

March 13, 2010



Kansas - 72
Kansas State - 64

An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: We offer our congratulations to Bill Self, the Kansas Jayhawks, and our two student-athletes, Tyrel Reed and Marcus Morris.

COACH SELF: I thought it was a really good championship game. There won't be a better atmosphere in America for a final in conference tournament. Big 12 obviously did a great job putting on the tournament. Kansas City was a great host and the Sprint Center is awesome. You had two of the best teams in the country playing today. And we're fortunate to win, but feel really good about how hard we competed against a really outstanding K-State team.

CHARLIE FISS: Questions for our two student-athletes. Marcus Morris and Tyrel Reed.

Q. You've had three different leading scorers in three different games against K-State. How difficult does it make it to prepare for?

MARCUS MORRIS:
It makes it very difficult. Sherron is our leader. Some games he's going to be off. We still have Cole and we have X and still have a lot of guys coming off the bench, and Kieff has been playing well and Brady

has been playing well, and I've been in a little slump with foul trouble. Guys keep backing me up. And just having different leading scorers just show how deep we are.

Q. Tyrel, if you would, could you talk about your foul shooting tonight? You were 7 of 9 and the team was 24 of 31. Offensively, what do you feel like you guys did well that allowed you to get to the line and make those shots?

TYREL REED: I thought we were aggressive tonight. Different guys stepped up and took the ball to the basket and getting fouled, getting big rebounds. And I was just proud of our guys knocking them down in tough situations and just proud of them.

Q. Can you guys talk about how you feel about the team headed into the NCAA tournament?

MARCUS MORRIS: We feel great, you know what I mean. Today we're going to celebrate and tomorrow we have the selection show. But Monday and Tuesday is back to work. We can't dwell on wins, and it's just time to get back to work after today.

TYREL REED: Yeah, I'm just proud of our guys. I thought everyone came out and competed hard today. They were really focused, and I think we have some momentum going now going into the NCAA tournament. But we'll celebrate tonight and starting tomorrow we'll start focusing for our first-round opponent.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you, guys. Questions for coach.

Q. K-State leads the nation in free throw attempts. Only 14 tonight. What did you guys do to keep them away from the free throw line?

COACH SELF: We played a lot of triangle and 2. We didn't give them much in transition. They put so much pressure on you when they come with the full head of steam. And a lot of their free throws are out of transition, where they force help or attack the rim.

And we did a good job of kind of neutralizing that. Then we played triangle and 2 which created long possessions and a lot of jump shots. But still they whipped us on the offensive glass, which is that's what they do.

But I thought we competed hard, and even though, you know, we didn't foul that much. We still had -- Cole fouled out and we still put them in situations where maybe they could get to the line. The big key was the first half. We shot ten and they didn't shoot any. So there's 8 points right there that because we were 8 for 10, if I'm not mistaken. There's eight points right there. That was really a bonus for us. And we, you know, they're so aggressive on the perimeter, we did a good job driving pressure. And we did a good job of sealing and throwing it in for the most part.

Q. For a 40-minute game, was that one of your better defensive performances this year, you think?

COACH SELF: I think so. I don't know exactly. Because I'm kind of stubborn in that regard, because we didn't play man the whole time.

You know, if you talk about not fouling playing man and doing the same things, I probably feel more proud. But we did what we were supposed to do. We played to the scouting report very well. And for quick turnaround in a 45-minute scout, that's all we did, just to talk about it. I thought our guys responded to that very well.

But we did compete hard. There's no question about that. Both teams competed hard. A lot of 50/50 balls that went their way. A lot went our way. I thought it was a hard-fought game. Wasn't much trash talking at all. Two teams respecting each other. And fortunately we were able to pull out a victory.

But nothing but respect for the K-State program. And to add, beating the Top 5, Top 6 team in the country three times, I think, also bodes well to how we competed and played.

Q. Could you comment, please, on the guard play that we saw tonight with the seniors on both teams, Sherron and Denis, seemed like

a pretty special night for those two guys at the top of their game as seniors?

COACH SELF: Clemente -- Denis is a good player. He's so fast. And he played well. He had 17 and 4 and only one turnover. And Sherron didn't get a lot of shots up but that wasn't his deal tonight. He had 12 and 7 and only one turnover. But Sherron's had a really good tournament. He played really well.

