

March 12, 2010



Kansas State – 82
Baylor – 75

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: Coach, congratulations on your victory tonight, Coach Frank Martin and student-athletes Jacob Pullen and Denis Clemente.

COACH MARTIN: Two great teams. They're good. Both times we've played, it's been like today's game, down the last 20 seconds and just real proud of our kids. Baylor, a lot of credit to them. Tweety Carter is as tough as a kid that I've ever had to coach against. And their team has grown so much. They're real good. They have components to make a serious run, I feel. I'm proud of the team. I'm proud of the kids sitting next to me, the way they've continued to lead our basketball team. They coach me now; I don't coach them. They tell me what to do and they tell me to shut up sometimes, which is the best thing that's ever happened. Real proud of our guys.

CHARLIE FISS: Questions.

Q. Last night Coach Martin mentioned that at this point at tournament time that you just want to be one better than opponent. You want to survive, keep playing. What did you feel like that you guys did right the last five minutes that allowed you to go from Baylor being 1 point better than you to finish win by 7?

JACOB PULLEN: I think we got stops. We made them shoot tough shots, which they shot

all night. They made some, they missed some. I think Dominique did a great job of just helping us rebound. He really fought down there tonight and I was just -- I was impressed by Dom. He had a will tonight, and he just decided that he wanted to get every rebound that came off the rim, and every time he got the ball inside the free throw line he was going to score it. That was really the difference in his game.

Q. Jake talk about getting another crack at Kansas, what it means to you in a Big 12 championship game?

JACOB PULLEN: We wanted to win the regular season Big 12, and we felt like we lost it at Kansas. We just want a chance to get a ring. Denis never got a ring, I never got a ring, I don't think Frank got one. I want to get one while we're here. That's our goal right now. We have the opportunity in front of us. That's our opportunity tomorrow.

Q. Both you guys, early in the game, Denis, you carried things and Jacob got hot there, starting the second half Dominique dominated. Jacob, was it a little bit of a tag team relay race where it's one guy did something and the other guy took over?

JACOB PULLEN: As a team, I think we're playing great off of each other. We really are unselfish team. Denis sees me make a shot. He tells you regardless if it's five or ten people guarding, he tells me shoot it, shoot it. I think as a team we do a great job trying to find the person who has the hot hand and try to ride them. Today we took turns. Denis made some shots. Frank called some plays for him. Dom made some shots inside the free throw line and got aggressive going to the paint. We called some sets for him. I made a few in the row. Denis and Frank called some sets and got me the ball again. As a team, we did do a great job sharing the ball, I think.

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Q. Jake, just talk about your game tonight. What was going well? You hit half your 3-pointers, five of ten. Talk a little bit about what was going right for you.

JACOB PULLEN: You know, last time we played them, they're a zone team, man. I just tried to be ready to shoot, Frank, told me since the day I got on campus if you're going to shoot the ball, you better be ready, step into it. I made one, Denis kept calling the play so I could get in that same spot. Once you get in a rhythm, it's really just muscle mass and repetition. So I just -- I kept letting it go and it started to fall for me.

Q. Jake, you've seen LaceDarius Dunn in two different forms. What was he doing today that he didn't do in Waco?

JACOB PULLEN: He made shots. We contested them. He has a Sam Young type pump fake. Our coaches screamed at us all the game, but when you're guarding a play like that with a quick release, and when he shows you the ball you have tendency just to leave your feet. He made some tough ones. He made some over our hands, splitting the ball screen. So I thought we made him shoot tough shots, but when a good shooter sees the ball go through the net he gets a rhythm. He had a chance to get a rhythm tonight.

Q. Denis, when was the last time you told Coach Martin to shut up?

DENIS CLEMENTE: That's a good question. I don't know.

Coach Martin: The last timeout in the game there.

DENIS CLEMENTE: I'm not going to respond you, you have to understand.

COACH MARTIN: He did. That's the God's honest truth there.

CHARLIE FISS: Questions for the coach.

Q. Just your thoughts on getting to the Big 12 tournament game, playing for it something you guys worked for and also playing Kansas?

COACH MARTIN: It's what you practice for. That's when we're doing all our lifting and conditioning and all that, everyday in the summer and our guys committed to all being there the whole summer. Then they continue that into the preseason. That's what you practice for.

