

March 9, 2011



Missouri – 88
Texas Tech – 84

An Interview With:

**MISSOURI
COACH MIKE ANDERSON
MARCUS DENMON
JUSTIN SAFFORD
KIM ENGLISH**

THE MODERATOR: Okay. We're now joined by the Missouri Tigers. Coach Mike Anderson and student-athletes Marcus Denmon, Justin Safford, and Kim English. Coach, opening comments.

COACH ANDERSON: First, sorry for the delay. I gotta get these guys to bed right now. But I'll tell you what, I want to first compliment Pat Knight. What a class guy, and you can tell he's a Knight because if he's going to go out, he's going to go out in style. Wore a suit for the first time, imagine that.

But, again, he's class all the way. He's done it the right way. And I'm proud to be one of his friends. But he'll be okay.

But you gotta give -- take your hats off to his kids. I thought they fought, scratched and clawed. And I'm proud of our guys. We kind of just hung in there, hung in there, and found a way to win.

And that's what you want in tournament play. The first game is always the toughest game. And we have the last game here in this building. But I was proud of these guys for finding a way to finish up.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Marcus, if you would, could you just take me through the foul shots you shot with

about a second left. Just trying to make at least one? Hoping to make both of them?

MARCUS DENMON: Yeah, of course I was hoping to make both, but I was just trying to make it a two-possession game because this time of the year you never know what can happen, even with one second left.

So we just tried to play it out until it says 00 on the clock.

Q. Justin and Kim, obviously you guys had pretty good games. Can you kind of tell us what's that like, and then how did things get so close there at the end?

KIM ENGLISH: We just -- we tried to execute as a team. We came out. We did. We knew that these Texas Tech guys had a lot of seniors and they were playing for their coach, so to speak, so we knew we definitely had to play a pretty good game to beat 'em.

You gotta understand that all records get thrown out the window in March. Everyone is 0-0, and just try to help our team.

Q. (Question off microphone)?

KIM ENGLISH: I don't ever second-guess myself too much. I'm always confident. Next shot is always going to go in. So I expected to have this game.

Q. Marcus, Coach Anderson had alluded to how Texas Tech played and gave them credit. From your team perspective, what were your concerns about Texas Tech because their coach got fired, in terms of them playing hard and trying to play for him, your thoughts, what was the team's attitude coming into this game with the other conditions going on with Texas Tech?

MARCUS DENMON: We knew they were going to be a hungry ball club coming in, the coach was leaving, and they probably wanted to send him out in style. But we came into the game with

the same mindset and focus we come into all our games with.

And I know they were playing for a lot, but we were, too.

Q. Justin, we're not going to let you out of here that easy. Go ahead and talk about your game tonight.

JUSTIN SAFFORD: Just felt like I kind of got into a little bit of a rhythm. That was about it. Short and sweet.

COACH ANDERSON: In other words, he said the coach let him play.

Q. Kim, are you looking like you guys have to make a deep run into this tournament going into the NCAA Tournament?

KIM ENGLISH: No, we don't worry about that. Just next game, next play. That's out of our control. You accept the things you cannot change, change the things you can, and the wisdom to know the difference. So we're just worried about Texas A&M.

Q. Kim, can you talk a little bit about Texas A&M coming up for tomorrow?

KIM ENGLISH: Good team. Well-coached. They stick to their system. They have some veteran guards, strong bigs. They beat us the last two years, and more importantly this year in College Station. And we just have to bring our hardhats tomorrow because it's going to be a battle inside.

They take pride and they play hard-nosed basketball. So we need big games out of Justin, Laurence, Ricardo, and Steve again. And we're excited to just be playing on.

Q. Marcus and Kim, can you just talk about Justin getting the most minutes of any forward today and scoring those 10 points?

MARCUS DENMON: Justin's our senior out there, and we got a couple of guys in foul trouble early, and I felt that he came in and he was a difference in the first half.

He had a lot of energy. He was in there battling, and it was a key for us to get Justin playing well, and I'm glad to see it.

KIM ENGLISH: I was standing up halfway through most of the shots. I just knew they were in a rhythm. Shoot over so many guys, he's so big. But it was good to see the ball go through the hole for him because that opens up so much more for

our offense having a big that can step out and create mismatches.

