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Oklahoma Sooners— 76
Kansas Jayhawks — 59

An interview with:

**KANSAS JAYHAWKS
COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON
DANIELLE McCRAY
SADE MORRIS**

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the Jayhawks from Kansas. Coach, your thoughts about this afternoon's game and we'll then open questions for our student-athletes.

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: We didn't have an answer. Not that -- I mean people in the whole country don't have an answer for Courtney, I'm not saying that, but we didn't have an inside presence at all, which means you are not getting to the free-throw line and not challenging the interior defense. And you look at our shot chart, we have too much outside the paint. That's why we are not getting to the free-throw line more. We got there, we would have knocked those down. But the most difficult to defend is when the ball is in the paint, whether that is off a drive and a drop or the low-post presence and we just didn't have that.

The post collectively didn't step up and produce as much as we need when you are playing number two in the country, or whatever they are. And you know, we just didn't have an answer for that. Didn't respond, you know, with some -- our production and giving up that many offensive rebounds, it is disappointing as well.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you for that. Questions now for the student athletes.

Q. Danielle, talk about fighting through the defense. Every time you looked up, it was a different defender in your face and trying to overcome it. Not so much in the first half, but in the second half and giving your team a chance to win.

DANIELLE McCRAY: I just realized how they were guarding me and the wings they were trapping and I just tried to throw it to the open point guard or open player. I don't know, the second half I tried to do something different, and it was pressure in the face, but I just tried to slow down and make a basket.

Q. Sade, just talk about the second half. You know, trying to help out and contribute.

SADE MORRIS: You know, I noticed that they were trapping Danielle on the wing. I tried to get open gaps to help her, give outlets so she can release some of the pressure. You know, I just tried to do what I could.

Q. How much did you guys view this game as a chance to just absolutely make your statement for the NCAA tournament, without any doubt, and then when you're down six at half, how much did you feel like that was right there for the taking?

DANIELLE McCRAY: Oh, we were down six. We obviously knew that we could have played better in the first half. But it was pretty good that we were only down six by how bad we were playing in the first half.

And then as far as the help for us, playing the number two team in the country, it would be a help for us. But I think, I don't know, we viewed it as something important for us.

THE MODERATOR: Just as a reminder, we are supposed to give our names and affiliation if you don't mind.

Q. Danielle, can you talk about, defensively, in the second half, you guys couldn't seem to get pieced together enough stops to kind of keep them from making that run? Can you talk about what they did or what you guys weren't able to do defensively?

DANIELLE McCRAY: Just in the beginning they were packing it down, I guess. I

mean, if something -- there is nothing wrong with it, you can't fix it.

SADE MORRIS: If it's not broke, don't fix it.

DANIELLE McCRAY: Yeah. They kept going inside. When we tried to dig inside and tie the ball up with Courtney, they just kicked it back out. But, I think they just packed it inside for us. And offensive boards, they killed us on offensive rebounds. And then our offense, we wasn't clicking on the offensive end in the second half either, so.

THE MODERATOR: Further questions for the student-athletes?

Q. Thanks. I'd like both of our players to talk just real briefly about the fact that you had quite a slide in the middle of this season, starting with that loss in Manhattan. And surely, at some point along the way through there, it must have seemed a little preposterous that we would be in Oklahoma City talking about you guys as maybe being an NCAA tournament team. Talk about what you did to get this season turned around and get to the point where that is a possibility and something that's being talked about.

SADE MORRIS: I think we finally embraced how hard it was going to be and how hard we had to work and how good this league is. And we started to make the turn around by starting on the defensive end and then started offense from our defense and I think that's where it got us to where we are now.

DANIELLE McCRAY: To go along with that I think it was more of our practice like. We came in every day, even after the loss, we came in with a positive attitude. No one was negative. Like the whole team just embracing it. When you have teammates that want to go that far and want to go to the NCAA tournament and have no negative talk at all, and just that commitment, I think that has changed it, too. There are teams where in the beginning of the season they probably would have all split up, and I think we just stayed together as a team. And that's one thing that's really great on our team, we just have that great team chemistry that we just stay together. And through the good and the bad, we never go away. And once you have that, your season can keep going strong.

Q. Both of you can address this if you want. You guys are juniors so you have watched the Courtney Paris steamroller for three years. Do you have some empathy for

your bigs that are in there battling and battling her, and especially a youngster, Sutherland, a freshman. What do you say to her during a game when she's going against somebody like Courtney Paris maybe to help her keep her spirits up?

SADE MORRIS: Gain 80 pounds in a hurry.

DANIELLE McCRAY: In the beginning of the game she was -- she was trying to battle hard and I just told her -- and what is surprising to me when she fouled her one time, she turned to me and said I'm trying, like, I need help. And that was something, for her, that was huge. And I turned to her and said just keep moving your feet, that's all you can do. The whole feeling when she responded and she knew she was trying to do something and not just like, oh, well. I can feel for her, Aishah, that she was trying and she knew that was a big role for her. And playing Courtney Paris, she tried but had to try harder.

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: And how aggressive Krysten Boogaard -- produced that offensive foul. Just how aggressive that was And she has been watching a lot of NBA. Shaq did that, didn't he?

THE MODERATOR: This is the final question for the student-athletes.

Q. Can you talk about fouls for you guys as a team? Kind of in the first half and it kind of wore into the second half. Did that affect how you played defensively or did you have to be a little less aggressive with three or four players with three or four fouls each?