You practice to play in that game when it comes to your conference championship. It's what it's all about. I'm just proud of our kids. I'm happy

for K-State, all the great coaches and players that have reached out to us, that have embraced our team, that are starting to take pride in K-State basketball again.

And I'm happy for our kids, because they're the ones. These are the guys that make the sacrifices, that listen to what we're trying to say and then believe in everybody and go out and do their jobs. I'm just real happy for the kids. They've earned the right to play for the championship. Now, we've got to go deal with the best team in the country who we've been nose to nose twice before. So it's a great opportunity. KU is great.

I've got to think that it's going to be the best environment of any conference championship game in the country. I just hope we play well, because if not, it might be a long day against those guys.

Q. Dom always plays a lot with a lot of energy, but can you talk about the lift early on, especially when you guys were struggling a little offensively?

COACH MARTIN: You talking about Dominique? He had a bad last week of a season. I don't know why. He's had a great year for us. And at Kansas he didn't play well. Against Iowa State he didn't play well. But he's a great kid. And that play he made, God, I think it was a 2-point game at the time, where he comes out of nowhere and chases an offensive rebound down. And that's something that we instilled into our guys because we stopped doing it, which is going to that offensive glass. He chased that ball from the weak side, to the weak side, from the weak side, to the strong side corner. Then he made the pitch to Denis. Then he makes the extra pass to Jake for that 3 that kind of made it a two-possession game. That's a big-time play. That's a guy that's making a play that has an unbelievable desire to win.

And he was great. At halftime -- we told them going into the game -- we tried to do some things against their zone to get him to be a facilitator and a scorer. And he tried. First half he just missed some shots. But he in the second half he came out and he was aggressive and he started the half with that dunk and it kind of, Dom's a confident guy. That dunk to start the second half just made him feel good and obviously he played his tail off the rest of the game.

Q. Frank, could you talk about the job

that Denis did on Tweety. Everything starts with him on Baylor's offense. You force him to six turnovers and hold him to eight points.

COACH MARTIN: Denis has been great for us. He wants to win. He might have been the worst offender in the history of basketball when he arrived on campus. And his desire to be a good player, his desire to make our team win has made him grow as a defensive player. Tweety Carter is tough as nails. I'm just telling you, there ain't too many better than him out there.

Denis was phenomenal. Tweety got some going right. Runners, floaters on us. But that's what good players do. They're going to make some plays. But for the most part I thought we were rock solid on our defensive assignments there with Tweety. Starts with point guard. When your point guard plays good defense then you've got a chance behind them.

Q. You mentioned that hustle play by Dominique and the 3 that Jacob hit. Baylor comes really close to deflecting the pass that went out there. Just the fact that these kind of games come down to that kind of play, and the fact that the four teams that play here are in the top 12 of the RPI, and I guess you guys are going to be happy to get away from the Big 12 and go wreak some havoc on the NCAA. Just the fact that the four teams playing here were really good.

COACH MARTIN: I'm glad you asked that, because I hope, when you play, I think we've played the top five schedule in the country, and you're in the number one RPI league, and you're the second best team in that league. I think you deserve a little more credit than when the so-called talking heads are trying to give our kids. We're playing for our conference championship. There are a lot of teams that are supposedly better than us that have been penciled in as 1 and 2 seeds in the NCAA tournament. And when you schedule the way we try to schedule this year and you challenge your kids and they answer the bell and then you're the second best team in your league and you line up and play for your conference championship and the number one RPI league in the country, I hope our kids get rewarded. But it's not about that. You've got to win games, and we lost some games here earlier in the year that we should have won, but that's what makes me the proudest of our kids, is what they have done. See, they just set a school record for wins in a season.

With all the incredible tradition that Kansas State basketball has, they just set a record for wins in the season. They set a record for most conference wins in the season in the Big 12. These kids, what they've done, is off the charts.

And I'm just extremely proud of them. I just hope we've got some gas left in the tank here, because by the time they're done with media responsibilities and we get back to the hotel, it's probably going to be 1:00 in the morning. Kansas has been in bed since 6:00. I hope we've got some juice left in the tank to try and compete with the best in the country tomorrow.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you, coach.

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