

**March 12, 2009**



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An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: We are ready to begin with the Oklahoma Sooners and Coach Jeff Capel, his student-athletes Blake Griffin and Austin Johnson.

Coach, your thoughts on tonight's game?

COACH CAPEL: First of all, I want to congratulate Oklahoma State. They were terrific. They played hard. They played with a lot of passion. You have to congratulate them.

It has been an interesting day here today. A lot of upsets. Unfortunately, we were part of it. It is tough to win when you are 3 for 19 from three and have 19 turnovers. To me that was the story of the game, those two stats right there. And so we have to regroup. We'll figure out Sunday where we're going and give this some time to try to work and get better get ready for the NCAA tournament.

**Q. Blake, can you talk about the final sequence when you were on defense and what was going on there, especially with Byron driving and that kind of thing on the rebound.**

BLAKE GRIFFIN: I went and grabbed the ball, and they said I fouled James Anderson. There is not much you can do about that.

Had pretty much the same thing coming back down. But I mean, you know, didn't go our way.

**Q. This is a tough way to end the regular season. You still have the biggest prize still out in front of you. How do you regroup and get back ready for Sunday and next week?**

BLAKE GRIFFIN: Learn from what we did wrong today. Like you said, we still have games left to play. This isn't the end of the world. At the same time, we need to figure some stuff out and we need to do a better job in certain areas. We need to learn from this but at the same time grow from it and move on.

AUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, it is a tough loss. Like Blake said, it is not the end of the world. We are just going to regroup, get over it and try to move on. We got the big dance coming up. We got opportunity.

**Q. Blake, what were they doing differently defensively in this game than Saturday night to you to limit your touches?**

BLAKE GRIFFIN: When you have three guys you can run into push and grab, you really don't care. That's what they did tonight. They just didn't play behind me. They just, you know -- when I did get in front of them, they would just kind of, I guess, claw their way back around.

So I mean, it was just kind of their mind-set coming in obviously from the intentional or the flagrant foul. You saw that they weren't going to let me have anything. If I was going to get a point, I was going to have to get it at the free-throw line and they were going to knock me down and do whatever. That was the difference.

**Q. Austin, talk about your shooting difficulties outside. Was it something that they were doing? Or you guys just weren't on tonight?**

AUSTIN JOHNSON: I think we weren't on, and that happens sometimes. Sometimes teams

have a little shooting slump.

I thought when we shot -- when we came over today to shoot around, I thought we shot good. Me and Willie and Crock and Cade, I thought we were shooting good. It just happens sometimes, and you just got to move on.

**Q. Blake, you got Marshall Moses out of there early. You got him in foul trouble. You talked about what they did defensively. It seemed like you weren't totally happy with getting the ball down deep. Do you feel like you could have gotten the ball and done some damage down there?**

BLAKE GRIFFIN: I can always do a better job than what I do, I feel like, after games. I didn't have to do much to get them in foul trouble. That was their mind-set coming into the game.

They got themselves in foul trouble. But you got to give it to them because they played a better game and they wanted it more, and that seemed to work for them.

**Q. Blake, did you think you were fouled on that last shot?**

BLAKE GRIFFIN: Yes. Same play as before. We were both going for the ball. I had the ball. He ran into me. Exact same play, different call.

**Q. Do you have any explanation for the ref on this?**

BLAKE GRIFFIN: No, not at all.

CHARLIE FISS: Question for Coach?

**Q. Can you talk -- is there any explanation in your mind for why you guys are having so many turnovers here as of late? I mean, you were great for 30 games.**

COACH CAPEL: Yeah. I don't know. That's something I've -- I asked the same question, Jim, these past -- past three games in a row really, we have had 18-plus turnovers in each game. It is why we struggled. Even when we beat Oklahoma State at our place last Saturday, we would get up 10, 11 points and then we would get a couple turnovers and they would make you pay for them. Like you said, it was something we were doing a very, very good job of. But here in the past, I would say, four or five games we have been very sloppy. We have been really weak, in my opinion. That's a big part of it, we have been really weak.

We'll get a rebound and we're not strong and they come from behind and knock it away. We

are pushing the ball ahead. And against this team -- if you look at our last three games that we have played against teams that do some sort of pressing, our last three games, Oklahoma State twice and Missouri, and we will work on it on practice and talk about when you get by these guys, they will come from behind and try to knock it away. That probably happened at least three times today.

