this tournament affect us in the next tournament.

TAYLOR GRIFFIN: I think when you lose, you should always have a bad taste in your mouth. If you don't, then something is wrong with you.

After not playing very well as a team yesterday and then losing the way we did today,

you know, it's disappointing. But at this point in the season, you got to move on quickly. If you don't, your next game could be your last. So, yeah, it is disappointing. But, you know, we still got a big opportunity coming up.

Q. If you'll just address the fact that the game was even, looked like a heck of a ball game there for a while, even into the early part of the second half and then it just got completely out of control. Can you talk about how it spun out of control?

BLAKE GRIFFIN: I think it started just with us letting them play their game and play the way they wanted to play. And when you do that and they have a point guard like they do and shooters like they do and big ones like they do, it can get out of control fast. And we didn't do a good job of getting back on transition and slowing them down and stopping them.

Once they got rolling, like I said, they're hard to stop.

TAYLOR GRIFFIN: Same thing. They're a team that -- or it seemed like after they started getting ahead, it was like they could do whatever they wanted. They were getting the shots they wanted from the people they wanted and they were knocking down shots. And at the same time, it seemed like we weren't knocking down shots. With a team like Texas with that combination, then things are going to get out of hand pretty quickly.

Q. Blake, what was the difference today? Your 20 points, 13 rebounds. Yesterday no factor at all.

BLAKE GRIFFIN: I think -- (laughter). I think today, you know, trying to stay involved and run the court and I mean, rebounds kind of helped out a little bit and also hitting some shots helped.

At the same time, we didn't win so, you know, kind of wish I was a nonfactor again today. And we would have gotten a win.

Q. You guys get 7-0 run. You tie the game up; what was going on that didn't

continue as the game went on? Just simply not making shots?

TAYLOR GRIFFIN: Yeah I mean, like I said, they were making shots and we weren't. And, you know, they have the ability with the players they have -- it seems like they have the ability to turn it on at any point, especially Augustin. You know, like I said, it was a bad combination.

Q. Both players, you played so well coming into the tournament against A&M, Oklahoma State, Missouri. What's the confidence level now? You come in playing well, you should be confident. Where's it at now?

TAYLOR GRIFFIN: We're good. I mean, we got NCAA tournament coming up. We got an opportunity to win some games there and, you know, I think with the abilities that everybody has on this team, we can do -- we can get pretty far in this tournament. So like I said, it is disappointing that we didn't play as well as we know we're capable of in this tournament, but we know what we can do and we know how we can play and we are going to go out and do that.

Q. Taylor, you were here last year -- this time last year, your season was done. Contrast now how you feel this year.

TAYLOR GRIFFIN: You know, both Big 12 tournaments have ended in a loss. This time it is not like the season's over and you're looking forward to the next season.

Like I said, we have a lot of good players on this team and we have a chance to do something big in the NCAA tournament if we play together, if we play with passion, if we do the things that each of us can do well and we do it together.

You know, last year was disappointing. It was an off-year for Oklahoma basketball. We're back in the NAAs and we're ready to make a statement.

CHARLIE FISS: Blake, Taylor, thank you for coming. We will let you go back to the locker room.

And we will now take questions for Coach Capel.

Q. Jeff, we talked about before, is it impossible for you -- you see the way your team practices -- figure out how they are going to come into a game of play?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Sometimes it is. I didn't have a great feeling coming into yesterday because of practice. I had a better feeling coming into today, you know, because I knew our guys would be ready to play Texas. I knew the opportunity and we knew we had to play at a high level in order to have a chance to beat them.

Texas is awfully good. I think they're one of the best teams in the country. They're making shots at a high rate, they're extremely difficult to guard because of the pressure their guards can put on you and because they just keep bringing bodies of post-guys in.

The thing you don't know is how you're going to shoot the ball. I thought we got good looks, we just didn't make them here in Kansas City. One of the great things -- I could be out of line. I don't think there are any NCAA tournament games up here so we will be in a different arena, so hopefully that leads to us making shots.

Q. Jeff, best-guess, what do you think your seed will be?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I don't know. I haven't really thought about it until you just asked me. I have been concentrating on our team, so I don't know.

