

**March 13, 2009**



Missouri – 67  
Oklahoma State – 59

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: Okay. We are joined now by the Cowboys of Oklahoma State, Coach Travis Ford, his student-athletes James Anderson and Marshall Moses.

Coach, we'll call on you first for your thoughts on tonight's game.

COACH FORD: Congratulate Missouri. Wish them the best of luck as they continue.

We just didn't play one of our better games today. Not taking anything away from Missouri, when you are not making shots, neither one of us were. When you are not making shots, it is imperative you take care of the basketball. Obviously the more opportunities you get the better off you will be hopefully. 17 turnovers in a game where you are not shooting the ball well is going to hurt you a little bit because we did some other things well, rebounded and played defense the way we wanted to really. Accomplished what we set out to do.

But we just couldn't get shots to fall. Didn't take care of the ball particularly well.

Even though we outrebounded them by eight, they rebounded the ball when it counted, the last three to four minutes of the game. They got some big rebounds on us and rebounded the ball when it counted. So you got to give them credit.

Our kids played hard. They fought hard, no question. It is just one of those games. We just

didn't play well today. Haven't played like that in a little while. Hopefully we can put this behind us.

Just congratulate Missouri. They won a good game.

Marshall, can you talk about when Byron (Eaton) came out in the second half and obviously was going to get to play. It looked like that gave everybody a big emotional boost. Why do you think it didn't really transpire into success for you guys?

MARSHALL MOSES: I don't think we can really put it on Byron. I was glad to see he came back into the game in the second half. With or without Byron, we still -- like Coach said, we didn't rebound when we needed to and do some of the right things we needed to do to win the game.

Like Coach said, taking away nothing from Missouri, they played a great game and they played hard. I don't think Byron was the reason we took a loss tonight. He played hard and he played hurt which took a lot for him to do that. I think just like Coach said, we just didn't do some things right. We didn't play the way we had normally been playing over our winning streak. We need to get back to the way we played before that in postseason play.

James, was it a disruption when Byron went out or was it something you were able to overcome in the first half?

JAMES ANDERSON: We were sad to see he got hurt. We told Keiton had to step up and make plays and run the team since Byron was out.

At times, I think -- he did a pretty good job the whole time, but he kind of -- I don't know. He wasn't prepared mentally for the challenge. I think he did an overall good job just stepping up.

To see Byron come back, I think it kind of released a little pressure from Keiton. It was just a tough game for both of the guards and a tough game for us overall. We made some bad turnovers and we turned the other team over, too. We just couldn't convert, and Missouri played a good game and got the best of the 50/50 balls at the end. (Take out that last period).

**Q. James, would you just kind of put the latter part of the season in perspective, talk about what you guys have accomplished as you look forward to playing on.**

JAMES ANDERSON: I think we accomplished a lot this year. Just the way we started the season out, I think we had got into 3-6 and started a new season with our last seven games, kind of went on a little winning streak. Just took each game one by one.

That's how we got here today. Now we just got to put all this aside and just get ready for the rest of the post-play.

**Q. James, all of you guys up there said you didn't do exactly what you wanted to do tonight. It wasn't the way you played in those seven games. Was this a wake-up call? Was it a learning experience? What did you learn tonight that you can take with you?**

JAMES ANDERSON: Yes, it was a learning experience. Tonight we learned that we got to rebound when we are not hitting the shots. That's what Missouri did.

We out-rebounded them, but they rebounded when it counted. That's what we got to learn from. When we are not knocking shots, everybody's got to crash the boards and come up with the big rebounds.

**Q. Can you guys talk about just you missed 16 straight threes to start the game. Just kind of -- that's -- for a team to shoot so many threes and make so many threes, what the mode is and how does that affect you when it seems like none of them are going in.**

MARSHALL MOSES: It definitely affects us when we are not making threes. We have big-time three-point shooters on our team, and that's a big part of what we do. If I'm not mistaken, I think we are somewhere in the upper ladder, if not number one, in three-point shots made in the Big 12. Of course, it will hurt when we are not making threes.

The key to what we got to do is when we are not making threes, like Coach said again, we got to rebound the ball. When teams aren't shooting well, the team that rebounds the most, especially offensive rebounds is usually the team that comes out with a victory or fights to the end to get the win.

When we are not making threes, we have to dig in deeper on defense and follow the game

plan to a tee even more to make up for the shots we don't make.

**Q. James, you went out 13 minutes and something with your fourth foul, you sat out almost seven minutes. That's when the game sort of turned. Can you talk about how frustrating it was sitting there watching the minutes tick by and the lead evaporating, eventually get bigger for Missouri.**

JAMES ANDERSON: Yes, I did get a little frustrated, and I wanted to be in the game, do whatever I can to contribute to the team.

