

March 11, 2010



Texas A&M - 70
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An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: Joined now by Nebraska, Head Coach Doc Sadler and his student-athletes Sek Henry and Ryan Anderson. Coach, let's go to you first.

COACH SADLER: First of all, you've got to give Texas A&M credit. They came out, especially the first half, and I thought they were the aggressive basketball team. As I told our team at halftime, you know, I thought they were the team with their backs to the wall instead of us. And we had to pick up the effort to have a chance to win.

And the first minute to two minutes in the second half, it was difficult and it got us down I think 18 -- 16-18. But as this season's unfolded, this basketball team, because of Ryan and Sek and Chris and Ben being the leaders to this whole thing, they just came back and fought as hard as they could fight. And I actually had a chance to -- actually had a chance to maybe win the basketball game.

To be honest with you, that doesn't surprise me, because that's the way this team has competed every night. Obviously, we're disappointed, disappointed in the end of the season. But as I told the team, the character in that locker room is really, really strong.

And you know, I hear stories that athletics is supposed to teach you lifelong lessons, and if that's the case then these guys are going to be very, very successful people, because their character is unbelievable.

CHARLIE FISS: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. How much does it erase the bad feeling from the regular season, the fact that you played so well here, won a game and could have won the second game?

RYAN ANDERSON: Like Coach said, I think it showed the character of our team. We fought hard all season. At conference time we fought really hard. And we came out here and we fought really hard, you know what I mean?

And the outcome, they made some plays. Hats off to those guys. They made some shots. And capitalized on some mistakes that we made. But overall, you know what I mean, it's just -- it's tough, man. You know what I mean? It would have been nice to win this game, keep going with these guys.

Because this is it for us, you know what I mean? But it's just a great season overall, even though we didn't win as many games as we wanted, it was just a great experience.

Q. What will you take from your careers at Nebraska? What sticks out in your mind?

SEK HENRY: How Coach taught us to play hard and stay with the focus to just play hard no matter what and never give up. And that never-give-up attitude by Coach spread out like cancer on the team. That's how we played all year. The previous years we did pretty good. Like last year we finished 8-8. And this year we had a pretty tough year for us. And we still played hard every single game.

And that's one thing I really love about our team, is that we never did give up, because we could have easily gave up and just said it's all over, but we didn't. We gave ourselves a chance to win this game today even though we were down a lot of points. Just the fight, the team and believing in our Coach?

CHARLIE FISS:
Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. There was a play late in the game where I think it was Richardson tried to take a charge, didn't get a call, and they swung it around and got a 3-pointer. Did the fact that he's on the ground cause people to move and give them that open shot?

COACH SADLER: I think you ended up with two bodies on the floor. And you ended up getting a shot. And they made the shot.

So, you know, I told the coaches afterwards -- I mean, Donald Sloan is their A.C. Law. A.C. Law made so many big shots that senior year. Donald Sloan did the same. He stepped up and made that play.

And so you gotta give him credit for it. But was it big, no question it was huge. But he made the shot.

Q. How do you get this thing back on track? What are the lessons you take from this year?

COACH SADLER:
Well, I know a lot of people probably don't like this answer, but I don't think it's that far off the track. I mean, if you look at our record, it was not good. But if you watched our team for 16 games, I think they gave everything that they had.

So that part of it is the hardest thing to get. And, you know, we've got to have -- at Nebraska you've got to have some luck. We can't lose-going every season losing guys that you think are going to be starting for you. And that's what happened this year.

I mean, you lose two guys before the season starts. But hopefully they'll be back, if everything goes well. So I think all of us in this room knows how hard it is to be 2 and 14. But there's very few in this room that really probably understands how competitive and how giving this team has been, because you hadn't had a chance to see them as much as I have.

So if you look at wins and losses, which is that's what it's judged on, we've got a lot of work to do. But the good news is I truly believe that 80 to 90 percent of the work to get you over the hump has been done. So I don't think it's as far off as maybe some people.

But if you look at wins and losses, it's a long ways.

Q. You talked about the beginning of the game kind of starting slow, then you came back in the first half. And the last minute or so

kind of killed you with all the work that you had done for those ten minutes. Can you talk a little bit about that?

COACH SADLER:

Yeah, the last minute of the half and in the first minute and a half or the two minutes in the second half. That three-minute period right there really -- it made it difficult for us, the 3-pointer at the end of the half was difficult. But then they came out and I think -- did we give up five straight points, maybe, in the start of the second half, which made it difficult also.

So those probably three possessions, as you said, made it really, really difficult. But to these guys' credit, you know, they fought their way back and had a chance.

So that part of the game was not a good part for us, the last minute or the first two minutes.

Q. Were there any signs of progress in your mind this year or any signs of optimism for next year? Anything you can take out of this year and build on?

COACH SADLER:

Again, Tom, I think the biggest thing is I can't imagine wins and losses being any tougher than it's going to be this year. And to continue to practice the way we practiced all year, that's what gave me hope each day. But I'm sure sitting back now and reflecting on this season, that's what's really going to give me a lot of hope. So that part of it -- do we need to fill some pieces, no question.

We've still got to get a guy, as you well know, Tom, we've got to get a guy that can go make that big play for us and that can go make it offensively. But I challenged these guys. I challenged them a lot, and you've seen how they've responded.

So especially in today's world, I mean, a lot of guys you probably can't challenge the way I've

challenged them and get the same response. But that's the positive -- of all the other things, that would be the most positive thing I'll take from it.

Q. Were you surprised without Dash that you weren't able to force a few more turnovers; did that disappoint you at all?

COACH SADLER:

No, not really, because they don't turn the basketball over. Mark's teams take care of the basketball. They don't turn it over. You know, we're short on the guard end also. It's not like we can pick up and try to force the issue. And on top of that, after playing yesterday. I wouldn't change anything that way.

CHARLIE FISS:

Thank you, Coach.

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