

March 12, 2010



Nebraska – 63
Kansas State – 46

An Interview with:

**DEB PATTERSON
BRITTANY CHAMBERS
ASHLEY SWEAT**

THE MODERATOR: We have Coach Deb Patterson and they are two students athletes, Brittany Chambers and Ashley Sweat. Coach, your thoughts?

COACH PATTERSON: Well, I liked the first half. Obviously, in the second half we just didn't establish any fire power on the offensive end of the floor. You know what? The magnitude of any make by Nebraska in the second half is just really intensified when we're not making conversions on the offensive end.

So I think the second half was just a bit about our lack of effectiveness and our scoring presence on the offensive end in the second half. Obviously, Nebraska shot a great percentage over time but it seemed like any basket they made was just so huge, because we were stringing together four and five possessions without a make.

So we struggled with that all season long, it's a game in which I thought that separated us as much as anything in this contest, the board work was fairly even when we're done. The turnover numbers again got to us. I think they gained some extra possessions, you know, you hope you finish a game with 15 turn overs, and we had 12 at half and 23 in the end.

So the 13 turnovers kinda handcuff you relative to your offense in the second half as well so credit Nebraska's defensive abilities, and our lack of conversion on the offensive end. I think that's what primarily changed the game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for our student athletes?

Q. Ashley, y'all did a good job on Kelsey in the first half, 8 points, and obviously she took over in the second half. Can you talk about the difference?

ASHLEY SWEAT: Kelsey Griffin is a great player, we all know that. I think in the first half we did a great job of team defending her which is where we've been strong this year, when we've played good defensive games we've had good team defense and we defended their 3's so well in the first half and I think that was a difference as well.

Great players are going to have halves like that, but we've got to convert on our end, too. Defense was an issue and our offense as well. Like Coach P said stringing together possessions where we didn't get anything out of them we can't have possessions like that if we want to have success in games.

Q. Brittany, talk about just -- it seemed like in the first half you guys were able to get in and make buckets, particularly from outside a little bit and then in the second half it went away. Talk about the difference in the offense between the two halves.

BRITTANY CHAMBERS: I think in the second half when things weren't falling early we kinda got into panic mode and we tried to get things right away and myself and other people made dumb decisions ask we weren't staying within the offense as much and I felt like we lost our heads and got out of the offense and that killed us in the long stretch.

Q. I wanted to follow up on what Brittany said there. We have seen throughout this tournament with a lot of games and a lot of teams the offense struggling, the shooting struggling. Do you think there's -- you mentioned pressure, is that part of what's going on? Is there just something about the

setting that causes shots to be problematic? Is there great defense being played? What's going on with that?

BRITTANY CHAMBERS: I think it's a combination. Obviously, there are amazing teams here and on top of that there is a pressure because everybody wants it so bad. For us we really needed some more wins and it's kinda like a one and done, so the pressure is on everyone because everyone does want it that bad.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to let y'all go back to the locker room. Congratulations and good luck to you.

Q. Coach, can you talk about Kari how is she?

COACH PATTERSON: Hopefully we will get an x-ray, but I think it was sort of a knee into a deep quad hit and it might be on a tendon there. But it really was kinda spasm and I think a lot of pain for her at that point of impact, it wasn't a cramp, it wasn't bone on bone but it was just right above that kneecap.

Obviously, Kari is an unbelievably tough kid. She look like America's sweetheart, but she is unbelievably tough physically, so it's a very significant -- when she comes off the floor it's significant. In my four years I've seen her go through a lot of stuff at practice and in games, and that's one of the few times I've seen her have to leave the floor in tears. I think she'll be okay. But I think during the course of the competition it absolutely limited her ability to feel like she could move without a great deal of pain.

Q. You've gone against a Texas team that's gone to the Final Four, Oklahoma that's gone to the Final Four and a Baylor team and won it all, can you gauge how good this Nebraska team is? Is this a team that has Final Four potential?

