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An interview with:

**OKLAHOMA SOONERS
COACH SHERRI COALE
COURTNEY PARIS
AMANDA JOHNSON**

THE MODERATOR: Okay. We are now joined by the seniors from Oklahoma and Coach Coale and her senior athletes. Coach, your comments about this afternoon's win and Congratulations.

COACH COALE: I thought we found off a really hungry and scrappy Kansas team. I thought they really played with a purpose and played extremely well in the first half, particular well in the second half. Our bench was a story. They were just terrific. Everybody from Jasmine Hartman all the way through the guards down to Abi Olajuwon at the post. Everybody who came in contributed, and we talked all year about that becoming a strength of our team and it certainly has paid off today in the first round.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Coach, thank you for your comments. A question on the right-hand side.

Q. Courtney, talk a little bit about your game today. I think you had a block on the first attempted shot that really seemed to set a tone and you just seemed to carry that out through the rest of the game.

COURTNEY PARIS: I just am ready to play. It is postseason. Every game is that much more important, because if you lose it you don't get to play again. So I was just really feeling it today and I wanted to come out and make sure I did the best I could.

Q. Amanda, we've often talked about your shooting ability. That you are probably so

unselfish; a lot of times you pass up shots. But it looked like today you decided you're going to take your shots and you had a great game.

AMANDA THOMPSON: Well, I just found the ball and I was open a couple of possessions and I took advantage of those opportunities. And the ball went in today, so I kept going with it.

Q. Ladies, would you address waiting all this time to finally play, watching all the other men's games and the women's games and what's that's been like?

COURTNEY PARIS: It's been a lot of fun, everybody loves watching baseball. Especially the game last night with Syracuse and UConn.

AMANDA THOMPSON: We were in bed by that time, the highlight. You know, I love playing with these girls and for me personally it is my last year and I don't get another shot. So I was just ready to get out there and go, and like you said watching all the other teams play made us that much more pumped up.

Q. Courtney, could you talk about how much better this feels right now than a year ago? And how much better do you think you guys are playing than a year ago in the first game of the Big 12?

COURTNEY PARIS: I think it is a complete turn-around. Last year, like you said, we were -- didn't even make it to this tournament last year. But, you know, with that said I feel like last year helped us get to it point and we just learned from that season. I didn't want to be back in that situation, so sometimes you get, you know, short-comings but you can make something out of it.

Q. Amanda, talk about that, too, what you think.

AMANDA THOMPSON: It gave us an opportunity to build chemistry and come together. And I think that's one of the key points of us

coming this far in the season, is just chemistry and sticking together. And just fighting the whole time. We have a lot of fight in our team and it keeps us together.

Q. Courtney or Amanda, either one of you. With the number one and two seeds in the men's tournament across the street going down yesterday, was that on your all minds at all?

AMANDA THOMPSON: Nah, the guys are different than the girls. I don't want to focus what is going on there, we are trying to stay in our bubble. As long as we are focused we survive an event.

Q. Amanda, for what a number of you did today, can you talk a little bit about what it was like to have Courtney soaring 27 and grabbing a bunch of boards and blocking six shots and what it meant for you as a team.

AMANDA THOMPSON: It built our confidence unbelievably. I knew if I would pass her the ball, she would get it in the basket or find me or find any another shooter that was open. She was outstanding today, and I just hope it keeps going.

COURTNEY PARIS: I think the reason I am able to have a game like that, right off the bat, Amanda comes out and knocks down some big shots. And they have to single coverage us and I love that. So It all worked out.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies we will let you return to the locker room and then we'll take questions for Coach. Congratulations and good luck tomorrow.

Q. Sherri, Courtney seemed almost like possessed in the first half. Talk about her game.

COACH COALE: She is a driven individual, as we all know, and she understand clearly what time of year it is. And I think great players sense that. I think all seniors sense it to a certain degree. But I think the really great players get that in a way maybe the rest of the world doesn't. She established herself early and was just terrific the entire game from both ends of the floor. It wasn't just scoring the points. Defensively affecting their ability to get to the rim, limiting second shots. All kinds of stuff. Emphatic blocks. Blocks that take momentum if it happens to be sitting anywhere other than your bench and puts it firmly in the middle of your bench.

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Q. Sherri, if you can draw it up, was this game about what you would want to get in the first game in the tournament when you win, you win fairly big. And you get to rest your starters considering you know it's going to be a very tough road to win the next two games?

COACH COALE: I did love the way it played out. I loved the fact we got so much juice from our guys off the guys on the bench that a lot of people contributed. And at the end of the day everybody feels good going into the second round. I know we look at this line and say Whitney played 20 minutes and didn't score and only got two shots up. But understand that one of the reasons Courtney Paris got 27 points and had single coverage is because somebody was following Whitney everywhere she went on the floor. Even though it is not reflected in the statistical category, she had a huge impact on the game and the way that Kansas defended us today.

I thought it was a complete effort. Good for us to really feel challenged in the first half and to not have it out of hand at that point and to have to play through it and create some good things for ourselves. So, all in all a good morning. Is it lunchtime yet? I am starving.

Q. Sherri, what is the biggest difference, the way you're playing now and the way you were playing that first game last year?

COACH COALE: I don't know. I can't even -- I can't even compare the two. Every season is a lifetime in and of itself. And even if you have an entire team that turns around and plays and it's your entire team the next year is different, because the experiences are different. Kids grow and they change and the relationships change.

