

March 11, 2010



Baylor – 86
Texas – 67

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: Joined now by Coach Barnes from Texas. Let's go straight to questions for him.

Q. Can you sum up what happened out there?

COACH BARNES: I think it sums up our whole season in the last couple of months. We go through a four-, five-minute period where we just come unraveled. And all at once everybody thinks or someone thinks that I've got to go do it to try to turn it around as opposed to staying together.

Again, this game pretty much sums up the inconsistencies we've had all year.

Q. Speaking of that, there was a point where I guess it was 71-63, J'Covan takes a 3. Kind of a bad shot. Dunn comes down, hits a 3.

COACH BARNES: Wide open shot there. Think about it, he probably had a better shot than the one -- I know the play you're talking about. Again, at that point in time, you know, again, he's wide open, and it's hard not to take that shot.

And, again, Lace goes down and hits one and we miss it. I didn't have a problem with him taking that 3 because he got a great look at it.

Q. Rick, you guys cut it to 5 and seemed to have it going. Then they made another run. How did it get away at that point?

COACH BARNES: Well, again, I think we go through a period where, again, what we really wanted to do was obviously continue going inside putting pressure on their post players. They've got some guys that can really score the ball. And I think we missed a couple free throws there. And then we did have some shots. But, again, it goes back, when we get away -- and we had a couple turnovers there at the start -- I thought the way we started second half was not good. Again, it's a period we go through.

For whatever reason, we get down. Then we get aggressive, and we wanted to be aggressive all night long. But, again, this game pretty much sums up what our season has been the last two months.

But it's like I told the team, you know, the whole deal is every year is to get to the NCAA tournament. And we've built our program to where, you know, we are where we are right now. And people are disappointed in the season we've had up to this point, but, yet, there's a lot of teams that would like to trade places with us right now, and one of them is the defending national champion that's not in that tournament. And it's not something -- so, again, we go back. We've got a week here to try to improve on some things that we continue to talk about.

But one of our goals was to get to the NCAA tournament. We're going to be there. And I just hope that we can do what at times we've proven we can be a really good team. But we have to stay together for 40 minutes. And we haven't done that consistently in a long time.

Q. At this point in the season, what can you do, I mean, to kind of minimize some of those lapses and get this team together as you head into this NCAA tournament that you --

COACH BARNES: We tried all year. If I had put my finger on it, I would have done it a long time ago. It's right when you think you've turned a corner in some ways, guys you're really counting

on, they don't-- you know, they're not as consistent.

Again, honestly, if I could put my finger on that, I would. And we would change it. It's just consistency. And, again, those stretches, and I wish I had the answer to that. If I did, I would have tried to already put it in place.

Q. Baylor hit 53 percent of its shots tonight. Were they just good shot-makers hitting shots?

COACH BARNES: They made a couple tough shots. But they're an outstanding offensive team now. I mean, one, I think they've got a guy in Tweety Carter that's been around and played a lot of minutes. And he's going to make a lot of teams good by what he does and the things that he creates.

Obviously tonight, you know, Udoh played extremely well. We have done a better job on him than we did tonight. And LaceDarius Dunn, their two guards, I mentioned last night that Iowa State had two of the best forwards tandem in the country. You look at Baylor's guards, they played a lot of minutes together and they both were very explosive offensively, very difficult to guard. But offensively, they're a really good team. They really -- they have some guys that can make some shots and they can make some tough shots.

Q. Rick, your guys got it going when they got into transition, and they were getting up and down the floor a little bit. Seems like that's when they have the most fun playing together and when it all comes together. How do you get that?

COACH BARNES: Again, we talk about all year running, getting down the floor. Again, I can tell you this, at no point in time this year, until maybe it gets to the end of the game when it's a situational-type game, if we ever, as a coaching staff, said we're going to walk the ball up the floor. We always encourage, run, run, get down the floor and try to flow.

And we are -- we're better when we do that. But again it goes back to consistency.

CHARLIE FISS: Joined by student-athletes from Texas Damion James and Justin Mason. Let's direct some questions to them.

