

March 12, 2009



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Texas Tech – 60

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: We are joined now by the Missouri Tigers and Coach Mike Anderson, and he has three student-athletes, DeMarre Carroll, J.T. Tiller and Matt Lawrence.

Coach, congratulations on the win. Your thoughts on the game.

COACH ANDERSON: I can tell you what -- I thought it was a tale of two halves and that has probably been the story of our basketball team this year. The first game in a tournament you never know how your guys are going to come out. You never know if the nerves were going. We saw the nerves going early on.

Texas Tech, give them credit. They had a game under their belt and they played outstanding basketball. I thought they attacked us in the first half. In the second half we really came out and we, I thought, established tempo, which is more to our liking.

Before you know it, our defense, which is the thing we thought about hanging our hats on, really took over the game.

Q. DeMarre and Matt, can you all discuss the ferocity of the hit on the sideline pass by Tiller?

MATT LAWRENCE: I was just happy to see Voskuil get up. Two guys going for the ball. That's what J.T. does for us all year. He goes all out. Sometimes he is going to knock some people

down. He has done that to me a lot in practice, too. I was just happy he was okay, though.

DEMARRE CARROLL: It was just a great effort. J.T., he gives 100 percent, he couldn't slow down. They call him the Tasmanian devil. You saw for yourself he couldn't slow down. I'm glad he got up and he's not hurt.

Q. I wonder if you can talk about those nerves in the first half and how your defense kind of took things over after halftime.

DEMARRE CARROLL: We came out with a little bit of nerves. We just had to get our rhythm. Like Coach said, we needed to get our rhythm on the defensive end. So the second half, we just put our focus to the defensive end and it gave us ease of offense. We got ease of lay-ups, ease of breakouts. That's our main goal in this whole tournament is just try to focus on defense.

J.T. TILLER: Yeah, having almost a week off, we had to get the rust off. That makes for butterflies. That turns into that half that we did have.

Coming out in the second half, we knew what we had to do. Everything was already out, we had the sweat going. That's how we finished that.

Q. Can you guys comment on winning a Big 12 tournament game, I think, for the first time in your careers, just to have that. And also how conscious were you of the weirdness of the rest of the day with all those other top seeds losing? Were you aware of it? Did Coach Anderson make a point of pointing it out as inspiration at all?

MATT LAWRENCE: I mean, yeah, it is the first time I have been to the second round in the tournament since I have been here and I didn't have to play the first game. So I was pretty excited about that. To win the first game since we've been here, it is tremendous. If there is a half you want to win, it is definitely in the second half. I think we have been doing that all year, coming out in the

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second half if we didn't have energy in the first. Definitely turning it around like we did.

As far as the other games, we don't like to look into that kind of thing. Watch their teams -- the only thing we can do is take care of the game at hand and that was Texas Tech. Now our next game is Oklahoma State, who is playing very good basketball right now. We got them at their house, so I know they will be ready for us. I think we will be able to match the intensity.

J.T. TILLER: Definitely a load off our back for the fact that we haven't even been to the second round of the tournament. This has been our biggest game. Not knowing what's going to come after that is -- after that, it is definitely a big feat.

DEMARRE CARROLL: Coach always said the first game is the most important game. We just tried to pay attention to Texas Tech. Now we defeated Texas Tech. Our next opponent is Oklahoma State, and that's our next biggest game. We can't look over Oklahoma State.

Q. All year long and even tonight you said that the defense has fielded your offense. What was going on in the defense force and the 10-second violation and DeMarre flying into press row. What did that mean to spark the offense in the second half?

J.T. TILLER: That was definitely the spark that got the crowd into it and definitely got the team into it.

When he went for that ball and dived over the table, I knew what was next to come. I just felt sorry for what Texas Tech had to face after that.

Q. You mentioned Oklahoma City a little bit. Can you go into further detail what you think about that team as you get ready?

MATT LAWRENCE: They are a very hot basketball team. Obviously they can shoot the basketball. They can put four guards out there that can run transition and spot up from three. They did a great job today winning that close game. I didn't get to see much of the second half because we were getting ready.

But they got great players, and they got a guy in size that has been playing pretty well, too, Moses. They got some guys come off the bench and help them. They are a deep basketball team that likes to get up and down the floor. So do we, obviously. We got into a track meet with them at their place. Hopefully we will get the up-tempo style again because I think that favors us.

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Q. Coach Anderson, it was brought up before, I just wanted to go back to you are the only high-seed team placed in the quarterfinals to actually win your game. Is that going to affect your confidence, boost your confidence into your game with Oklahoma State?

COACH ANDERSON: Our league has been so balanced this year, it is very typical what took place today and yesterday. On any given night anyone can beat anyone.

