

March 12, 2009



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An interview with:

COACH GAIL GOESTENKORS
EARNESIA WILLIAMS
BRITTAINEY RAVEN

THE MODERATOR: We're glad to have the University of Texas Longhorns, Coach Goestenkors, if you would like to make an opening comment.

COACH GOESTENKORS: Just thankful to come away with a win. I thought Coach Stein had her team very well prepared from the last time we played, and I thought they did a tremendous job.

Last time we played zone almost the whole game, and when we went zone in this game, she had her kids ready and they scored layups on us. I feel fortunate to come away with a win because they certainly controlled a good portion, most of the game, really.

I am proud of my team because the shots weren't falling and we got good looks, but couldn't get anything to go down. But I'm proud of my team because they never gave up. Looked a little bleak there toward the end, and did a great job with our press, got some key steals, continued to attack and came away with a win. I told the players in the locker room, you know, I was proud of 'em.

They stayed the course, and at this time of the year it's survive and advance. You're going to have games like this when nothing seems to go your way, but you have to find a way to win and I thought we did that.

Particularly proud of Ernie Williams, I thought she willed us to win, her effort. I've always called her my warrior, and she played like a warrior

tonight. And she willed us to win with all of her hustle plays, so I'm proud of Ernie and proud of Britt; she wasn't hitting her shot, but she did so many other things that helped us be successful.

Q. Missouri has a seven point lead with less than two minutes to go, y'all just describe what happened from there.

BRITTAINEY RAVEN: We've been in that position many times this season, and it just comes down to fightin' it out and being really aggressive, more aggressive than we had been the entire game.

We all were on the same page, all of our rotations were correct, so once we rotated, we had Ernie and Carla get a few quick steals, and before we knew it, we were tied.

Q. You guys scored 7 points in 10 seconds, what was going through your mind, Coach?

COACH GOESTENKORS: Thank God! It took us, what, 20 minutes to score 24 points, so for us to score 9 points in 30 seconds, you know, we'd been waiting to score all game long. We needed every single one of them.

Things worked out for us in the end with a couple of key turnovers, and we had the ability to score.

Q. Ernie, could you talk about your big game tonight? You seemed to -- you were diving after balls, back in your home state. Obviously you wanted to win this bad, talk about your night tonight.

EARNESIA WILLIAMS: Of course I wanted to win, I was ready to play. Just to be here with my team and be alive, I guess. I had a car accident yesterday, yesterday morning, while doing my internship for kinesiology, and it was raining in Austin and my car hydroplaned into the other lane and back into my lane and I hit a rock wall with my car, and it flipped a couple of times.

I walked out, two guys helped me out, they

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were behind me and saw the whole thing. I walked out with only a scratch on my arm. So -- on my hand. I'm glad to be here and alive. Just to play like that for my team. And help us advance to another game is just a blessing.

BRITTAINEY RAVEN: Good job, Ernie!

EARNESIA WILLIAMS: Thank you.

Q. Can you tell me a little more about what time of day and kinda what happened?

EARNESIA WILLIAMS: It was in the morning, 6:25, 7:00, early in the morning.

Q. (Away from mic.)

EARNESIA WILLIAMS: Not really, I had a little neck stiffness when I woke up today, but that's about it. Not many people make it out of something like that, so I'm just glad to be here.

Q. Earnesia, any accidents like that happen to you before? Did you know how to handle something like that?

EARNESIA WILLIAMS: None at all. That's probably the most dangerous thing and life-threatening thing that has ever happened to me. I had two ACL tears and I thought that was life-threatening, but I was in something way deeper than that.

Q. Brittainey, when did you guys all find out about that?

BRITTAINEY RAVEN: I think when everybody arrived for practice, a couple of us overheard Terry talking about it and we all wanted to know what happened, and we talked to Ernie about it. She told us what happened and we all comforted her and made sure she was okay. And we asked her how she felt.

Q. How do you get back to focusing on basketball after something like that?

EARNESIA WILLIAMS: I don't know. I guess -- I don't know, I just played and, you know, I guess God had different plans for me, so I'm still here, so I'm just going to live my life and do what I was doing before the accident.

Q. Gail, could you talk a little bit more about -- I mean, wow! Can you talk a little bit more about that, how you found out? Was she on I-35?

COACH GOESTENKORS: No, Ernie has an internship and she goes to it early in the morning, so about 6:45 yesterday morning she was

on her way and it was raining and the roads were slick. And like she said, she hit a wet spot and swerved and the car flipped several times and ended side down.

So she was in the car upside down in a ditch, and the road she was on was 22, and it's a windy road, it's a scary road, she called me right after it happened. They couldn't get her out of the front door because it was bashed in and the car is totaled, so they got her out the back.

Two guys stopped and got her out the back. Fortunately she wasn't -- they called an ambulance and they checked her out and she had bumps and bruises, but overall she was okay. She called me from the site and just said, you know, "Coach I got in a car accident, I'm fine, I hit a rock."

I thought she was okay, and -- at that time, then I realized later she was in shock. She called her mom and basically told her the same thing. And then when her mom got to the scene, she called me very upset, she said the car is upside down, it's totaled, it's flipped, but Ernie was in shock at that time.

They both came in and we met and that's when it started to hit her and she really broke down. We had our team doctor look at her yesterday afternoon. She didn't practice, and we didn't know if she would be able to play really until today. And she said she was stiff, especially her neck, but she went to our shoot around and she looked good.

She is a spiritual young lady and she said it's put things in perspective for her. And I think anytime something like this happens, you want to live each moment to the fullest, and I think that's what you saw out there today.

Q. You said two guys helped her out, were they just two strangers?

COACH GOESTENKORS: Yeah, they were behind her and they saw it happen, and they both stopped. I don't know who they are, I don't know that Ernie knows. They left after the ambulance came, so "thank you" to them. Good Samaritans.

Q. Could you talk about that flurry there at the end? Your athleticism seemed to throw them for a loop. Did you think about putting that press on earlier and maybe trying to get what you got there at the end?

COACH GOESTENKORS: We had

pressed throughout the game, we pick and choose when we press, because it's a long game, forty minutes is a long time to press. This is a long tournament as well, hopefully. So we pressed after our free-throws, and we were not successful at all.

We were running a zone press, so the last press we ran was our man-to-man press, so I knew we would use the man-to-man press and got aggressive. It was desperation at that point, and we were going to press on makes and misses.

Sometimes if you press the whole game, teams get comfortable with your pressure. And because this was late in the game and it was a different press than we had been running, it made them a little more unsure.

Q. What did you tell 'em during the last media time-out when y'all were down seven?

COACH GOESTENKORS: I said we're going to win this game, there is plenty of time, don't panic, don't throw up bad shots. We need to get stops with our defense and you need to get shots with our offense. I said don't panic. Overall, I thought they did a nice job of trying to still execute our sets.

Q. Obviously this has been an emotional roller coaster the last 24 hours, how do you go about preparing for Iowa State tomorrow?

COACH GOESTENKORS: Not going to sleep a whole lot tonight. Iowa State is an incredible team, very well-coached. They spread the floor out on you, they can all shoot three's, so it's a different style.

Missouri only has two kids that are what I would consider really good 3-point shooters, Iowa State has so many weapons from outside the arc. We were fortunate to come away with a win at Ames. They had an 11-point lead at the time and let it slip away.

I'm sure they'll remember that game and come ready to play. We have to show the fire and desire that we showed at the end of the game, and in the second half of the Oklahoma game, that's who we have to be at that point in time to be successful for forty minutes.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, good luck tomorrow.

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