



**2014 Ohio Valley Conference Men's Basketball Championship
Game 5 – Semifinal - #1 Belmont 86, #4 Morehead State 63
March 7, 2014 – Municipal Auditorium (Nashville, Tenn.)**

Post-Game Quotes

Belmont head coach Rick Byrd

"I really thought the game was pretty much a toss up game going into it. I thought they played really well last night and at times this year they've played as good as anybody in our conference. They present a lot of problems for us. They've got great penetrating perimeter players and they've got big kids that rebound it great. We don't guard drivers real good sometimes and we don't rebound it great sometimes. So I really thought that their strengths were sort of looking right at our weaknesses. But I thought it was the best defensive game probably overall on the year. Late, we got driven some but late you're afraid to foul and you're not quite as aggressive as you were early. Obviously shot the ball well, shared the ball well. One of our better games. We had a good time."

On playing a lot of players

It was foul trouble more than anything else. Our starting five, when you look at sort of a plus/minus chart, is pretty standard when that five is in the game. It was really great to see Reece (Chamberlain) get two really quick ones and he's so valuable to our team. Caleb Chowbay came in and did a nice job - made a huge late three for us in one late possession. And then Nick Smith made some big plays in the second half. Holden Mobley played more minutes than he's played in a long time and he played terrific defensively and he's a tough kid. It was good because I don't think the depth is one of our strengths but tonight it was very good."

Belmont senior J.J. Mann

On Morehead State playing back-to-back nights

"Yeah, I mean they played late last night. It was a quick turnaround and they're very active and want to get up in you. You could kind of tell they were definitely a little tired and a little sluggish. It was tough with the quick turnaround."

On a slow start offensively

"They just came out and were playing good defense. Craig (Bradshaw) got going early and I just waited and tried to be patient and let the game come to me. Finally I was able to open up and get a transition three from Blake (Jenkins) and that kind of got me going. I just wait until it comes to me."

Morehead State Head Coach Sean Woods

"We didn't play one of our better ballgames tonight....a lot different than last night. I think a lot of that had to do with Belmont really having a week or so to actually prepare for us. We were kind of erratic – especially in the first half – offensively...no driving lanes...didn't make a lot of shots and they made it seemed like every shot they threw up, especially from three. They were ready for us...our illnesses and our ailments finally caught up with us, especially against a good team in this type of an environment. But we had a good run, and Belmont was just more prepared and much fresher than we were tonight. In two years I think we've come a long way in a short amount of time and it's just the beginning. You win championships with veteran teams that have been there before – I just didn't have enough guys that have been there and it kind of showed tonight in experience and immaturity in certain situations and certain plays, but hopefully we'll be back. "

On Belmont's time to prepare

"They did their homework and, come on, you give Rick Byrd a week and a half to prepare for anybody, you're in trouble and I knew that. But I just thought our toughness would prevail...they were just fresher than we were and they had everything going, mentally and physically – and they did a good job preparing for us and they got the job done."

Morehead State Senior Drew Kelly

"It's frustrating, but part of our motto is we don't make excuses. You could tell when they started pulling the trigger like that and everything they pull goes in. It's frustrating, but, you know, that's just how it is...if we had taken care of some things earlier in the season we could have potentially pulled out a double-bye and been fresh like them, but that's not the way it went - credit to them...they played well and we didn't play smart in this game at all. It's very unfortunate to end an OVC career like this, but...move on."

Post-Game Notes

Belmont improves to 24-8 on the year and advances to play the winner of the Eastern Kentucky-Murray State game in the OVC Championship on Saturday at 6 p.m. on ESPN 2.

Belmont has now won four straight and seven of its last eight conference tournament semifinal games. The Bruins have also won conference tournaments in six of the last eight years.

Belmont improves to 3-0 in OVC Tournament games.

Morehead State is 29-40 all-time in the OVC Tournament.

Morehead State entered the contest ranked 26th in the nation with 7.87 steals per game and forced six steals on the night. Belmont finished with 11 turnovers in the game to improve to 20-1 when committing fewer than 15 turnovers.

Belmont took a 35-25 lead into halftime to improve to 19-2 when leading at the half.