

March 8, 2007



An interview with:

TEXAS TECH COACH BOB KNIGHT

Q. Coach, what did you think of Zeno's play early on versus late in the first half and then the second half?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: I thought that the last five or six minutes Zeno played very well. He had missed a couple block-outs. We had a little discussion on the sideline, and I was really pleased that the way he reacted over the period where we had to play to win the game. Wasn't really a discussion. It was kind of a one-way conversation. "Discussion" is being very liberal with what took place.

Q. Can you shed some light on what exactly that one-way conversation was?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: No. If I wanted you to know about, I would have called time and invited you to come down and listen. So when you're sitting up there, I'm on somebody or talking to somebody, you know, you can turn to whoever is beside you and say, well, the son of a bitch didn't invite me down, I guess he didn't want me to know.

Q. What do you think of your team's defensive play today?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: We gave up a lot of stuff. They did a good job driving to the basket. We had people that seemed to be tentative on offense -- or on defense, rather, in terms of moving to help.

I really think our defense in the last four or five games has been pretty good, and I don't think it has been as good today as it has been. They had something to do with that. They were aggressive and going to the bucket with the ball.

Q. Coach, can you talk about the matchup with Kansas State tomorrow?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: Well, Kansas State is a very, very tough team with a really good coach, a tough-minded coach and a tough-minded team.

I think they have shown all year long that they are very tough for anybody to play against and that certainly will be the case for us tomorrow. They're a team that I think in view of the record that they have in this league should -- if there wasn't any game played tomorrow should be in the NCAA tournament.

I think that's a pretty good tribute to Bob Huggins and his players.

Q. Coach, how do you feel like Decensae White has played the last few games?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: I think White is still too careless. He is casual. He is a casual player. He jive asses around out there. I'm not sure he knows he has missed a blockout or taken a bad shot. That's what we are trying to teach him.

I think he has really made good contributions to our team and in and out, he's made good plays. He made two really good plays at the end of the half that made a big difference in where we were starting the second half and where we would have been without the five points that he scored.

Q. Coach, how do you handle preparation in tournament play with the quick turnaround?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: We just prepare. We just go tonight and go over our last game with Kansas State and what they have done since and just say here's what we got to do. You know, it isn't like we're going to, you know, attack Tokyo.

Q. Coach, if you can, talk about your ability to get to the free throw line and how that helps you in tournament situations, especially as now you're going into the NCAA as it looks like?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: I think that we've always been -- let me rephrase that. I have always

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wanted us to be a team that can score from the free throw line, that we try to maneuver and get people in position where they have got a half a step or a step and they can go to the bucket.

We've always been that kind of a team. I think that -- I remember as a player we're playing St. John's in Madison Square Garden in the Holiday Festival. This was a great lesson for me. I had the ball at the foul line and I drove and I scored. I didn't score a hell of a lot of buckets but I scored this one against Tony Jackson who was an All-American at that time.

And Jackson fouled me, and the bucket didn't count. I went to the free throw line and I made two free throws. And I remember sitting after the game in the locker room. I wanted to tell Havlicek so bad that I scored against Tony Jackson and the referee had screwed me out of that, see.

But, anyhow, he came over and he thought what I was thinking. He sat down beside me and he said, that was a big play when you drove and got to the free throw line and made both free throws.

You know, that got me thinking. I thought back to that when I started coaching, that one of the things I wanted kids to understand was that two points from the free throw line is many times more valuable than two points from the floor. You are not as excited about it. The fans don't see it that way.

But you get fouled, you make two points, it is the third foul on this kid in the first half. You are now in the one and one. You are now shooting a two-shot foul.

I really think back to that play that I made or didn't make in that game and that was December of 1960. And that was one of the things that I really thought about when I started coaching, the value of the free throw.

Q. There seems to be an impression that the Big 12 is not as good as some of the other conferences around the country. How good is this conference?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: I think the conference is really good. There are a hell of a lot of teams that will get beat by Kansas and Texas and Texas A&M. That's three really good teams. I'm not sure who else has three really good teams.