We have to make a conscious effort to work on it more. That's number one. But then to be stronger with our decisions, to be stronger with the basketball and to be stronger with what we are trying to do offensively.

**Q. Most people as soon as the game was over said it is one of the most fun games they have ever watched. I know it is no consolation for the team that loses. But were you able to sort of appreciate the atmosphere and the remarkable swings of emotion with the building roaring at every second?**

COACH CAPEL: Well, the atmosphere was great. But I didn't enjoy how we played today. I'm sure Travis enjoyed how his team played. I didn't enjoy how we played really for the whole game.

I thought we were sloppy. When you are not making shots from the perimeter, that makes it a very long game. It felt like a very long game to me.

But, certainly, the atmosphere was great. You could feel the energy. It was like a NCAA tournament atmosphere.

**Q. When you talk about regrouping and to follow up on Jim's question, how do you regroup? Is it a mental thing? Is it a Xs and Os thing? Is the turnover a mental thing or is that a Xs and Os thing?**

COACH CAPEL: We just have to go back to work. We have to try to sharpen up some things that we want to do on the offensive end.

Those are the things that -- the things that we can control, we have to try to do them at a very, very high level. Our movement on offense, being stronger with the basketball. We have to work on it even more. We have tried to work on it but obviously I haven't done a good enough job of working on that. We maybe need to do some different things. That's how you regroup. Really, we don't have a choice but to regroup because if

you don't, then we are going to be done pretty quickly. Fortunately, we do have part of our season left and it is the most important part.

Again, we'll figure out where we're going to play and we'll get prepared for who we're going to play once we find out on Sunday, and then we'll go from there.

**Q. Jeff, you talked after Blake came back the guys were kind of struggling with their roles because they changed when he was out. Do you still feel like you are going through that a little bit?**

COACH CAPEL: I don't think it is because of the roles, I just think guys are struggling. Crocker is struggling shooting the basketball. We're all struggling shooting the basketball, our whole back court.

I know Blake was asked a couple times about some of his touches. Well, they had three guys around him before he even caught the ball at times. They weren't guarding some of our guys. And that's one of the things that happened to us earlier in the year. And we started making shots.

Through the conference season only, we were one or two in three-point field goal percentage. I think that's why we were winning, especially when we were winning 13 in a row. We were really shooting the basketball well and taking advantage of those open looks.

When you do that, then that make it more difficult to guard Blake. I felt like Oklahoma State's game plan was to not let Blake beat them again and to make some of these other guys -- to make some of our other guys make shots, and unfortunately we didn't do that today.

**Q. The final play that you got -- you told your guards to get going to get moving and you got the bucket. Could you talk about that. And then the sequence defensively, did you get what you wanted out of your team anticipating what they were going to do?**

COACH CAPEL: Well, we got to the -- we got what we wanted offensively. We were able to -- I think we got fouled and went to the free-throw line and made two free throws. So we got what we wanted.

They didn't call time-out. Our zone had been very effective for us. We forced a tough shot and a miss and we went to get a rebound and there was a whistle.

Again, I'm not going to take away anything from what Oklahoma State did, but I think it's

physics. If you have a 255-pound guy and he happens to run into a guy that is going for the ball, a guy that's 200 pounds, 205, he is probably going to move him a little bit.

But, again, that was the call. We threw ahead, ran an out of bounds play, got it where we wanted it and there was some contact there and it wasn't called. I knew then, even when we went to the monitor, the game was over. We shot it and actually I think we got a rebound and I think we missed that. That's 2.3 seconds. I knew the game was over then.

We got what we wanted both times as far as forcing a tough shot, a contested shot and coming up with the rebound. And then for our last offensive possession, we got the ball down in position where we wanted it, it just didn't happen for us today -- tonight.

But the game was not won or lost on those last two possessions. The game was lost for us throughout with the 19 turnovers. That's where the game was lost. The game was lost because of our inability to make shots, because we were weak with the basketball.

The game was lost because we didn't have movement on offense at times. We were very, very stagnant. That's why the game was lost. It has nothing to do with those last two possessions. Again, I'm not going to take anything away from Oklahoma State's kids. After playing a hard-fought game yesterday, they came back and showed a lot of character, a lot of heart and they won a tough game today.

CHARLIE FISS: Coach, thank you.

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