

March 10, 2010



Oklahoma State - 81
Oklahoma - 67

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: We're ready to begin with the Sooners of Oklahoma and Coach Jeff Capel, and his two student-athletes are Tony Crocker and Cade Davis. Coach, we'll call on you first for your assessment of tonight's game.

COACH CAPEL: Congrats to Oklahoma State. They were the better team. They got off to a great start. Shot the heck out of the ball in the first half. Keiton Page was really, really good. And I thought we played better in the second half. Our goal was to gradually chip away and get back to our game plan defensively. I thought we did that. Our goal was to have it to 10 by the ten-minute mark. We had it there with about 12 minutes to go and gave up two 3-point plays in a row. And that kind of broke our back. When Crocker picked up his fourth foul that hurt us. We had smart match-ups out there. And Oklahoma State took a good job of taking advantage of that. Congrats to them. They were the better team. And good luck to them going forward.

CHARLIE FISS: Questions for our student-athletes.

Q. Coach Travis talked about the importance from his standpoint of starting strong defensively against you guys. Did that disrupt you more than anything, or was it something that you guys didn't get accomplished, offensively. Same question, the coach was talking about OSU the importance of them playing defensively strong in the beginning. They had you backing up, was that something you were doing or --

CADE DAVIS: We were losing shooters in transition. They were getting shots up and knocking those down. That dug ourselves a hole right there at the very beginning. Whatever that did, our defense dropped off. And it was really never there in the first half. And they just kept making shots and kept digging ourselves in a bigger hole.

TONY CROCKER: I think them coming out, making shots like they did, really hurt us. Their pressure on defense, we practiced that throughout the whole time. It may have caused a little bit of trouble but not too much because we knew that was coming. But what hurt us was them getting out to such a big lead so early.

We fought back and got it to 10, and we just couldn't get it over the hump.

Q. Can you guys talk about just how frustrating the season's been with the injuries and then closing out the way you did?

CADE DAVIS: Well, certainly not the way we wanted it to turn out. Like you said, there's some factors we couldn't control with injuries and things like that.

But, you know, there's times where we can

ASAPsports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

Oklahoma – 3.10.10Oklahoma

show effort and things like that. There's things we could control and try and make a positive note out of things. But with the ups and downs and with the streaks of losses, it's difficult to kind of come back from that. But it's never fun having a season like this.

Q. Can you talk about the season, obviously it's your last one, your last game. Obviously a disappointing season for you the way it ended for you?

TONY CROCKER: This season, it was different from our past years. It was sad that it ended the way it did, but we had fun out there a lot. And we just try to do the best with what we had. And we just -- we struggled but we had fun out there. And I'm going to miss those guys?

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. Coach, one win away last year from Final Four to this season. Kind of reflect on that and your thoughts on it?

COACH CAPEL: It wasn't fun for me. Not one second of it. A very difficult year from the beginning. It's not just the wins and losses. We had a lot more losses than wins. Frustrating, difficult from every angle. For me, frustrating I wasn't able to do a better job for my team. Frustrating I wasn't able to help them have more success than we did this year. I felt I let them down. Frustrating year, and this is an opportunity for all of us to learn and get better. It's going to make me a better coach. I don't think I'm a worse coach than I was last year. I didn't think I was a better coach at the end of last year than I was the previous year.

But this will definitely help me grow as a coach, help me in some decision-making processes going forward. And I look forward to getting ready for next year.

Q. James Anderson, 11 points, five turnovers. Mission accomplished? Did you think that would be enough? What was your plan with him?

COACH CAPEL: Obviously we knew we had to contain him but we didn't do a good job on Keiton Page. I think Anderson, being such a great player that he is, also such a great kid, he didn't force it.

He didn't come out where: I have to do this. I have to just jack shots up. I have to get my average. That's what really good players do. They don't play necessarily to a stat sheet or to points. They just play. And I thought he did a great job of reading some things and just kind of letting the game come to him but he also knew that those guys were playing really well in spite of him.