I don't know anybody who has three that are really good. And then there's another three or four that are pretty good. You know, in most conferences, they are just pretty good. Now, we

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played those three and they are damn good, all three of them.

So I think the conference is very good. I mean, that's why -- you know, I don't pay much attention to that stuff. But Pat tells me or one of the other coaches tells me that, well, this conference will get four teams. I just don't think that's realistic at all. I mean, you have got a team that finished -- Kansas State finished 10-6 in a tough conference. And I think that, to me, I mean, they're a lock.

In this conference if you go 10-6 to get into it and they won a couple of games like -- a game I'm sure they would overlook we damn near get beat by North Dakota State at home and they beat North Dakota State but they beat them up there. That's a hell of a win.

I don't know. Sometimes, you know, I am always a little bit -- just like this deal with Dick Vitale that I have been kind of crusading for. Somebody has got to tell people how important the guy has been to college basketball. You just can't look at a résumé and say, oh, here's Dick Vitale, he coached for -- broadcast for 27 years, Dick Enberg was his partner, what does that tell you? Nothing.

I think that is a screwy way to handle things because let's say we got a coach that coached 30 years ago. Hell, the only guy in America that will remember the guy is me. And if they don't listen to me, how the hell is he going to get in the Hall of Fame? How was that for a tirade? (Smiling.)

We are not going to take any more questions? Are you hungry?

Has anybody else got a question? The hell with him. Does anybody else got a question? You guys better catch me in this mood; it ain't going to happen very often.

Q. Since you seem like you are in a good mood, I will ask one that you have shot down before. Can you reflect on what Jarrius Jackson has meant to this program and his development over the last few years?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: I think he has been a kid that has been about as consistent a scorer as you can find. If you go over the games that we've won, he scored.

When we've played somebody tough and maybe gotten beat, he's scored. I mean, when we've been in a game where we've done a good

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job against a good team, almost invariably he has scored.

Actually, I think tonight was one of the lighter games he's had or this afternoon. He didn't get a bucket in the second half, I don't think. But, you know, he winds up with 13 points. This would be -- was that Kevin Weiberg? Is he not happy with our press conference? (Smiling.)

Charlie, you want to check on this and see what we are up against here?

So if you checked it over, you would find it, if we have played somebody that's good, well, win or lose, he has been a really consistent scorer against good teams for us.

Q. Since you got started on this topic a second ago, I wonder how you would respond to those who refer to tomorrow's game between you and K-State as a play-in game for the tournament?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: To me before the tournament ever started, both teams should be in the NCAA tournament. I think that their record season long -- the problem I have with the tournaments, because of the problems I have -- my teams have never done very well in post-season tournaments.

A couple of years ago, Oklahoma State beat us in the championship game. That's the only time we have ever been in a championship game.

I don't think with the exception of a team that -- if a team is in the NCAA tournament at the end of a season, then the only way a tournament should matter is that somebody wins a tournament championship that wasn't figured on getting into the NCAA.

I don't think you can put one game against an entire season or two games against an entire season. Kansas State finishes fourth in this league, a really tough league. I think they should be in it.

You know, I think we should be in it. Hell, I think Kansas ought to even be in it (smiling).

Q. Coach, you are having such a good time here, is it fair to say that Oklahoma City is working fine for you? You are enjoying it? The site is fine?

COACH BOB KNIGHT: My wife is from Oklahoma. My dad was born and grew up in Oklahoma. When I was 12 years old, my mother took me on the train to Pittsburgh to see OU play Pittsburgh. It was a 7-7 tie. They lost all those backs from the year before. Vessels, Crowder,

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McPhail were all gone and Buddy Leake was the only guy back. That was even before your time. That's how long I have liked Oklahoma. I want to stop right there. There are some things about Oklahoma that have displeased me from time to time.

Just remember, if I'm all pissed off tomorrow and don't feel like talking, just remember we had a nice time today.

