

March 10, 2011



Kansas – 63
Oklahoma State – 62

An Interview With:

**OKLAHOMA STATE
COACH TRAVIS FORD
KEITON PAGE
JEAN-PAUL OLUKEMI**

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with the Cowboys from Oklahoma State, Travis Ford and the student-athletes Keiton Page and Jean-Paul Olukemi. Coach, an opening comment.

COACH FORD: This is a good basketball game. They played hard, competed. They made a few more plays down the stretch. Good basketball game. Came up a few plays short.

But our guys competed. And after a tough game yesterday I was proud of them coming back and playing as hard as they did. The Morris, 3 from 35 feet was the biggest shot of the game. That was huge. That was bigger than the one we missed at the end. That was a big play.

But give them credit. Our kids played hard. But we expected it. We expected to compete.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Jean-Paul, can you talk about the last play and what was supposed to happen, and then how it sort of break down and what did happen?

JÉAN-PAUL OLUKEMI: Coach called a weave play and it was supposed to end up with a high flat screen, and that's not what happened.

Q. Keiton, you were talking about how that play worked for you earlier in the game. What did KU do defensively on the last play?

KEITON PAGE: You're exactly right. We had ran that a couple times previous earlier in the game, and we got some penetration and got fouled, I think, and got a bucket off the weave play. They did what they're supposed to do at the end of the game. You're supposed to buckle up and play defense. They got in there, got a hand in there, forced a deflection and forced us into a bad shot.

Q. Keiton, you were able to get inside and get some points against these guys. What was the difference in your team's intensity and play today versus what happened in Lawrence?

KEITON PAGE: Just the overall focus, after the Nebraska game we were completely focused on Kansas, and we went out there and played a complete team effort. We're doing everything, all the little things to try to come up with a win tonight, all the loose rebounds, helping everybody on rotation rebounding, rotation defensive help and those are the types of things you have to do to win a game against a team like Kansas.

Q. Jean-Paul, you and Markel got technicals, getting pretty fired up. Can you talk about, was that by design to come into a game and sort of try to stare down Kansas, or what was going on there?

JÉAN-PAUL OLUKEMI: We went down there and took a hard beating, and we knew today, you know, we just weren't going to lay down. It wasn't going to be a round 2 of that.

And I think we let our intensity go when we made big plays, and Kel made a block and me with a dunk, and I think we got a little bit carried away.

We knew how big this game could have been for us. We just wanted to let them know that it wasn't going to be any -- we're not going to lay down here.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.
Questions for Coach.

Q. Travis, can you talk about the two times that Mario Little was able to get in the heart of the zone and make those plays?

COACH FORD: Yeah, that was big. That was something we talked about the last couple of possessions in our time-outs, especially the last one where they drew up plays, let's try to stop the inside play and make them kick it out and run and challenge the shot. Once we made a few adjustments to it, I thought we did a good job.

When you've got a Kansas team that has such an inside/outside threat, it's a Catch-22 to an extent.

He made tough -- the and-one was a tough shot. It wasn't bad defense. It was a tough, tough shot. For the most part, we told you about what type of shots we wanted to try to force Kansas into.

And we did a pretty good job of that. It was like night and day compared to the first game against those guys. But those were big plays. They made a lot of big plays down the stretch.

Again, the 3 from 35 was the biggest play there was in the game.

Q. Foul trouble obviously hurt tremendously. What were your thoughts on that? It seemed like Shaw gave you some pretty good minutes early and fouled out in only nine minutes.

COACH FORD: Killed us. Especially when you talk about we found ourselves with the ball. But in the last play of the game we had a bunch of guys in there who they could switch off on. And we knew they were going to switch every screen. They had already done it a little bit before. We wanted to try to create a lot of spacing, which we didn't do.

We talked about try to get to the rim and draw help, because Kansas is a great helping team. Either score or kick it to the open man and get an open shot. Whatever happens, let's make sure we get an open shot. Here's what we want to do. We got caught fumbling the ball around.

After that, it was -- but we were a benefit of it last night. And just like Nebraska did. But disappointing.

Q. Travis, did it basically come down to this, did foul trouble hurt you more on offense than defense? Because the defense you actually kept them out pretty good.

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COACH FORD: We went to the zone when we got Matt in serious foul trouble, we had to play a lot of minutes without Matt.

And we had to play a lot of minutes with Marshall with four, and we didn't have a choice. We were losing big men left and right. We were almost running out of options.

Lucky J.P. had played a little bit of forward this year. So it was more offensively than defensively. But we were getting some good action on a play we run where we kind of spread the court and try to do some things off the dribble and get some spacing in the right places where guys know where each other's at. We had a little bit of success with it.

We just -- but it did hurt. No question it hurt us. No question. Because you get out of your element. We had four, five guys out there I don't know that have played together all year long.

And in the time-out, we were going to run a certain play or something, but I knew they were going to switch off and the odds of those guys understanding what to do at different spots wasn't good, and we had had success. So we set up some things to try to spread the court a little bit, and we talked more about spacing and what everybody needed to do at certain spots. Never got to that point. Never got to that point, even from the beginning.

Q. Travis, I don't mean to be a psychologist, but you look more distraught than usual after a defeat. Is there any explanation for that?

COACH FORD: I thought we were a good team today. I thought we were a very -- a team that didn't just show up and play good, but a good team today.

We're outmatched in a lot of areas by Kansas. And I was really, really concerned would we have anything left after yesterday. And we did. We showed some fight. But we played a good game. It wasn't that -- we forced Kansas into doing some things that we wanted them to do. It wasn't that they just played bad. We were a good basketball team today.

Today we were a good basketball team. We win this game, we're in the NCAA Tournament, if we win this game. We told people before -- but we lose by one, so we're a good basketball team today. We haven't shown that all year long. That's been the challenge of this basketball team, and it's

been the greatest challenge for me to try to get it out of these guys.

But it's disappointing to play and do the things we wanted to do. We did a lot of things we wanted to do. And it was just -- it's disappointing. And it's disappointing to get the shot at the end, too. But that happens. Gosh, I've been a part of this. That happens. There's a thousand things. You're talking about the technical. Those are two guys who are high competitors, especially Markel, and their emotions get the most of them at times. What they did wasn't flagrant or violent or anything like that. They deserved them. They deserved the technical. But it was just their emotions got the best of them.

But that also is a part of what allowed us to compete today, is that high level of intensity. I told them you've got to channel it. That's unacceptable, and you've got to channel it and use that intensity in the right way.

But we competed today. We talked about in the last 24 hours, if we did a lot of scout report on paper, on film, on dry erase boards and just try to mentally get our guys off their feet but just pound some things into their heads the last 24, get them up early this morning doing some things, they just responded.

I'm disappointed for our players. I'm very disappointed for them that they didn't get the win. As a coaching staff we have more opportunities. But these guys played hard today, and Kansas, I think, is the best team in America. I've said that earlier in the week. I think they are the best team in America, the best offensive team in America.

And for a team that has played the way we have played this year and to be able to play like that, it's disappointing not to get the win.

You can sit back and say you did this, you did that, but we're down. We're down. We expected to compete. We expected that today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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