

March 11, 2011



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Kansas State – 53

An Interview With:

**BAYLOR
COACH KIM MULKEY
ODYSSEY SIMS
DESTINY WILLIAMS**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Baylor coach Kim Mulkey and student-athletes Odyssey Sims and Destiny Williams. Opening statement, Coach.

COACH MULKEY: Hit these kids. You all know I've never opened with a remark.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Odyssey, defense is always a focus for you guys. First minute or so of the game you got a couple of turnovers, created a couple turnovers. You got a shot clock violation early on. What was working well for you defensively today?

ODYSSEY SIMS: Just our intensity. We came out, was ready to play. And we knew we had to defend them.

And just as far as the shot clock goes, we knew it was going to come down to the wire and we had to defend all 30 seconds, so that's what we went out and did.

Q. Destiny, kind of talk about the game plan going inside, you and Brittney obviously seemed to really have an advantage down low. Is that something you knew from the first game and what was the approach tonight?

DESTINY WILLIAMS: I thought Kansas State had a pretty good post plays as well. I thought we had to come out strong and open the

doors for perimeter and just get an early start like we did when we played our last game. And we did just that.

Q. Destiny, you were the recipient of a lot of nice passes where you were just shooting layups. Is the layup drill very key for you, because you get so many easy looks?

DESTINY WILLIAMS: Well, I thought the perimeter players did a great job of looking into the post players and finding us and giving us wide-open layups. I thought there were a couple of possessions that my man lost sight of me, and Odyssey saw that and they saw that and gave me easy looks. When they double-teamed or triple-teamed B.G., she always looked in, looked out, sometimes I was open and she passed it in; sometimes I wasn't and she kicked it out.

Q. Destiny, can you talk about how maybe that relationship with you and B.G. has worked, you've all done better post-to-post passing, and how much that's developed since January?

DESTINY WILLIAMS: I thought that developed a lot since January. Me and B.G. feel more comfortable on the floor with each other. I thought that B.G. could take it to the hole, jump shots, wide open. I think B.G. can pass as well and give it to me and vice versa. Me and B.G. just having a good feel for one another right now in the tournament.

Q. Odyssey, they got it to nine there in the first half and then you hit 3s on consecutive possessions. Were you feeling any kind of, okay, they're getting back in the game and we need to do something at that point?

ODYSSEY SIMS: I felt like we kind of didn't play as good of defense as we should have. They obviously had great range outside. And we didn't defend. We didn't have our hands up. When they cut it to nine, we knew that we had to defend

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and put our hands up and defend all of the floor because they're really great shooters.

Q. Odyssey, and then Destiny, if you could comment on this. Odyssey, you had a lot on your shoulders since you came into Baylor. In what ways do you think you've grown and improved the most? And, Destiny, could you comment on the way she's been able to perform as a freshman this season?

ODYSSEY SIMS: First coming in I had a lot of turnovers. My assist-to-turnover ratio wasn't good. It's still getting better still. It isn't the best, but I'm still working on it. I'm distributing the ball better than I did at the beginning of the year. My shot has gotten better just being able to run the floor from my teammates, find B.G. when she posts up in the middle of the lane, just stuff like that.

DESTINY WILLIAMS: I thought Odyssey has more intensity versus the first half of her season. She's pushing the ball more, finding open teammates, giving up the ball at the right time and then making easy shots, knocking down good shots, attacking the rim and knowing how to pass it, just making us all better.

And defensively she's given us -- she's holding down their best players, their best perimeter guards on defense. She locks down on defense and she pushes the ball to offense. I thought Odyssey comes in she doesn't play like a freshman to me. I think right now Odyssey is playing more like an upperclassman, and we need that from her.

Q. Destiny you went through a rough stretch there shooting the ball. What's the difference now? Because particularly these last few games you've really kind of come on strong.

DESTINY WILLIAMS: I just feel comfortable out there. Shooters can't ever stop shooting. So it will have to fall eventually. That's what I kept doing. I just kept shooting. Teammates kept giving me the ball to shoot, telling me to shoot, and I kept shooting and find my rhythm, and that's what I did.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. Kim, how much did you appreciate the defensive effort today?

COACH MULKEY: That team's hard to guard. Kansas State is hard to guard. You know

what they do. They don't -- they shoot it all over the floor. Just when you think you're in the range where they won't shoot it, they will shoot it. They challenge you to keep moving. They challenge you to stay in a defensive stance for the entire shot clock and you know that they're going to go all the way to the time that they have to throw up a shot, and they did make some of those with hands in their face.

To answer your question, you know what we do in Waco. You know what we spend time -- you know what every time-out is talked about. It's not talking about the offensive end of the floor. It's the defensive end of the floor. And for the Odysseys and the Destinies and the B.G.s, those kids come to your program as some of the best players in the country. But those kids have never had to guard anybody. And that's the biggest adjustment and also the most improvement is every day making them as efficient on the defensive end as they are on the offensive end.