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An interview with:

TEXAS TECH

Q. Either one of you guys, can you talk about what was going on defensively in the second half and if you think you can get away with that kind of effort again for the rest of the season?

JARRIUS JACKSON: We just went through some mental lapses on defense. Missed a couple switches and missed a couple of blockouts and it hurt us.

We capitalized on our mistakes on defense, and we just have to watch film and just correct our mistakes.

Q. Martin, I wonder if you can talk about taking the game over down the stretch. I think I had you at 13 in a row. Talk about the run you had to kind of close them out.

MARTIN ZENO: I had got taken out, he told me what I am going to do is sit down on the bench or I am going to go out there and play. I felt like playing so I went out there and did what he asked me to do.

Q. Martin, you have been getting in the free throw line a lot. Is there an art to that?

MARTIN ZENO: Draw the ball and get fouled. That's all I can say.

Q. Martin, if you can talk about -- you guys being able to penetrate and get to the free throw line earlier, how did that make it easier down the stretch?

MARTIN ZENO: When we get to the foul line early, it makes the game easier for us because the team being fouled, get in foul trouble, it is easy to cut and screen and get open layups.

Q. Martin, what were you doing or not doing that caused him to tell you that you are either going to sit or play?

MARTIN ZENO: I guess I wasn't as aggressive, just letting things go and not playing defense really like he wanted me to. Stuff like that.

Q. Jarrius, yesterday you said you didn't think that you guys -- or you couldn't lose to Colorado. Did you think you are in the NCAA tournament now?

JARRIUS JACKSON: I think our chances are much greater getting into the tournament. We still have some work to do tomorrow against K-State. We can't sleep on them because we know they are trying to get in the tournament as well. We have to come out ready to play tomorrow.

Q. Jarrius, you didn't quite score like you usually do. How nice was it to have Martin to pick up the slack today?

JARRIUS JACKSON: In the second half, it was a big help. He took the pressure basically off all of us. He take the game over getting to the line. Got to give credit to Martin on that.

Q. Can you both talk about what the difference will be against Kansas State tomorrow than when you played them in Manhattan?

MARTIN ZENO: I think they are all gelling at the end of the season. People know their roles, they know how the coaches coach, where the coaches roll from. It will be a very tough game.

JARRIUS JACKSON: We know they are trying to get into the tournament and people just been telling us we wasn't in so we will come ready to play tomorrow.

Q. Can you talk about the way Decensae and Charlie played in their first Big 12 tournament?

JARRIUS JACKSON: Decensae and Charlie took the pressure off today. Charlie got to the line, knocked down some big shots. And Decensae with his open threes and his rebounding.

Q. Martin, did you tweak your ankle again, same thing you did against Oklahoma State?

MARTIN ZENO: Yeah, I came down on Jackson-Wilson's foot and tweaked it again. I hurt it a little bit but it is all right now.

Q. For either one of you guys, how hard is it with a quick turnaround to get a good preparation for the next team?

MARTIN ZENO: We played them before early in the season, so we know exactly what they want. We might make a little bit of changes on our defensive play.

You know, being in high school, we played in tournaments that did this. It is the same thing. We just got to be prepared.

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An interview with:

COLORADO

COACH RICARDO PATTON: I was really proud of our young men. Came out and did battle. We got down early in the game but stayed the course and had our chances. The free throw shooting certainly hurt us, of course them attempting 44 and us attempting 22, even the ones we got didn't do a good job of capitalizing and making those free throws.

Give Tech credit, they played extremely well and just kept us on our heels most of the day. But, again, our guys, I thought for their first tournament experience, eight of those guys did a terrific job.

Q. Rich, is there a sense of relief or a sense of a weight being lifted off your shoulders now that the season is done and you guys can look to the future?

RICHARD ROBY: I wouldn't say that. The weight it going to be there next year. Just have to go out in this off season and work really hard and get back to playing great basketball and get ready for a great season next year.

Q. What did you guys think of how Zeno played today, the Red Raiders?

RICHARD ROBY: He did pretty good. He got to the free throw line a lot, 28 points. Always a good night.

