

March 13, 2009



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Texas – 70

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: We're joined now by the Baylor Bears, Coach Scott Drew and his three student-athletes, Curtis Jerrells, Henry Dugat and LaceDarius Dunn.

Coach, congratulations.

COACH DREW: Thank you. Players really competed, really battled, were down most of the game till the second half. And for them to persevere and obviously Texas is a very big, strong, physical team. We never backed down and we kept playing and couldn't be more proud and happy for them.

Q. Curtis, which is sweeter, getting to the championship game or beating Texas?

CURTIS JERRELLS: I say getting to the championship game.

I think that we came in here with a mind-set of -- with a task. Today was step three, and I think that any -- either team that won, that would have been in this place, they would have got that type of game from us in the tournament.

Q. Curtis, how did you manage to get that rebound, the last free throw with Dunn with Dexter Pittman was boxing you out like that? How big was that?

CURTIS JERRELLS: Usually when LaceDarius is at the line, I don't even move because I know he is going to make it. But I watch the ball and I seen it, it was falling short. I just used my judgment, and it darted right back and I just got in there.

Q. Curtis, you have struggled this season shooting against Texas. What kind of emotions were you going through when you made several big plays in a row down the stretch today?

CURTIS JERRELLS: I don't think it had nothing to do with Texas. I shot it okay. I shot 13 shots, had 13 points. I still wouldn't say I shot it well. I made free throws and rebounds. I made other plays rather than just scoring the ball. We got a ton of scorers on this team.

I can kind of not do well in that area and we can still get a win.

Q. This is for Curtis, Henry and Lace, you guys came into this tournament the underdog and now you are in the title game. How has your philosophy of wiping the slate clean in this tournament affected your performance these last several games?

HENRY DUGAT: I think it helped us. We came into it, you know, the underdog, like you said, and we took that as a chip on our shoulder. We came in and knew what we had to do. Like C.J. said, it is not over yet. We have one more step to do, and we are willing to do it.

Q. Lace, can you talk about that three you hit. Did you feel like you were pretty open there with 1:11 left? What was happening on that play?

LACEDARIUS DUNN: I just felt the first one I had before Damion smacked it out of bounds. (Laughter) I felt great. I heard Curtis saying we got to get him a ball, we got to get him a shot. They got it to me and I was willing to shoot it and it went in. I think it was the biggest shot for my

team.

Q. Curtis, can you talk about when you finally got the shot clock turned off, you guys went to the foul line but you ended up having to make about five or six free throws there before the game was secured. You guys were smiling in the huddle. Looked like the confidence was there and you knew what you had to do.

CURTIS JERRELLS: First thing I want to say, it is never too late to thank God so I want to thank God.

Secondly, we shoot free throws before the game, after the game we had all our best free-throw shooters on the floor. That's what it is about. Basketball is about having confidence. Anything you do is about having confidence, and I think if you look up at your teammate and he is smiling, he got -- you got to believe that he thinks I am going to make these.

If you got a frown on your face or you are like, come on man, we need this, you are putting pressure on your teammates.

We try to have fun. We try to go out and have fun while we're doing it.

Q. Henry, you have been kind of in a drought from the three-point stripe. When you made that, what kind of lift did that give you? And, I guess, for your teammates, what kind of lift did it give you to see Henry knock that down?

HENRY DUGAT: It was a big weight lifted off my shoulders. The first one I shot it went halfway in and came out. I got to give glory to my teammates for continuing to believe in me and find me. He found me and I was able to knock it down.

Q. LaceDarius, are you guys looking forward to this next step here? Oklahoma State and Missouri both get up and down the court a little bit. Looking forward to that challenge and running a little bit in this championship game?

LACEDARIUS DUNN: Exactly. I think we got here for a reason. We got here for just leaving it out on the court at the end of the game playing 40 minutes. That's something Coach has been preaching all year.

I think the last three games we played, everybody just left it out there on the court and gave it their all. Whoever we face tomorrow, I think

we have to come with the same game plan for the last two games. We will be all right.

Q. Do you have a preference who you play, Oklahoma or Mizzou?

HENRY DUGAT: I don't think we do. Whoever it is, we are going to be ready for them. We didn't make it this far for nothing.

Q. Dexter Pittman has been one of the hottest players in the tournament. He had 21 rebounds yesterday. Talk about the job you guys did neutralizing him out there?

CURTIS JERRELLS: Our bigs did the tremendous job inside with him, fighting him. We did our best to come down and help.