COACH PATTERSON: I think the one thing that stands out to me at this point against Nebraska is just their resilience over the forty minutes and the step-up play in particular of Kelsey Griffin. I think they're an unbelievably solid basketball team with great balance, but they're not nearly as athletically explosive as those prior "Big 12 Final Four" teams. When I think about when Purdue went to the Final Four, they weren't as athletic as the Purdue team that got there, they might be as you alluded to earlier in the season a little bit like the Minnesota team that got to the Final Four. And I think Minnesota had an

opportunity to advance because they had just the right match-ups and they hosted early in the tournament. So I'm excited about the prospect of Nebraska having an opportunity here in the Kansas City area. I think their senior leadership is tremendous, their chemistry is good, and I like this Nebraska basketball team, but I don't think winning by any stretch of the imagination is easy for this team.

It's interesting because they're 30-0, you know, so that just speaks to those other elements of chemistry and just the phenomenal leader and the balance. I think they're poised to make a great run if they get the appropriate match-ups.

Q. Coach, to come down here and to have Ashley struggle the way she did at the offensive end of the floor, is that at the top of the list in terms of difficult things to overcome?

COACH PATTERSON: Well, it certainly, you know, presented a great challenge to us as a basketball team to overcome on the offensive end. You know, we have not established over the course of this season, we were not able to establish that we were one of the leagues best or most potent offensive teams.

So when we were successful, by and large we found that we were seeing Ashley at 24 to 31 points, you know, and that's a heavy load for any one player to carry. So we had an additional challenge, I think, in that vein, as we competed through this tournament. We addressed it and answered it, I think, well yesterday.

I would like to think we could have been better at that today if we had taken care of the ball, you know? That was a struggle for us. Those turnovers that lead to extra possessions for a team like Nebraska really just, man, they just crush you.

So even when we weren't great offensively, I think if we took care of the ball we had a shot to be 7, 8-point differential against the best teams in our league. So, yes, it added an extra challenge, we didn't answer that challenge today, and by and large I think that was our greatest struggle this year.

Kansas State over the next two or three years needs to find quality offensive production, I think, to compete well because I like us defensively, and I like the toughness and how hard we play. I felt like our young players probably got overwhelmed emotionally for segments of the second half and maybe we didn't play with the

same spark that we're capable of defensively at times but 63 points to Nebraska I could live with. The turnovers, I think, made it a tough game for us.

Q. Coach, was depth a problem today considering your short bench and is that something your staff looks at into next year?

COACH PATTERSON: Oh, yeah, depth really all season long has been an issue from the moment -- as we went into the season we were going in Kelsey Hill looking at her being our point guard and we lost her to the ACL, and Alina didn't have a lot of minutes, but I thought she could come in and give us quality minutes and production in one way or another and sort of the tipping point was losing Shalin because late in the season we had begun to use Shalin as a 3 and a 4.

So when we needed someone to come in and bring that versatility, shooting a 3, posting up and defending the post we had her playing the 4 spot when we had Ashley on the bench. Obviously, depth was a really big factor today especially once Kari got a little nicked up, and at that point I think the game had run away from us a bit, but very big and certainly you never like to think in terms of three catastrophic injuries, but it happens, and it did. Even with that to get to the second round of this tournament, I was really proud of our basketball team.

We've signed for four, we lose two and as we look ahead on the positive side, I think we're involved with some really tremendous prospects. At the same time our medical red shirts will change everything for us as we move forward. So everything has changed a lot over the course of this year with these injuries.

Q. One more comment about Kelsey, you mentioned her as a step-up player. Is there anything in her game in particular that has impressed you this season maybe compared to others?

COACH PATTERSON: I've always been just a huge fan of hers, even prior to the mono and all that other stuff. The thing that just -- I love about her is, you know, she has an unbelievable feel for the game, just an intrinsic understanding, an intrinsic fight, toughness, leadership presence out there. I've always said to my team anyway that she reminds me of Shaylee Lenning in the post, you know, and I've said that I don't know that I'll ever coach a player like that again.

And I don't know about Coach Connie Yori, but players like Kelsey Griffin are just special,

are just good, you know, she has always been strong, she can hit the 15-footer two years ago. She can hit it now. She's got a great drive, but it's the maturity that she competes with the and the confidence and she's made the game easier for everyone around her. And it's almost like she's, you know, usually point guards do that, it's rare when you see a post player able to do that consistently and she does that. I just really love her game.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much, we appreciate it. Good luck.

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