SADE MORRIS: Not really, yeah. We had fouls but we just had to be smarter. It didn't keep us from being aggressive, because that wouldn't do us any good. We just had to be smart about what we were doing and make sure we pull our hands back and try not to foul.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, ladies, we'll let you return to the locker room and we'll take questions for coach now.

Q. Bonnie, can you talk about how the strength of the Big 12 plays into your NCAA tournament hopes? And also, how it kind of built the competitiveness of this team as you go into the postseason?

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: I think as far as building a resume for the tournament, if

you only take six, everybody above us is ranked nationally. Every single team above us is ranked nationally. You look at Nebraska. Nebraska beats Arizona State at home in non-conference. Out of the gate down 19-2 and come back and beat Arizona State. And I watched that game. I watched Nebraska lose by one against Ohio State, who is now ranked in the top 10 in the country. That's Nebraska. I wasn't talking about anybody that's ranked. You know. The quality of the league is fantastic. We have been the number one RPI league in the country since December. You know, we kick ourselves every day for, you know, we got a couple in there. We lose three. Sade gets a concussion against Texas Tech. We're a nine-point game at home and lose up in Nebraska without Day and that matters. Playing Marquette without Krysten and everybody has that. That's who we are, that's what we face. And we have some losses in there that we have to kick ourselves in the pants and we don't play with urgency that we do down the stretch. And that is those, talking to you about why it is different. The sense of urgency was completely different.

And I think the competitiveness in the league. And what's hard to do in this league is be consistent because it is so good. What is hard is to be resilient and persevere. Especially two juniors. The freshman year they get beat who do we play next. Who do we play next? That is hard to do the junior year. Oh, my, are we going to do this again? It is this going to happen to us again? And the resiliency and toughness. And in that stretch we are playing well and defensively holding teams to 32 percent. And guarding and out rebounding and our cut our turnovers, below the turnover goal, so we take care of the basketball, do the things that you do have to win in this league.

And you know, and Danielle said it as far as chemistry. Even in that stretch where we're talking about going from the tour to the tournament, people. It wasn't that long ago we were 2-9 and just after the Colorado loss, the team that is pretty desperate at that point. Like, what are we doing? And you know, we go through that stretch where not only Sade and Danielle step up, but production from other players. We have to do it in this league. You can't win with two people. And -- and you can't give them enough credit for the toughness and resiliency to bounce back and to stay together as a group. Boy, that's easy. If they start pointing fingers, it is not me; it's you. I wish you would stop yelling at me. I kept asking for more and they kept trying to give more. And

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that's how you bounce back in about this league and that's tough. Really tough.

Q. Sherri was talking about Whitney Hand and I know she didn't really have many points today or whatever. But when you're trying to game plan against them how does she factor into that and having her back held up?

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: We prepped as if she would play in a pretty short turn around from yesterday. You know, shooter, deadly. But more than just shoots the ball. She guards. She is a smart kid. And we started in the box in one. And you know, just not having that long to prep for the tournament and splitting with Nebraska. I mean I watched Oklahoma ahead of time and we didn't prep for Oklahoma. And just to come out in the box and one, it is not who we are. We did a decent job and still had possessions in the first half and they got us on the baseline in the second half. We just said let's be who we are. Guard, try to turn only people over and get some opportunities in transition and that's where we make the run in the first half. So she does, because just she is spaces you and is just beautiful giving Courtney and Ashley more room. It helps.

Q. Coach, looking for a bright spot in this game, is Aishah Sutherland's performance one of those and how importance has her progression been for the team?

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: Their athleticism, she is a skilled athletic kid. When she competes every day, all the time, every play, she is going to be very, very good. She is a work in progress like we are and it is a tough situation for a freshman to have to battle probably the best post tandem in the country, I think. And at times she did a good job and there are things she can learn from. She is a talented kid. Her ceiling is really, really high.

Q. Bonnie, talk about what they're running in the second half when they pulled away from you guys.

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: They go inside, Courtney, and were trying to force the middle pivot because baseline we can't bring any help. And first half, Whitney Hand had high ball side so that you can't dig off her. And she keeps going baseline. And we try to force the middle and

not getting pressure on the ball and she just goes one-on-one inside of us.

And we turn it over, points off turnovers, and we start to get sloppy with the ball. Now it is two on one, one on nobody, and we really don't ever do a great job against the 1-3-1. I think maybe score one side of it but it is a combination of, you know, if you get back in the game you have to be able to get stops. We went through a stretch where we didn't get stops and we didn't score. And the sense of urgency and then obviously roar' not to the free-throw line because we are not playing in the paint.

Q. If I am a committee member you want in my tournament, tell me the good things about Kansas and why the Jayhawks should be in this year's tournament.

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: I think if you look at the RPI from yesterday it was at 50. It jumped with some teams in the Big Ten that are under consideration. And with this, I don't know where it will go to, Larry Keating is the RPI expert so I need to talk to him on the bus ride home. But we should be somewhere in the 40's. How we finish down the stretch, beating Baylor, beating Iowa State, winning at Oklahoma State, beating Nebraska here. As I told the kids at one point we have to try to cut the lead and make it respectful and don't let it get away. They got frustrated and we made some bad decisions and you hate to do that as a coach. And if we're not go to win this thing we have to try to close the gap. And play the numbers there a little bit.

But I think for us, in a league that is so strong, I think your conference affiliation but what we have done down the stretch, too, I think gives us an opportunity to be at the table.

Q. Any further questions for coach?

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: I wish you were a committee member.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much and good luck.

COACH BONNIE HENRICKSON: Thank you.

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