

March 11, 2010



Kansas State - 83
Oklahoma State - 64

An interview with:



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CHARLIE FISS: We're joined by Oklahoma State. Coach Travis Ford and student-athletes James Anderson and Matt Pilgrim. Your assessment of tonight's game.

COACH FORD: We have to give Kansas State a lot of credit. Played extremely well. Came out, took it to us really.

I thought we were a bit flat. And we knew we were going to get an incredible effort from them. After the game earlier this year, and then we were in a big game last year. We knew they were going to come out ready to play.

And we just -- you know, they made a big run at us early in the game and got up a lot of points. And we cut it all the way back and got it to 5 respectably and weren't playing really well. And then we were devastated with foul trouble. And that hurt us tremendously.

And just give the credit -- we were just sluggish, didn't bring our A game. It was a bad combination for us. They played extremely well. We didn't play particularly well tonight. But just one of those nights. But give Kansas State a lot of credit. They played real well.

CHARLIE FISS: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. James, Obi got his third foul and then Matt got his third, and you're playing with

sort of a lineup you don't generally play with. And that's when Kansas State took over the game. Could you talk about how out of rhythm everything got during that stretch of the game when you were playing with Dowell and Gulley and whoever else was on the court?

JAMES ANDERSON: I think it was pretty much the lineup we had. I know Matt and Obi, we need both of those in the game, and I mean it hurt our team when they go out. But it wasn't the lineup. The plays we were making, we were making more positive than negative.

Anytime you make more negative than positive, it hurts your team.

Q. James, you didn't shoot it particularly well here for two nights. You be glad to kind of leave this building behind?

JAMES ANDERSON: I wouldn't say just leaving the building. I didn't shoot good. Last night or tonight. I wanted to stay here and play another game and compete for the Big 12 championship. And I mean, it didn't happen that way. So we're on to the next game.

Q. Matt, can you talk about Kansas State? Seems like they've got a bunch of guys about your size and your athletic ability. Seems like they can run a lot of different people at you and Marshall when he's in for you. And it seemed like you got overwhelmed by the numbers.

MATT PILGRIM: We was prepared for that, because coach prepped us for game rebounding. We knew that was going to come. They just got a great, great front court. So can't really complain. All you can do is go with what you've got.

Q. James, last time you guys faced Kansas State, Jamar Samuels, No. 32 only played 13 minutes and fouled out of the game with five points. Did you have any inkling

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heading in that he was capable of putting up the type of numbers that he did tonight?

JAMES ANDERSON: We knew from the scouting report that he was a big kid who had -- he was like the glue guy of their team. He would get all the offensive and defensive boards and just a hustle guy.

We knew that he was capable of putting up numbers. And I mean, he just outhustled us tonight and that's something that we can't let guys do. And he came in and made some big plays for them.

Q. Matt, you might talk about that maybe hustling is just part of the answer to this. But the rebounding numbers are ugly, especially in the first half, 25 to 8. And I guess Samuels outrebounded by himself your team. Can you talk about the problem there?

MATT PILGRIM: Honestly, we just got out-toughed. We were a bit sluggish but that's not an excuse. The numbers speak for themselves, really, so...

Q. Guys, would you both talk about just moving on now? You've got bigger things to play for down the road.

JAMES ANDERSON: Yeah, this game is over. I mean, we just gotta get back to the gym and start preparing for whoever we are going to face in the tournament, and just start getting our team back on the positive side. Start from the second half of last night's game, carry it over to today, we made more negative plays than positive plays, and we've just got to get back to the gym and get our team on the positive side again, and just get ready for our opponent.

MATT PILGRIM: We can learn from this game, because Kansas State is going to be or 1 or 2 seed. So we finally know what it takes to win an NCAA tournament.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you very much. Questions for Coach.

Q. Coach, I know it's guesswork, but where do you see yourself as a seed? And did today really hurt that much given how good K-State is?

COACH FORD: I thought we could only help ourselves. I thought we helped ourselves last night. I thought every win that we could get in this tournament would help us.

A lot has to do with other teams as well. You know, I don't understand -- I think if you sit

and try to figure out the whole thing it would drive you crazy. There's no way to figure it out. Because you don't know exactly what to do.

But who knows. Who knows. But I thought we could improve our seeding with every game that we played. But, again, a lot of it depends on what other teams do.

Q. Along that same line, at the end of the game you were talking, it looked like, to your starters. Were you looking forward with them talking NCAA tournament, or take us inside that last conversation?

COACH FORD: When you play like we did tonight, you try to figure out as many -- you try to make a positive out of a negative as much as you can. And you try to learn from it. And I didn't want -- at this time of year, win or lose, you've got to move on.

I didn't want our team being down. They knew they didn't play well. They knew that. They knew they ran into a great basketball team who we had beaten earlier in the year in their own gym.

We knew it was going to take a special effort today. I thought we were ready today. I thought we had a good shoot-around. Last night, us not playing well in the second half carried over a little bit. We had to probably use a little bit more energy than we thought we were going to after the first half of last night's game.

But I was proud of our team. The other team came back, made a run, cut it down to 20. If there's a positive. And I did. I told them in timeout let's get this thing under 20, let's see if we can do that.

Let's set some mini-goals here, and we did that. But I just wanted to talk to them about, hey, now the fun begins. And we've got 22 wins. Young basketball team. And we've won some great games this year, and now we get to go to the NCAA tournament, and let's get back on the court, let's practice and let's put this aside. We got beat by a great team. We didn't play very well. All right. Move on.

Q. Coach, again this shows what a contrast this time of year is. I mean, last night, couldn't miss. This night -- talk about that contrast and the difference in how important it is to have that A game every night when it's single elimination.

COACH FORD: That's the name of the

game this time of year, which team can bring their best game the most consecutive nights. That's the key to this time of year.

And we played pretty good basketball last night. Not great, okay basketball. Good enough to win by 14, 16, whatever it was. But tonight we ran into a very hungry basketball team, a team that -- I'm sure they talked about when we beat them last year at our place in a big game, playing for the NCAA tournament, beat them there.

Then we go to their place this year, they're a top ten team, and we won there. Last night took a little bit out of us. I don't think that's an excuse. It magnifies it when you dig yourself a hole like we did tonight. It magnifies being tired a little bit, to try to dig out of a hole like we did.

But we did, we dug out of it early cutting it back to 5 after digging ourselves a huge hole. But foul trouble killed us tonight, because with their pressure we need Obi on the court and with their rebounding ability we need Matt on the court.

Q. Travis, big picture, not this tournament or next week, big picture: Did this game show that while you've made great strides, you just need more good players? You've got good players. Your good players are about as good as their good players, they just seem to have a lot more.

COACH FORD: Yeah, we've got some work to do. No question. We've had two good years. We've got to go out and continue to build this thing. We're still building, still a ways away. We have to continue to get good players to compete at the level we need to compete at in this league. But we've been able to compete with the best in this league with what we've got. But there's just so small room for error for our basketball team because we're not overly deep.

Some guys have to step up, who got an opportunity tonight and we didn't play particularly well.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you, Coach.

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