

March 13, 2014



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HOUSTON

THE MODERATOR: Okay, we'll get started with our postgame press conference starting with the University of Houston, Head Coach James Dickey, student athletes, Jherrod Stiggers and TaShawn Thomas. Coach, we will get your comments on the game.

COACH DICKEY: Thank you very much. Really proud of our guys, big win for us, have a lot of respect for Coach Brown and SMU, they've beaten us twice this year at home. I think Nic Moore had a huge second half. They hurt us in two key areas, on the boards and at the free-throw line. They got 16 more free throws than we did and averaged 8 more rebounds a game than we had, so would he outrebounded them today and we did not get to the free-throw as much as we would like but I thought our guys rebounded well.

Second half, down 9 at half, I was proud of the way our guys came back and we finally got some flow to our offense. Down the stretch we had empty possessions but they missed free-throws and I thought our defense and rebounding were key in the second half and obviously we had some balance in scoring. J-Rod kept us in the game in the first half and hit some big shots and when you have four guys in double figures that always helps, and obviously TaShawn had a huge block toward the end of the game there that was big for us. That's an area that he's really improved on this year and then we made -- Danuel made two big free-throws and L.J. hit two big free-throws.

Q. Coach, what do you think was so special about the way your team responded after falling behind in the second half?

COACH DICKEY: The biggest thing we talked about was togetherness, toughness, playing hard, leaving it all out there on the court.

Our guys were disappointed that we lost both these games and they knew if we played right we would certainly have a chance to win. Right

before the half, I didn't think that we settled for -- we settled for too many perimeter shots and didn't get to the free-throw line. The second half we kept pecking away and had good possessions and the guys started understanding "paint touches" you don't always throw it to TaShawn or big J or Danrad but we've got to get to the paint with the ball either off the dribble or throwing it in there and I thought once we played the game inside out, it opened it up for us and we were much more efficient offensively and then we complemented our offense with the defense at the other end.

Q. Coach, you guys came close last time at their place when you played. Is there anything from that game you took to this game?

COACH DICKEY: The biggest thing was we took better care of the ball when we played in Dallas, didn't rebound as well as we need to do and we weren't as efficient offensively. I thought we were more efficient offensively in the second half even though we had empty possessions there when we had that 3 and 4, our defense kept us in it, they missed some free-throws and we got the rebound and we had guys hit some big shots. Our guys came into the game with a lot of confidence and I thought Coach Hamilton, one of my assistants did a terrific job in preparation and we're happy and thrilled to come out with a win.

Q. Is Jherrod your 3-point shooting was excellent. Can you talk about how you felt out there? Seemed like everything was going in for a while.

JHERROD STIGGERS: My mind-set was never know if this would be the last game, never know there would be tomorrow so leave everything on the floor. Take everything they give me. Feels great, though.

Q. TaShawn, you get a key block at the end, your point man comes up with the ball. Few seconds left. What's going through your mind?

TASHAWN THOMAS: Not to give up the

easy basket. The whole game, the rest of the night, lettin' us play and people were dropping to the basket so I knew I was going to be able to give up little "contact" on the basket so I waited for him to release the ball so I could get the block.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

An interview with:

SMU

THE MODERATOR: We have Coach Larry Brown, student athletes, Markus Kennedy and Nick Russell, Coach, your comments?

COACH BROWN: We got outplayed. You know, when you go 4 for 19 the second half and we missed a bunch of free throws late, I don't think you're going to win many games.

You gotta give them credit. We had pretty good control of the first half. We talked about winning the first five minutes, and I just thought they punched us in the mouth and we just didn't respond very well.

Their guard, L.J. Rose, controlled the game, played great. TaShawn Thomas when the game was on the line, played great. You gotta give them credit. They made the plays that were necessary. They made the shots when it counted and I think they had the confidence that they could beat us. We have had a lot of games like this, where we have had some adversity happen and we haven't handled it very well, and this was a typical one of those performances.

Q. Coach, how much did lack of experience, playing this late into the season with these expectations of being a ranked team, did that play any factor in the game?

COACH BROWN: I don't think so. I think it is true we haven't been in big games. It's obvious we have had a hard time handling games when we have gotten behind or had some difficulty, but we had great shots. Marcus hits a 3 at the end of the game but other than that we're 4 for 19 and I don't think one of those shots was guarded. TaShawn Thomas makes a great block at the end, we're 14 for 15 from the free-throw line. Game is on the line and we're missing free throws. The biggest thing is their "will" was greater than

ours. I don't think it's about experience or anything.

This is part of our building process. We have to develop a trust factor in one another and I don't think we've gotten there yet.

Q. Markus, how is the ankle? You did tweak it during the second half, did it feel any better as the game progressed?

MARKUS KENNEDY: It still hurt, but there is no excuse for playing and losing the game. I asked to come back in the game and I was ready. This is a mind-set. My ankle hurts but it wasn't enough to keep me out of the game and I asked to come back in and I came back in and I felt I was ready to play.

Q. Coach, three straight losses, not exactly how you want to finish the regular season. Can you talk about how you go into the NCAA Tournament?

COACH BROWN: I'm not thinking about that. I'm just disappointed because the same stuff happens over and over again. Things don't always go right, you know, and it's how you handle situations, that's what I'm concerned about.

We lost to two great teams at the end of the season. I don't think anybody is going to look at a Louisville or a Memphis loss and be worried, but I kinda had it in my gut what was going to happen today. Houston, I thought, felt they could win. I was thrilled the way we finished the half. Kinda felt, you know, maybe we started to understand that every possession matters and every possession defensively is important. But, again, we didn't handle it but we got four days, five days to work on things and get better, and I'm confident we will be ready when we have an opportunity to play again.

Q. Nick, when you guys got up 10 in the second half, were you feeling confident that things were going to go your way?

NICK RUSSELL: I knew they wasn't going to give up and we was going to start the battle for the second half, 20 minutes. We said that we had to come out and win the first five minutes but they came out stronger than us.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time.