And hopefully -- he bumped his knee. Hopefully that's not an issue, but he's hopefully on an uptick. But, really, he played well. But you could talk about Tyshawn, how he played, didn't turn it over, handled pressure. You could talk about -- Brady was a big plus for us.

And then Tyrel was great for us. I mean, that's probably the best game he's had since he's been at Kansas. So when you look at our guard play, I think you could look at everybody and say that we played pretty well handling the pressure.

Q. Quick question, Xavier tonight didn't shoot incredibly well tonight. Do you see him being an X factor for this team in terms of where he can go in the tournament?

COACH SELF: No, not really, because he didn't need to shoot well tonight. I mean, that's kind of -- we always want him to make shots, trust me. And he's as important as anybody making shots for us, because he's the guy that you can run bad offense and come away with nine points in three possessions. And every team needs a guy like that.

But the way that they play, they don't really let you run your stuff. And basically you just kind of have to go make some plays. So he didn't make shots tonight, but I'm not sure he got three good looks.

Because we were putting it down and driving it. So that doesn't concern me at all. I thought he played pretty well. He just didn't score the ball. He was 1 for 5 the first half. Took two shots in the first possession out the second half, and then after that he really didn't look to shoot the basketball, but he really didn't have opportunities to because of the way we were playing. But I still thought he played well.

Q. It's always special to win a title, but is there anything extra doing it against your rival?

COACH SELF: Yeah, probably. I mean,

you know, the K-State game in Manhattan we could have gone either way, obviously a one possession game. The game at our place was a tie game with about 17 left. So to me we haven't really shown the way that I thought we were capable of playing, and they probably felt the same way.

And this is one of those games where, I'm sure Frank told his team the same thing, hey, this game ain't going to affect seeding much or anything like that. Just go compete and play for pride and have fun. That's what we told our guys.

And I thought our guys just competed so hard. But it would feel good winning regardless of who you're playing. But having a chance to beat in what our estimation one of the best teams in the country in a great atmosphere against your state rival in Kansas City, I think, makes it a little bit more special than if we had been playing somebody else.

Q. As far as Kansas State is concerned, you said it spoke to what you guys had done beating them three times but the fact how they competed against you guys three times. How tough a team are they going to be in the tournament?

COACH SELF: They're good. I don't know what seed they'll get. They're not going to get worse than a 2. They're good. And whenever you have guard play like they have -- and we were fortunate Jacob didn't make shots tonight, but whenever you have guard play like they have they can beat anybody at any time. Jacob didn't make shots but how about Samuels. We dared him to shoot it a few times and he made us pay. They can score from different spots. They're always going to guard you.

I certainly -- I think their team could seriously make a Final Four run.

Q. Bill, you've talked about how physical K-State is. In fact, you've said they're the most physical team in the Big 12. Are there any teams in any of the major conferences that you might see if you go deep into the tournament that even come close to the physicality?

COACH SELF: Oh, yeah, there will be somebody. But I don't study the other conferences and I don't know -- I'm not going to name any schools off the top of my head. But I don't know if we'll play anybody that pursues the ball like K-State in the tournament. And we haven't been a

great rebounding team in stretches this year. Today we were much better. But still, yet, our first shot defense was great. They still got 18 offensive rebounds. That's something that -- that is one of their offensive weapons.

We may use dribble penetration or throw the ball to the post or run a play, one of their best offensive weapons is pursuing the ball when it's coming off the rim. But they're physical, and depending on how officials call it in the tournament, but the thing about it is when you are physical and have depth inside, officials can't call them all. That's one great thing about having four or five big guys, you can run those guys in and force the other team to play your style. And they do a great job of that.

Q. You mentioned the rebounding. There's been lapses at times this year. Are there other areas where maybe these lapses, I guess they kind of concern you or things to look out for going into the tournament?

COACH SELF: We have a lot of things. We haven't defended man to man like we can.

There's a certain style of team that has a perimeter 4 man that screws up our ball screen defense, at least we've got to really focus in on that this week.

But there's a lot of things that we can improve. We made two 3s today. I'm not sure that we're going to have a lot of success moving forward if we don't stretch the defense from beyond the arc.

But we just need to keep doing what we're doing and just continue to get a little bit better and stay away from distractions and have fun and be confident. If we do those things, I'm confident that we'll play well.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you, Coach.
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