When you get to tournament play, I don't know if people understand, it is a little different feeling than, let's say, just the regular conference season and so sometimes the nerves are going, and a lot of teams sometimes they have nothing to lose and everything to gain and they leave it on the floor. I think you have seen that case in point today.

But I have always been a guy that's been tunnel vision, that's to worry about what we do. We think we got a good basketball team. At the same time, we have played some pretty good basketball and then hopefully we can continue to play some good basketball.

Q. Mike, talk about the rematch with the Cowboys, how you match up with the Oklahoma State team.

COACH ANDERSON: We had a game earlier in the year, and, boy, it was one of those we were playing well. We shot the ball well. And, of course, they -- we had a 20-point lead or a big lead, and they did a great job of hanging in there. When you shoot the ball like they are capable of shooting the basketball, they will always be in the game. Of course, we had some miscue going down the stretch. But they are a tough team to match up. They like to play up tempo. We do as well. I think they have created some depth. They are a different team than we have played them earlier in the year. It will be a challenge.

We get a chance to play at the Ford Center. I'm sure there will be quite a bit of orange in the house. But, again, both teams in the semifinals and everybody is playing for something. It is a big game for them. It is a big game for us. I expect a high-energy game. That's what we thrive on, energy.

Q. Besides DeMarre you sat your other four starters for a significant time in the first

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half. Was that to rest them for the second half, the rest of the tournament or was that indicative of the play?

COACH ANDERSON: I think that's the way we were playing. I think those guys got tired.

I go back to saying when you go into the tournament and I have seven guys that have never been in this setting before, you use up a lot of energy, especially with the way we play -- the way we tried to play in the first half.

But at the same time, those guys got tired. They got winded. And I trust our guys on the bench, even though they came out and they didn't play as well as they thought they could. But one thing they were able to do to help rest those guys that started out. You saw those guys with the opportunity to finish big in the second half. That's been the secret to our basketball team all year long. A guy like Miguel Paul, he comes in and plays some crucial minutes in the game, early in the game. So it is important we get -- I thought Marcus Denmon came in and give us some good minutes.

Somebody over there come in and give us some productivity off the bench, sometimes it is not even about scoring.

Q. Mike, Matt has started the last three games. He has made his way into the lineup. Can you talk about what you have done there and how that has worked out. It looks like he has been keeping up the same pace.

COACH ANDERSON: I think Matt is important to what we do. I think he is a guy that keeps the defense honest. He has been shooting the ball extremely well. He is the man of old, even better because I think he is doing a good thing on the defensive side. He is deflecting passes, sticking his nose in. I think he is coming off the bench and just gave us a big lift off the bench.

So now he's back in the starting role. I think it is important at this time of year, you got to have some guys that have kind of been there, done that before.

Q. You said you wanted your guys who have been here before to set an example for the newcomers. How well did that follow that plan?

COACH ANDERSON: I thought they did good. Especially in the second half. I talked to our guys, J.T. and DeMarre and even Leo. I think those guys, they are the core unit to our guys. Taylor as well.

I think when those guys come out and they really, really play with a passion. They play -- they talk, they communicate, they are having fun out there. I think it makes it a lot easier for the guys -- the younger guys to follow them. I thought in the second half especially, they alluded to the play where DeMarre goes in -- knocking over the monitor over there. Those are energy plays.

And so what happens is now the guys on the sidelines, we talk about energy all the time and defense. That's leaving it on the floor. And I thought you saw just -- it kind of gets contagious.

Not only are they doing it by example, I think they are doing it by talking as well. Tonight we had a big-time spurt in the second half and it was all triggered by our defense. I thought fatigue was a big factor. You will not see Voskuil go to the free-throw line and miss two free throws. It was the wear and tear. That's where our depth has been good to us. It was good to us tonight, all year long and especially tonight and hopefully through this tournament.

Q. Obviously you got 15 guys playing time, nobody played more than 30 minutes. Talk about how important that might be if you guys have to play three games in three nights.

COACH ANDERSON: This is important. With the way we play in a tournament setting, as you can see right now, it is almost 11:00, it is going to be a quick turn-around. I think the game is at 8:30 tomorrow. I think we will have some guys that are extending a lot of energy. Although they played less than 30 minutes, that's the equivalent of 40 minutes for most teams because those guys, they play on both ends.

So we'll get back to the hotel and get ready. But I just think our team is made for this type of setting. We'll find out a little bit more about our basketball team because this particular team is going on -- going through some uncharted waters at the University of Missouri. So we will find out a little bit more about our team, our ownership of the team.

I like these guys, they leave it on the floor. They are a fun team to watch. They are exciting.

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