But also you still see his impact, because those other guys get so many open shots and so many open opportunities, because you're paying so much attention to him.

Q. I'm wondering, from your perspective, when you get to this point in the season, the intensity rises in every game, just how pivotal do you think guard play is? Does it rise? Is it as meaningful as people make it out to be?

COACH CAPEL: Yeah, it is. When you have really good guards, mature guards, because they can control the game on both ends of the floor. They can control it defensively if they're intelligent and understand how to follow a game plan. They can control it offensively because everything goes through them.

And I thought, you know, Keiton Page did a great job of that tonight. Again, Oklahoma State has some veteran guards. But as you watch this Big 12 tournament and as we get into the NCAA tournament or any of these conference tournaments, you see the teams that are winning and winning consistently. You look throughout the year. They have really good guard play.

Q. After the game, you went through the line and shook hands with the Cowboys. You stopped and chatted with Obi and Anderson. Could you share what you told those guys?

COACH CAPEL: I told them good luck. I think those two guys are really good kids. And I think they embody what's right about college basketball, about being student-athletes.

Anderson was not only Player of the Year in our league but he was on the All-Academic team.

And Obi continuously has gotten better in his career and just competes. As a person that loves the game of basketball, I admire good teammates. I admire guys that play the game the right way. Doesn't mean they do things right all the

time and they don't mess up, but I admire the beauty.

And it's that and wishing them luck in the tournament, for those two guys, obviously Obi's last year, and it's probably Anderson's last year. You know, I want those guys to have success in the NCAA tournament.

Q. Coach, normally you would want a season to continue to go on and on, stay alive. Is it fair to say that you're relieved, happy that this one is over, and also what did you tell your club after the game?

COACH CAPEL: No, I'm not. And if I ever get to that point, Joe or whoever is my AD, should fire me, if I ever get to the point where I'm relieved that it's over. Or I will just walk away, because I shouldn't be doing what I'm doing. So, no, it wasn't. I was maybe crazy enough to believe that we could come here and win the Big 12 tournament.

So, no. And what I told our team, I thanked our seniors. I told those guys they're winners, in spite of how this season turned out. All three of those kids will graduate. Ryan's already graduated. Tony and Bo will graduate in May and they have a lot of experiences that will help prepare them, that hopefully have helped prepare them for the real world and wherever life takes them as they move forward. I thanked those guys, really. It was pretty short.

Q. I was going to ask you, that first half, when Oklahoma State got on that roll, seemed they couldn't miss. They seemed to be having a lot of fun. How do you try to stem that kind of tide? You guys in the second half came out and made a game out of it. How did you stop such an after language when it's obvious that they're in some kind of zone?

COACH CAPEL: Look, they have good players. They run good stuff. They do a good job. But I didn't think we did a good job with our game plan in the first half.

I thought in the second half, you know when they called a timeout, that's when I told our guys, all we're doing is executing our game plan, what we worked on, it's taken us 20 minutes to do it, but we're finally doing that. We're finally playing ball screens the right way. We're finally closing out to guys in the right way and getting to shooters. And when you shoot the ball as well as they do and then you give them open looks like we did in

the first half, I could see why they were having a lot of fun out there.

But, again, I thought we did some better things in the second half. And our goal was to get it to 10 by the 10-minute mark.

We talked about it at halftime. We're going to slowly walk it back, defend and rebound, first two things, and execute. And we'll slowly get it back to 10. We had it about the 10-minute mark, gave up two 3-point plays. Crocker picking up his fourth foul was huge. We don't have that much depth as it is. It's difficult to match up playing two bigger guys, because one of those guys have to guard Obi.

When Crocker picked up his fourth foul we went with a bigger guy, and they took advantage of it. He got a 3-point play, and then Keiton Page just took the ball from Tommy and went down and got a 3-point play. And all of a sudden, after all that momentum we had, just like that it's back to 16 and they have the momentum again.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you, Coach.
FastScripts by ASAP Sports