Q. What do you think you deserve? You have been around the tournament a long time.

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Never really played attention, though. I just go play the games. That's all I've ever done, just go play the games. When you get to that point, you are playing against good teams. So I keep hearing one of my assistants the other day, and he gave me a list of 64 teams. So he picked the field. I think he had us as a 7 or an 8 seed. So I will take Mark Cline's guess and use that as mine.

Q. Is 7 okay with you?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Hey, man, we're in the tournament. It's better than where we were last year. Yeah, it's great with me.

Q. Coach Capel, Al asked the question a little bit earlier of the player what he felt like being in this position and playing; what do you feel like as a coach not having made it last year and now making it, getting ready to go into the tournament?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I will tell you what, as disappointing as this is, this one particular game, you know, when you reflect upon this season for us and I know I'll do it more when it is completely over with, I'm proud of our team. I really am.

We've overcome a lot. We've put ourself in a position where we are able to finish in the top half of the league. We were able to get a bye. And we had some really good wins this season. We've had some really good wins and we feel like we have earned an NCAA tournament berth. So I am really proud of it.

At the same time, we're not satisfied. Our guys answered that question, you got to move on quickly. We can't do anything about this. We will be confident going into the NCAA tournament. Texas is a bad match for us this season, last year, too. I tell you what, they have been a bad match for everybody, just about everyone.

They are really, really good. They are very good. You look at their body of work, I think they should be a No. 1 seed. You look at what we've done, who they've beaten, they are really, really good. They will be a tough out for anyone.

Q. Coach, talk about coaching a guy like Blake Griffin who is so explosive, yet hasn't played any and his ceiling is really high, yet I can see you on the sidelines, see him make mistakes that make you want to pull your hair out but you see that potential.

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Guys are going to make mistakes. The best guy that ever laced them up made a lot, missed shots, turned the ball over. You know, as a coach, I told Blake this from the beginning, the only time I get frustrated with him is I don't feel like he is giving effort, if I don't feel like he's playing as hard or playing every possession. One of the things where he has to grow as a player which is going to help him become a special player, if he can ever reach this -- I don't use that word a lot but I think he has a chance to be one of the special guys to play -- is him learning how to play every possession.

Not many guys, period, do that. And the guys that learn how to do it, that's what makes (Tyler) Hansborough so good from North Carolina. He plays every position. I just think the sky is the limit for Blake. I love coaching him. I love being on this team and I love the opportunity that I have and we have as a University, as a program to help him, to help him grow and to help him try to reach

that level because I know he so desperately wants it.

Q. Wasn't too long ago you were playing in the NCAA tournament. Now you will be back coaching in it. How does that help you as a coach, your experience playing, how do you tell it to your guys?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Well, I can use different experiences. I have coached in the NCAA tournament, too, when I was at VCU. We lost to Wake Forest by 1 in Raleigh. I have experience there. The thing I will tell them is just enjoy it, let's have fun with it.

But you have to really value every possession, you know, because you are in a situation now, it is a one-game season. If you lose, you're done. If you win, you get to play another game. But, also, have a lot of fun with it, too, enjoy it.

Q. Your players were asked about their confidence level now. I know you want to be positive because you are going into the tournament, do you feel confident about this team not only to appear in the tournament but win a couple games in the tournament?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Absolutely. Those that have covered us this year, you've seen us when we've been really, really bad. And all of you guys probably -- or people counted us out, and this team responded. Whether it was coming back from Nebraska, you know, the game right after that -- I don't remember exactly who we played -- or when we came back from Colorado, those performances, when we came back from Steven F. Austin, those are the three off the top of my head where there were a lot of things said about our team, said about me, about the direction we were going in and we've responded.

This is one of those times. And I fully anticipate us responding. We'll have fun tomorrow with the selection show and figuring out where we're going. And then we'll get in on Monday and be excited. I want our guys to forget about absolutely everything that has happened so far in this season. When you get to the tournament, it is a different season. To really enjoy every second because we've worked hard to get here, but also to not be satisfied just to be there. We want to be a team that can advance, and we feel like when we play -- we make shots, we feel like we can

compete with anybody.

It will be good to get outside of our league again. You beat each other up in this league because it is so good. It will be good to play against someone else and getting prepared to someone else. We look forward to it. I'm confident. Our guys should be confident. Even though this is tough today, but we'll be ready to go.

CHARLIE FISS: Coach, thank you.

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