Q. Dominique, can you talk about your emotions playing your last game and what's next for you?

DOMINIQUE COLEMAN: Class on Friday.

COACH RICARDO PATTON: Good answer, good answer.

Q. Can both you guys talk about playing for Coach and what he has meant to you guys going through today?

DOMINIQUE COLEMAN: He's hard on us but he's hard on us to try to bring out the best of

us. I think he has a good job with us. He knows what our strengths and what our weakness is and he coaches us to be in this game. If we convert on free throws, the game is tied. If we limit turnovers, we win the game. That's what he preaches all season, free throws and turnover. If we capitalized there, we'd be sitting on the other side talking about a win.

RICHARD ROBY: It has been great playing for Coach. Gave me an opportunity to come here and play in the Big 12. I thank him for that and everything he has done for me and my family, and I just hope he gets a great job soon. I know he is going to do a great job wherever he is at.

Q. Richard, have you decided -- is this your last game at Colorado? And if not, how will the next coach -- will that persuade your decision?

RICHARD ROBY: I don't think it is my last game at Colorado. I think our athletic director will do a great job of bringing in another great coach. You know, I want to -- when I came here, my main goal was to go to a NCAA tournament. I haven't had a chance to do that yet, and I still have one more opportunity to do that next year. So I'm looking forward to whoever they bring in because I feel like I can play for any coach. So that's how I feel for that.

Q. Coach, how did Sean's number get entered incorrectly into the score book?

COACH RICARDO PATTON: You know, our score book had it in correctly. The game score book did not. We don't have a 42 and so I'm not quite sure how that number was printed on the program.

The problem was we signed off on it. One of my assistant coaches had signed off on the score book. But Andrew Green had it correct in his book. So I don't know how it actually happened.

Q. Coach, you have known for a while that the end was coming. How does it feel now that you finally reached the end at Colorado?

What are your emotions now that you have reached the end of your tenure at Colorado?

COACH RICARDO PATTON: Right now, again, I have said all season long, I'm at peace with who I am. I am at peace with the job we've done. And I am at peace with moving on. It becomes another chapter in my life and I feel very fortunate to have coached in ultimately the best conference in America and to have walked the sidelines with some of the best coaches in the game.

So I feel nothing but admiration toward the University of Colorado and for the opportunity that it has afforded me. I look forward to the next chapter of my life, and that involves working at something.

Q. Coach, Coach Knight had some words for you after the ball game. Could you share what he told you afterwards?

COACH RICARDO PATTON: You know, he just talked about enjoying our relationship and if there was anything he could ever do for me, he would do that and has a great deal of respect for what we've done here.

Q. Coach, you guys were able to limit what Jarrius Jackson did offensively pretty well. But then Martin Zeno came up and picked up the slack. How tough is it to stop both those guys or limit them?

COACH RICARDO PATTON: It is very difficult. Particularly when guys, you know, are really able to attack the middle of your defense and get to the foul line. That's where we weren't able to play defense, is at the free throw line. But I thought our guys did a pretty decent job when we were changing defenses, going from different zones and some man-to-man. I thought our kids battled nicely.

Q. Ricardo, the matchup tomorrow between Tech and K-State. You have seen both of them. You have also been in a position of having a record of 10-6 -- winning record in the conference and not going to the tournament. Your thoughts and if you think Kansas State is in?

COACH RICARDO PATTON: I think it will be an excellent ball game. Two teams that know how to play. Two teams that have marquee guys that they can count on night in and night out. I will be curious to see the final free throw tally for both teams and see what that outcome is about.

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Q. Coach, I know you say you want to work at something. Do you have any plans for immediate future? Or what you might look into doing? Do you want to relax or work more?

COACH RICARDO PATTON: No, I'm a working stiff. I got to work. (Smiling) if you go down to Wendy's and you hear a familiar voice saying "can I take your order", it may just be me (smiling). I got to work. That's the only thing I know how to do.

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