What I like about this team and where we are right now, Amanda mentioned it, we have sight. We have tremendous chemistry. These guys play for each other, and that's almost like getting to play with an extra guy on the floor.

Q. Can you talk about that game before [Inaudible]?

COACH COALE: No. That game, I have a lot of questions about that and I think it's interesting. That game in the first round of the Big 12 tournament last year fueled the way we played in the NCAA's and fueled the way we worked in it the spring and the summer. It is so far gone now it is not even a topic of thought or conversation.

Q. Coach, just talk about how much better your ball club is when you get so many good minutes from various different players off the bench and in your starting line-up.

COACH COALE: Well, obviously it makes us very difficult to defend. Any type of junk or double teaming, whether it is on the post or a shooter, gets squelched quickly like when A.T. comes out and makes the jumpers and Jenny Vining comes in and does what she does.

And you can't talk about the bench without talking about Jasmine Hartman. For a true freshman in her first Big 12 tournament coming off the bench, she had all kinds of swagger. This is a kid that had to play big minutes against Oklahoma State when D. Robb went down to foul trouble and she's guarding Andrea Riley and you think a freshman may be taken back by that. And she loved it. She loved it. The greater the stage, the greater the challenge, the more this kid likes it. She is full of courage and I love that and I like coaching that.

But I just think having those weapons, you know, it wears the other team down. They keep going to a couple of guys over and over and over. But in the last 10 minutes of the game those guys are exhausted and we are able to keep fresh guys in and different people contributing, it makes us really difficult to defend.

Q. Coach, you are on the tournament clock now. Would you describe what that chronology is for your players. Do you let them watch the next game? Do you rest them? Do you watch the next game? Who watches film? Do they goof off? Do they watch any mens' games? What happens in the next 20 hours or so?

COACH COALE: I go get a hamburger immediately if not sooner. We will watch a little bit, and then not a lot of could having around, laying around at the hotel. Shaking off the legs a little bit. We have an unbelievable training staff. They will be in hot and cold contrast bath and taking care of the bodies. They will be all over that. And already have an assistant coach assigned to the scout depending on who wins. Each one has a different team in the game that follows. And tonight we will go out and have some great food and follow the scores and watch some games on TV and get to bed early and get up at the crack of dawn and do this again.

Q. Sherri, Danielle had her thumb taped up. What is up with that?

COACH COALE: Just in the Texas game, just hurt it a little bit and just keeps it taped, that's it.

Q. I don't want to delay your lunch, but I do want to ask you about the defensive effort of Thompson. And then, also, the boost that Stevenson gives. It didn't seem that Danielle McCray got a peaceful look at the basket all afternoon. A lot of it was those two.

COACH COALE: Yes. McCray earned every point she got. I thought she was fantastic and I told her so after the game. We didn't give her easy baskets and still she scored what, 22.

Amanda did a great job and so did our bigs. We were trapping the ball screen when McCray received one. And that's -- A.T. has to make her use it, which in my opinion McCray's forte is setting you up to think she is using it and then goes the other direction. So that was a big job in and of itself. Whether it be Ashley or Courtney or whomever had the responsibility of jumping out and trapping her, it was a team effort in trying to limit her looks. I thought Jenny Vining likewise did a great job on Sade and trying to get through all those screens. Just screens and screens and screens you, and you have to be consistent in your effort to follow those. Also our help from the point position, whether it is Danielle or Jasmine, did a great job of recognizing, oh, we're a step behind or we slipped and would go over and give both Sade and McCray some trouble and make them get off the ball.

Really, while Amanda was fantastic and I don't want to take it away from her, or Nye, it was really a team effort in guarding those two guys.

Q. Coach, Courtney mentioned a couple of times the idea that if you lose a game, it's all over, the world comes to an end. At this time of the season, do you maybe worry a little bit about getting too much focus on that? Or just the fact that you have been through this so much kind of make that pressure a good thing?

COACH COALE: I am going to answer your question, but my do you have a radio voice. You don't even have to tell us that you are with National Radio. Hello, right there.

You know what? I always said this -- my guys are smart. They get it. I am not going to go

in and pretend anything or downplay anything. I would be foolish to do that. They get it. They understand. Sometimes too well.

I told somebody the other day, the problem with us is when we're not good, we know how not good we are. And that's the problem. Some guys are not very good and they think they are, and they can buffalo you for awhile. Not us. We know. These guys understand. These seniors know post-season and what it means and that it's one-and-done and you have to win to advance. And in the locker room after the Texas game the kids had written on the board "We've played to win, and now we have to win to play." And that was before I even got in there. So it doesn't really matter what I am talking about, they are already a step ahead.

Q. Sherri, you went through the mock selection draft with the NCAA committee. With the team like Kansas that's won five of it's last six, but maybe their other numbers don't add up, but knowing the quality of team they are, how does that fit into the discussion about NCAA tournaments?

COACH COALE: It won't be a big part of the discussion, I can promise you that. How teams play down the stretch is important.

Who they are playing, when they are playing well down the stretch, the committee will look at this game even though Kansas lost. And they will have the little eye test, you know. Well, this player is pretty good and this player is pretty good. Now, to back all that up, it's going have to be a an RPI number and the strength of schedule and there have to be some numerical backing for that. But the way Kansas has played in the last three weeks of the season, they have given themselves a shot. They are in the conversation.

THE MODERATOR: Okay coach, Congratulations on the game, and we will see you tomorrow. And good luck.

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