Q. What happened when you got that technical? You look frustrated with something when you slammed the ball down?

DAMION JAMES: Yeah. I let my emotions get the best of me. They was talking a lot of noise. And, you know, just me being a player, I just got frustrated, and coach said I can't do that. I let my team down. I gotta keep my composure. So I really disappointed myself. But I can't do it because it's not about me, it's about the team.

Q. Damion, last night you said you wanted this to be personal. What are you most disappointed about, you and Mason, after this game?

DAMION JAMES: To be honest, I think we really competed. We just gotta go through our game plan, man. We broke down a couple times where we were making a run and coach emphasized we need to get the ball inside. And, you know, it's just difficult, man, because, you know, we was right there where we need to be, and we broke down as a team. So we can't point the blame on no individual player. We just broke down it's just a new season, and we've got to keep going forward.

Q. Justin, could you just kind of sum up where this team is now mentally as you go home to await for Sunday?

JUSTIN MASON: Well, a 0-0 record. We have to take this loss, the hurt that we all have, the feelings that we have after this loss. We didn't want to go into this game and for it to turn out this way. But we get another chance. A lot of teams don't get another chance this time of the season. We gotta go home and see where we go on Sunday. And use this fuel to our fire and realize we're still a good team. And I think all of us are going to be confident.

Q. Damion James, coach said that this game just was inconsistent, it's a small picture of what's been going on all season long. Would you just describe that?

DAMION JAMES: Playing together as a team -- we gotta stay together as a team. Even when the other team is making a run, we gotta stay together on offense and defense on both ends of the ball. We just can't break down.

It's tough, man, because like I said, I really thought we competed. And at the beginning of the second half, you know, they was talking and I let that get the best of me. And I broke down. I can't

do that. When they did that, they made their run. And we tried to come back, but you can't let five minutes get away from you like that, because it could be a one possession game.

That's all you need is that one possession and we let that five minutes go, and we could never get it back.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you. Questions for coach.

Q. Rick, do you think that you face a psychological task here in the next few days with these guys?

COACH BARNES: You know, Mike, I feel like we faced that all year in some way, some shape or form, whether it's with individual guys or as a team.

I mean, it goes back -- we've just been so inconsistent. And not just one guy. I think every guy has. Like last night, I thought we came in here and beat a team that's been playing really, really good.

And to be quite frank, I'm baffled that we could go and do what we did today through a five-minute period. I thought we had taken some steps forward, which we seemed to do. Then we'll take a step backwards.

And like the question earlier, if I knew how to fix it, I would. And I mean, I know what it is, it's inconsistency. It's from game to game wondering who is going to do their job, night in, night out. And it's not so much sometimes effort-wise, it's mentally.

It's like Damion James said, it's sticking with our game plan and executing it. And it takes all five guys to do that. And if one guy breaks down, whether it's on the offensive or defensive end, it gets away from you. But, yeah, I mean, again I just -- and what's really unbelievable as a group this year, we haven't had very many bad practices now. We've had situations where some guys aren't as good as they need to be every day. But as a group, you know, overall, I mean it hasn't been a team that hasn't practiced well, we just haven't gotten to carry over mentally where we need to stay with it. I don't know if it's psychological.

I don't know if it's continuing to grow as a team. You know, some of the younger guys, I mean, we know Gary has been terrific, for whatever reason tonight he had a tough night. He had a really tough night.

And right from the get-go. I can't tell you that -- there's times when other guys turn the

corner and then they're not there. Again, it's inconsistency. And I think it's more mental than it is physical, I really do. So whether you put it psychological, I don't know, we'll go back and see if we can -- again, first of all, and I really believe this, I hope they get really excited about the fact that we're going to be part of what every team that starts the season wants to be a part of.

And I've said before, you do not take that for granted. And so we're going to be 12 years in a row now, we've been a part of what I think is the best sporting event in the country. And I hope we can, again, do something with it. I've had teams in the past that I've coached that have been just where we are mentally. And believe it or not, they've been able to go and get it turned around and had a team that, I'm telling you, exact same situation, we end up going to the Sweet 16, and ended up losing to a team in triple overtime that went to the Final Four. When we left the ACC tournament that year, I was as bewildered as I am right now.

And so how we flipped it, to be quite honest with you, they flipped it. And hopefully we can or they can do it right now, because if I could flip it, I would have flipped it two months ago.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you, coach.

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