So it was huge in the first half, as Marcus alluded to.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. Four players in double figures tonight. Going into the game, was it a message from you to share the ball?

COACH ANDERSON: We talked about coming out and playing like we were earlier in the year. We came over the other day, and somewhere in my mind I just hadn't seen the up tempo, the guys playing as free, and I thought tonight you saw more of an attacking team defensively.

Although Texas Tech did a good job of attacking, but I thought the wear and tear was evident in this ballgame. With five minutes to go, we're in position to really get away with this game, and I thought we started playing not to lose.

But if you look at what took place defensively, I thought we did a pretty good job. The only thing that hurt us was them getting to the free-throw line. I thought that's what kept them in the game tonight. But it was good to see the balance, the sharing of the basketball and guys coming off the bench and giving us big play.

Our forwards got in foul trouble, so we leaned on the experienced guys. And coming into this game I think that's what you gotta do when you get to this part of the season, especially in tournament play.

The guys that it's new to, they have to see it through the older guys' eyes so it makes sense. I thought it really came into play tonight because Justin, a guy who has been here three, four years, this is his fourth year, playing in this particular tournament, so he comes out and really plays well for us.

I thought Mike Dixon played really well going down the stretch, early in that game, kept us going with his defensive intensity, and of course Marcus, he's Mr. Consistency, stepping up and making big plays for us defensively, deflection, and it was good to see Kim.

The more guys we have stepping up and doing things, I think the more dangerous a team we are, because we've got more options. And that's not even saying with Laurence Bowers and Ricardo Ratliffe, two of your top scorers that got in

foul trouble.

It's good we can go to our bench and those guys can come in and give us some key moments. And that's the tale in tournament play. You're going to have some unsung heros, and I'm looking forward to some more unsung heros as well as guys starting out and getting a lot of minutes tomorrow.

Q. You had talked about how the first game is the most important game. Now as you continue in this tournament, how relaxed do you want your guys to be tomorrow night? In a comfort zone?

COACH ANDERSON: I'm not going to let them relax too much. The reason why, because I thought even in this game here we didn't finish the game the way this team is capable of finishing.

We had probably more turnovers right there at the end than we did in the whole second half. And when you're an attacking team, you play to win. You play to win throughout the game. And so that's another learning lesson we can learn. But I think we're going to have to -- the guys alluded to -- bring our hardhats tomorrow because A&M is a physical basketball team. We've got to get in there and mix and naturally we've got to come up with loose balls. Our five guys gotta rebound and we want to create tempo.

I think they'll push it. They prefer probably more half court. So it's going to be an interesting game. It's the rubber match of this past year. We played them earlier, and I hate to say it, they stole one on their home floor. But they did. They got the W at their place, overtime game. But it will be a team that they're playing well. They're playing real well. They won a lot of close games. We have our work cut out for us.

Q. You said in the last few minutes you thought your team played not to lose a little bit. Was that in any way, do you think, a result of losing some games at the end of the year, or what do you think it was?

COACH ANDERSON: It could be. I just thought that we were tentative. I thought we didn't continue in attack mode. But I thought even once we put Phil -- inserted Phil out there, I thought he came with an attack mindset and got fouled and got to the free-throw line and made some big free throws for us.

But it's something -- our older guys -- they've got to show the ownership in that. But we'll get better with that.

Q. Can you talk about Marcus and Mike and the game they had in front of a hometown crowd and how maybe they fed off that and what that meant to them?

COACH ANDERSON: I was real proud of them because I think they started even on the defensive end of the floor. They did a tremendous job defensively, and offensively Mike was really in attack mode. Early on he really had us going the right direction. Got to the free-throw line and made his free throws. And Marcus, once he got in rhythm, some good things started taking place. And it opened up for other guys. It was good to see Justin get out there and really have some success.

So it's amazing when you get guys that are playing well. It can get contagious because here's Kim, and that's what we're looking for. We're looking for other guys to really start stepping up.

But for those guys to play well, and hopefully they'll continue to play well. I mean, you've got to remember we're in Missouri. We are in Missouri. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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