He is a large man. He needs a lot of attention. I told my guys, I said, man, that dude has been averaging 20, 23, 24 points a game in the tournament. Y'all held him to seven. Y'all did y'all's job. We tried our best to contain A.J. We have been watching that dude for years. The one thing he can do is shoot the ball.

If both of them have good games, I think we lose. But we was able to contain one and get the victory.

Q. Curtis, how did it feel to have all those Oklahoma State fans cheering you on like that?

CURTIS JERRELLS: I thought that was our fans cheering for us. I really didn't care.

Obviously, if they was cheering for us, that would maybe be a little bit of disrespect. We split one in the conference. They protected their court. We protected ours. Like Henry said, it doesn't matter who we face tomorrow. I'm pretty sure the coach will do a good job of getting us prepared. The players will be prepared and we will go out and play another game.

Q. Were there one or two things that turned this team from a 5-11 team to one that's on the verge of going to the NCAA tournament?

COACH DREW: I think God gets a lot of that credit, just like Curtis said.

The big thing is during the conference season, people don't realize how tough the Big 12 is. I mean, every team -- it doesn't matter who it is, you got to bring your A game to win. We played a lot of non-conference teams and we were very

successful against them.

I don't know why our RPI we finished third best conference because it is tough. That and number two, we started losing -- I think we lost confidence. When you lose close games, that is really tough on you.

And then the big thing is we had such high expectations and goals set for ourselves. Ones you realize you don't meet those, it is tough. Once we got to the conference tournament, we knew it was a new season. That weight vest was lifted off, and, again, guys are really playing well, like we did in the non-conference.

Q. The streak had reached 24. How had you come to view that streak?

COACH DREW: I really didn't like that streak (laughter). It is a situation where you had so many close games with Texas and chances and you just knew it was a matter of time you would break through.

I was really hoping it would be with this group of guys, though, because they had persevered and been through so much from their freshman year until now. I'm so happy they are the ones that broke through the streak.

Q. Talk about that closing -- at the end of the first half, you're down 12. You run off, I think, eight straight points to get back in it.

COACH DREW: We didn't take the lead going into halftime, but we were able to get enough momentum where we went into the locker room and we were feeling good about our situation and felt that second half we could be successful.

Q. You have been able to play these last three games like there is nothing to lose. Now you are playing for something. What is the mind-set going into tomorrow with that title -- with that tournament spot just sitting there for you?

COACH DREW: I don't think you should bring that up to the guys (laughter). We're just going to keep doing what we have been doing.

Q. C.J. was talking you had to stop at least one of those guys, Pittman or A.J. Can you talk about the job the defense did.

COACH DREW: I think C.J. -- in the locker room, they just really told our bigs they did a great job because I know they are all going to need ice because Texas is very, very physical and they do a great job playing hard. Our guys really

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battled, especially second half when first half Texas kind of had their way with things and we really did a good job -- and then the big thing was I thought our help-side defense and our rotations was much better, too, tonight.

Q. Scott, do you believe in destiny for this team?

COACH DREW: I believe in God, and I know He can do miracles. I definitely believe in it.

Q. I was wondering if you spent more time doing mental preparation to get this team ready to try to win four games in four days.

COACH DREW: A lot of people say coaches become psychologists. When you are losing, it is tough. It is tough on the coaches, it is tough on the guys.

Again, just like any of us in life, when you see your kid struggling, there is nothing that brings you more joy than to see them have success, especially when they are doing the right things. I mean -- and our guys did. Even when we were losing, they were in the gym, they were working hard.

The seniors made sure it never got to a situation where people were pointing fingers and really dividing the team.

Q. It looked like A.J. kind of shot you guys out of the zone early in the game. I just wondered if you can talk about how you guys didn't lose confidence in what you are able to do defensively and come back in the second half to play like you did.

COACH DREW: Well, I think the man helped give us confidence. When we came back to the zone, we were a little more aware of A.J. A.J. for four years he seems to play well against Baylor. If you want him to have a great game in the NCAA, make sure that team is wearing a B and if he thinks it is Baylor, they're good.

I mean, he is as good a catch-and-shoot player you will find in the nation. He gets it off so quick, it makes it very, very tough to stop.

Q. Can you chat briefly about Missouri and Oklahoma State and what challenges might pose tomorrow?

COACH DREW: Both teams are obviously on a roll. Both teams are successful. Both teams play fast. So we'll wait and see who wins and then

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we'll prepare and knock out a game plan from there.

Again, Missouri and Oklahoma State have had great runs and they will hopefully do well in the NCAA tournament.

CHARLIE FISS: Coach, thank you and again congratulations. Good luck tomorrow.

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