And a lot of great players don't want to do that.

Q. Speaking sort of to that, Kim, the way you guys have been able to rebound and the way that it's spread throughout your team. They didn't have Childs today, but still you almost -- well, you more than doubled them up.

COACH MULKEY: We beat a good time without Childs. So don't let that be your article that he we beat them without Childs. The article needs to be we beat a very good basketball team with or without Childs.

But if you look at our 3 spot, which is Melissa Jones, and if you look at Destiny Williams and even Brooklyn Pope, you look at their rebounding, and don't look at Griner, that's some solid numbers right there. And those are the numbers you have to have to contend for not just a Big 12 tourney championship, but a national championship.

And I just think that the challenge to them every day in practice is get more offensive boards, get every defensive rebound you can get, and make sure you guard people. And when that game's over, you're going to win a lot of basketball games.

Q. The defense was pretty solid and only five team fouls. Do you think you've ever had a team that played an entire game against

a team like Kansas State and not fouled?

COACH MULKEY: I don't know. That is very low. And you'd have to ask our media relations person, Julie Bennett, and those guys. But you have to look at the styles of play. We're very quick.

I would think that it would be safe, without offending anybody, that we're probably quicker on the perimeter than Kansas State, and we move and get through screens probably quicker before they can be set.

And defensively if you're in the right position and you're not fouling and you're not reaching and they make shots in your face, then don't foul them. Back in the day when I played, it was never foul a jump shooter. Never foul a jump shooter. Never foul a 3-point shooter. If they make it with a hand in their face, you pat them on the rear and say nice shot.

We just played good basketball. Part of that, too, is Griner allows you to get beat sometimes off the drive and she's there to clean it up for you. But I thought our quickness and our athleticism, we didn't get sucked in or baited to watching the ball, and they reversed the ball real quick and get 3s. We really did a nice job of not allowing Chambers to just go off on you.

Q. It seems like players were a lot less willing to just throw it up there with Griner in the paint this year, a lot fewer blocks. How has Griner had to kind of adjust her defense considering they're not just throwing it up there and getting ten blocks a night?

COACH MULKEY: Well, Kansas State's style is not that anyway. You know when you play Kansas State, Iowa State, their styles of play, they're not coming into the paint a whole lot. There's not opportunities for her to get blocks.

But I can't say it enough, Brittney Griner, I don't care what style you have, I don't care what great post players you have, she makes you change your game plan because she's just so big in there and she alters shots.

We need to start keeping a stat on the number of shots and the number of people that don't want to go in there and they have a layup. I would love somebody to just follow her the next two years and say your job is to keep up with nothing but, gosh, if [Brittney] wasn't there, would they have gone in for a layup right there, if Brittney wasn't there would they have kicked it back out. She's a phenom. She's above the rim. Help me

here. If there's an adjective I haven't used, introduce me to a new one.

And she's only going to get better. You haven't even seen the best from her yet.

Q. Can you talk about the complement that Destiny gives you at the other side and how important that is with so much attention on Brittney, particularly how she's played at this tournament?

COACH MULKEY: Well, you know, Destiny wasn't eligible until after the Tennessee game. So we played Tennessee without Destiny. And we had Brooklyn Pope in there. And Brooklyn Pope was a McDonald's All-American. And Destiny is a McDonald's All-American, two totally different style of four players that are complementary to Griner. Brooklyn is probably the better passer in feeding her from high low. Brooklyn leaps out of the gym. Brooklyn does all those athletic things. Destiny is the better finesse shooter, better shooter and her rebounds will be done quietly. Brooklyn's will be done with a ah, she leaps out of the gym.

But when the game is over, one has seven rebounds, one has seven rebounds. That's when you just go keep them healthy, keep teaching them. They're sophomores. Keep getting better. They just complement each other well.

I have thought about, and may do this in the future, running a triple post offense. Boy, that would be scary to guard, have them all three in there at the same time. Because truthfully Destiny can go to the 3 and we lose Melissa Jones. So all summer, whenever that is, I may sit around and think: Might be something to that.

Q. Same thing I asked Odyssey, when they got it to nine, your thoughts -- and I know you were probably nervous the entire game, but was that the one time when you were a little bit worried that they had any kind of chance?

COACH MULKEY: No, I still felt they were in control. I thought we had subbed a lot of kids at that moment. I think the three that were in the game off the bench, I shouldn't have put them in that position, do them one at a time, get them in, get them out, and let them have some continuity with the starting group that had been on the floor for a while.

I thought our defense got us the lead. I thought our defense allowed them to cut it to nine,

and then I thought our defense allowed us to extend it like we did.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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