

March 12, 2009



Texas – 61
Kansas State – 58

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: Ready to begin with the Wildcats from Kansas State, Coach Frank Martin and his two student-athletes, Jacob Pullen and Jamar Samuels.

Coach, opening comment on today's game?

COACH FRANK MARTIN: Just a hard-fought game. We know Texas is a good defensive basketball team. They just beat us. It is hard to win when you don't make shots, and we obviously didn't make enough shots to beat a good basketball team today.

Q. Jacob, can you just talk about the difficulty on the offensive end and how frustrating it was.

JACOB PULLEN: No, their bigs did a good job of hedge and screens. They're real physical, so they kind of knocked us off some screens. And some shots just didn't fall. We got good looks the entire game. Our bigs got good looks in the paint. Me and Denny and Fred got good shots from around the perimeter. A lot of shots just didn't fall tonight.

Q. Jamar, can you talk about the game that Dexter Pittman had and how difficult he was to deal with?

JAMAR SAMUELS: He is just a load inside. He is 6'11", 320. I had to guard him for a

possession. It was hard just trying to get over him. I think we did a so-so job on him. I think we could have done better, but he is a good player.

CHARLIE FISS: Now we will entertain questions for Coach Martin.

Q. Did you feel that way, that you guys just got good looks, that the ball just wasn't going down today?

COACH MARTIN: We took open shots after open shots and just wasn't going in. Shots we have been making here for the last two months.

I am proud of these kids. They fought their rear-ends off. Give Texas credit. They made our two little guards have to go finish in traffic in the paint. And we got in there and we were able to make plays other times, other times we didn't. Bottom line, you know, Joe, you sat there and watched the game just like I did. You can count the number of lay-ups uncontested, free throws. Hard to win when you don't put the ball in the basket.

When you play a good basketball team, you are not going to get many easy opportunities. When we had easy opportunities, wide-open step-in threes, point-blank lay-ups, we keep missing, you are not going to win against Texas if you don't take advantage of your easy opportunities because they come through so few and far between.

Q. What do you think today's outcome does for your team's chances to make the NCAA tournament?

COACH MARTIN: I'm not on that committee. I wish I could answer that.

I like giving people intelligent answers. I like answering questions. I have no control over what those people do. What do you want me to tell you? We don't deserve to be there? Of course, we deserve to be there. These kids have busted their rear-ends for us. We ended up as the No. 4 seed in the Big 12 tournament seeding-wise. We are tied for seventh.

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Everyone is trying to compare our resumes to the Big 12 teams. You tell me how many of these bubble teams have as many top 50 wins as we do. Tell me how many bubble teams around the country won five true road games. You tell me how many of these other people that are on the bubble -- not the Big 12 teams. See, everyone is trying to argue us against A&M. Go find other résumés around the country. Look at our résumé, look at our résumé. Hide the RPI number. Look at everything else. Only one team has won more games over us in the last 12 and that's Memphis. Something to be said about that.

Do we have a great non-conference schedule? No. You know what I find ironic, everyone in the country that played Butler gets credit for playing a good basketball team. Nobody played Butler at Butler other than their conference teams. We go and play Cleveland State at Cleveland State. Everyone views that as a bad win. Give me a break, you know?

Everyone says you got to take the whole thing to create a résumé, which I totally agree with. That's why you play 31 games. When you got a basketball team that's as young -- as looking to define who we were early in the season, and our three non-conference losses came in the second -- between the second and third week of the season, and you want to not look at how much our team has evolved over the whole process, I got a problem with the way people spin things for their advantage because everyone assumed that we sucked this year. And when we didn't, a lot of people have had a tough time saying, "You know what, they are actually pretty good."

That's what bothers me, that people go out there and try to put our kids -- not put them on the same playing field with other teams. I'm not talking about Big 12 teams. I'm not into calling other people out, other programs out, because they are all proud of what they've done. That's not my style. I don't do that. But if you follow the RPI and you follow the so-called résumés, look at our paperwork and compare it to the other so-called bubble teams. You tell me if ours don't compare to theirs. Don't compare to the Big 12 teams. All the Big 12 teams deserve to be in there.

But I find it ironic that every other league in the country says, oh, they are getting eight in. Big 12 is maybe lucky if they get six. Give me a break. That's the most ignorant thing I have ever heard this whole year.

Q. Talk about the challenges for your team trying to handle a guy like Pittman, that size.

COACH MARTIN: It is a problem for us. It is a problem. The only guy that we have that has the girth, the size to kind of deal with Dexter is Colon. And unfortunately for us, he is not playing well for us right now. So I think we've had to rely on a couple other guys. I think he is a load.

He has been playing better and better and better and better. His minutes are up. And give him credit. Give Rick credit. They also have evolved as a basketball team. Early in the year they depended on A.J. Abrams. Now they are playing off the big fella and they are playing real well.

Q. To hop on Pittman again, it seems like you guys were trying to front him and that left him open for rebounds. It seemed like work off and on. Was that your strategy?

COACH MARTIN: Should we play behind him and they can score over our 6'7" guys? You have to do one or the other. Our guards didn't do a very good job of getting in passing lanes to extend their half-court offense. And then the basketball gets to places where it can get passed to the post.

You got to pick your poison. If you are going to play behind him, they are going to throw it to him and he will shoot over our 6'7" guys. I like to fight rather than sit there and let somebody punch me in the head. We got around. We did a half-way decent job on it. There were times that we had breakdowns. It happens. You play a team that's trying to come down and throw it to him every single time and play off of him.

Give them credit. They didn't fall apart from their game plan. They handled it. We had good moments, and we had other moments that hurt us. But last time I checked, we shot the ball to tie the game so we obviously didn't play all that bad. We just didn't make shots.

Q. What, if anything, did they do differently guarding Denny?

COACH MARTIN: He made four shots. Last time he made 17 or whatever it was. They took good shots. He took runners he makes. He took open threes. We're up one and we scramble for a ball and it comes to him, step in, wide open right in front of me and he missed. People have

days where the ball does not go in the basket. It happens.

He just didn't make shots. Give them credit. They made it a little hard for him. When we ran them off screens, they extended their defenders to make him catch it higher up on the floor. At the end of the day, he still got good shots. Maybe out of the 20 shots -- it is hard for me to put a number on it because the game just ended. But there were maybe four or five that he maybe tried to do too much.

But all the other ones I thought were shots they had been getting the last two months, they just didn't go in for him.

CHARLIE FISS: Coach, thank you.

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