Whatever I could do to help.

Me just sitting over there on the bench when I could help my team, I got some cheap fouls at times. That's something I got to learn from, quit reaching and fouling so I can stay in and help my team.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you for coming. Good luck next week.

We will take questions for Coach Ford.

**Q. What did you learn about this basketball team during this run, 8-9 coming into this semifinal championship game?**

COACH FORD: I think they have learned a lot, grown up a lot, improved a lot. It has taken us as a coaching staff as well the team to really learn each other, a long time, to understand our best rotations, understand what's best for our team. It takes them a little while to understand our system, coaching philosophy, and style of coaching, things like that.

I think that has a lot to do with it. We had a few heart-to-heart discussions after our Texas game at Texas when we weren't very proud of ourselves. We had a little wake-up call there.

But there is a lot of things. Defense improved. Rebounds improved. They have come a long way. This was a team, I thought, early in the season -- even though we won some games, they let little things bother them too much. They live in the past. They would make a mistake and it would affect three or four plays later.

We told them it is about having a winning attitude, a winning attitude. You can be intense and be passionate about the game, but you need to channel it in the right way. This has taken these guys a little while to understand that philosophy of that winning attitude.

Once they started experiencing some

success, I think they wanted a little bit more of it and they started seeing a light at the end of the tunnel.

So I think Byron and Terrell were tired of hearing they hadn't been to the NCAA tournament. I even reminded them of that. Things like that are motivating factors early in the year, that that needs to be a goal. That's something this program hasn't done in a very long time.

It was just a progression of a lot of different things. But learning how to win at the highest level and learning how to win when there is something on the line, that takes time. It takes time.

These guys started to understand how important defense is to success, how important rebounding is to success. And then we got to the point, and I put myself at the head of the list, where I said we are not going to make any more excuses. This was after the Texas game. I am not going to talk that we don't have size, depth. I told them nobody is -- we are going to concentrate on what we can do rather than on things we can't do.

We started holding people accountable which I wasn't doing earlier in the year as far as some guys I thought had to play 38 minutes a game or we didn't have a chance. I was letting them get away with some things that I normally wouldn't and we started holding guys a little more accountable to making the right plays, being in position defensively, not just scoring and things like that but doing other things to help our basketball team win.

I think all those things combined helped us get to this point.

**Q. Last night looked like you were really in control on offense, and tonight you looked like you rushed a lot. Was that due to what Missouri was doing defensively?**

COACH FORD: Definitely. Definitely. No question. Things were going our way until we got in some extreme foul trouble first half, and then obviously Byron goes down and we just didn't get out of that first half the way we needed to.

And then you get back in the second half and Byron is playing on one leg. He is fine. He's fine. He just couldn't get into the flow of things.

When you are not shooting the ball well, it affects so many other things. Both teams weren't shooting the ball well, it was not just us.

Missouri started rebounding the ball better, started doing some things better when things weren't -- they had other things to go to, where we

had Marshall to go to. We probably didn't get him the ball as much as we needed to at times.

Byron, no question, we wouldn't even have been in this game without Byron. Byron struggled tonight and he was injured. I love the effort and heart that he came back and played with.

Just wasn't our basketball team tonight. That's nothing -- Missouri did a great job, and they did a great job on defense and everything. I thought our guys, they had their head down and were very, very emotional and disappointed.

I told them, yeah, we wish we could be in the final game tomorrow but, hey, keep your head up. This just wasn't our night for whatever reason.

**Q. Travis, how do you feel about your team going to the tournament? And then also with Byron, is his injury anything that could bother you next week?**

COACH FORD: No, he's fine. Byron is okay. I feel very good about our team. I think we are playing as well as anybody.

Somebody asked me, were we tired because of three games in three days and we don't play a lot of guys. I told them tonight, yeah. If we were making shots, you don't think about being tired. When you start missing as many shots as we did, we started thinking about being tired, I think.

So I'm very high on our team right now, and that doesn't have anything to do with this game really, the reasons I am high on the team.

One of those games. Missouri won. We lost. And they probably -- and they didn't play that well. They probably stood up here and didn't play their best either. One of those games where two teams were struggling to put the ball in the hole and they came up with big plays when they needed to. I think our team knows we can play better than this, and I think they believe in that. That's why I'm high on our basketball team right now.

**Q. We were told -- you tell us, what exactly is wrong with Byron. Also, you said two different things. You said he's fine, but you also said he was playing on one leg.**

COACH FORD: Well, yeah, he was limping around a little bit but he's fine. He was normally limping when made his turnovers. (Laughter).

He is okay. I am not sure exactly what it is

yet, so I don't want to comment exactly what it is.  
But, yeah, he is going to be okay. He's fine.  
CHARLIE FISS: Coach, thank you.

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