

March 13, 2014



Louisville: 92
Rutgers: 31

An interview with:

LOUISVILLE

THE MODERATOR: We will get started with the University of Louisville and head Coach, Rick Pitino and Student Athletes, Chris Jones and Stephan Van Treese. Coach?

COACH PITINO: Well with, I'm not sure what to say. It was one of those nights where everything went really well for us and nothing went right for them.

We got a chance to play everybody and rest our legs. Anytime you play in a tournament where there is a potential for three games in a row, the more you can play your bench the better you will be. These two guys played a terrific basketball game. Stephan has been rebounding the ball and playing great defense and Chris Jones the last two weeks has been the best I've seen him.

Very proud of both of these guys. It was one of those games in the second half we wanted to pack in our zone and they held their own, forcing 26 turnovers, only turning them over ten times, turned them over in the half court which is a little surprising, but it's just one of those nights where one team, nothing goes right, the other, everything goes right.

Q. Rick, it's 18-8 when Monday Montrezl picks up his second foul. Do you have any anxiety at that point or do you think your team is playing so well it doesn't matter?

COACH PITINO: No, I didn't. I knew it was going to be a good night when we went to throw a lob to Stephan and Monday Montrezl dunked on Stephan, I knew it was our night at that point.

STEPHAN VAN TREESE: I'm not happy about that, I thought he was throwin' it to me, and I

didn't even see Montrezl and he dunked on me, I was like, "Man, that's not fair!"

Q. Last year you talked about the "boom" affect, today did we see the Sonic boom affect?

COACH PITINO: Yeah, I've been proud of these guys all season because our losses have been to good basketball teams. We haven't lost to a bad basketball team. And every single night they come to play as if they're down 10 with 2 minutes to go, they're very intense, they pay no attention to an opponent's record and respect everyone. That's a great quality to have.

Certainly we know we're going to have a tougher game with Houston tomorrow, upsetting SMU, Houston has terrific talent. Rutgers has played everybody tough in their last five games from Cincinnati to Memphis and they just don't play real well against us. Some teams are like that in conference.

Q. Chris, Rutgers last night talked about trying to -- since the last game with you guys, trying to slow down and attack the press, you know, with a little more logic. It seemed like their speed was letting you set up traps even better, was that the case today?

CHRIS JONES: I would say that was the case. I think our presence got better over the weeks, going into the tournament you need to know how to switch defenses to get farther in the tournament and that's what we learned how to do..

Q. Coach talked about the last two weeks, your improvement. What are the things you have been working on the most?

CHRIS JONES: I think my overall trying as a person. I came in thinking about scoring because I've been a scorer all my life but he have great players around you that make you better and I feed off those guys and sometimes they feed off me.

I think my game surrounds myself off of

defense. Pushing the pace. So that's why I think I've been playing my best basketball the last two weeks.

Q. Chris, this must have been very emotional for you today coming back to Memphis after your step-brother's death. Despite the lopsided game can you give us a sense of your emotions today?

CHRIS JONES: I think my emotions came out yesterday when I went to the grave. Some things you've got to let go of, they come between the lines. I don't let that get to me when I'm playing basketball. I think that freed my mind of that. His death is not a good thing but at that point it frees my intentions right now and that's why I'm playing harder and I'm playing way better, too.

COACH PITINO: One of the things we talked about with Chris is, you know, because this is a tough city as we all know, and we talked about when tragedies hit, about celebrating one's life no matter how young.

That's what Chris and I talked about, about celebrating his step-brother's life and celebrating in a good way where you don't necessarily win a game with him but you honor him with the type of person you are and the type of person you can become. Chris Jones is -- we all know he's been able to play this game since high school but he's come so far as a young man. He's just a great, great young man, I don't want to call him a kid. He's just a great young man and he's evolving into the type of person we want at Louisville.

Q. Rick, you said Rutgers is a different team all of sudden when they play you. What have you noticed about them on film that doesn't come to light and do you have an explanation for today?

COACH PITINO: No I really don't have an explanation for today. If you watched them the last five games they've played tough, South Florida, Memphis, and Cincinnati, and the last poor game they played at our place was a lopsided victory. I think sometimes we can wear them out and the passing is not as sharp as they would like.

I really don't have much of an answer tonight to say why, because they've been playing good basketball prior to this night.

Q. Stephan, you had opportunities to take that 3-point shot that you didn't get at

home. Why did you pass it up and why did you only take one shot tonight?

STEPHAN VAN TREESE: We're in tournament time so I'm not trying to mess around too much. I thought senior night would have been more appropriate if we were up by 12 or so and I think Coach would kill me if I shot one in at tournament time.

Q. Rick, night like this, Eddie feeling his way out in the head job, what would you tell him after a couple of games like this?

COACH PITINO: Well, he's coached in the pro's and you have certain nights in the pro's that are unexplainable and then you come back the next night and you win like the Lakers got blown out by 40 the other night and they came back and had a good win. There are nights that are unexplainable, and you got to forget about it. He is building, he was a terrific player, he knows the game at all levels. He has to get a deeper bench. Kadeem Jack has gotten better as a basketball player.

Like I said, certain opponents are a little stronger and deeper and quicker and we are and everything went well for us and nothing went right for them. He's seen it in the pro's and it's the time where you go right to the bar, forget the game, have a drink and get ready for next year.

Q. Coach, what is it about your teams that you seem to be able to get them to play their best basketball at the right time? You guys seem to be peaking when you would want to.

COACH PITINO: I've always believed this, that if you can get your team to respect everybody the same way, regardless of their record, regardless of what they're doing in terms of preparation and the way you go about it, and these guys have been able to do it. I had maybe my best team, I forget the year now with T. Will and L. Clark, two lottery picks-- and we went to the Elite Eight, because they weren't able to do it like this team does it or the year before. When you have humility as a basketball team you root for each other.

I think a humble attitude gets you to play hard all the time and know you can get beat. Our guys watch TV and they saw Villanova get beat today by Seton Hall and they saw DePaul beat Georgetown we are more than capable of getting

beat by any team, Houston can come tomorrow even though we played great and they could beat us, we know that, so I think it's a humble spirit, understanding you play the same way against everybody. Now you may change your defenses and your offensive attack from a scouting standpoint, but you don't change the way you get up and play defense and these guys have been able to do that.

Q. Stephan, given Chris's circumstances, I'm curious how the team has shown support and we heard that his family provided some of his favorite desserts, I don't know if you had a chance to sample that.

STEPHAN VAN TREESE: He hasn't shared any of that yet. Don't tell Coach G. that, either. That's our strength Coach.

We're a close-knit group and anytime Chris needs to come talk to us and we all live in the same dorm and we all hangout and try to get his mind away from things like that. It's tough and I think he's battling through it pretty well right now.

Q. Coach, your impressions of Memphis as a host so far after spending so many years in New York at MSG.

COACH PITINO: It's a great place to have it. Obviously the crowds were disappointing the first day because people work. Personally, I miss the Big East because it's Madison Square Garden where I coached and played and grew up seven streets from it. Memphis is a great place to have it, it's a great fan base, great basketball so when Memphis plays the place will be packed and it will be exciting and I hope we can get to the finals and play, and our fan base will come down each day but this is a week night and on the weekend it's easier, great city, great fan base, we're excited to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you.

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RUTGERS

THE MODERATOR: We will get started with Rutgers and head Coach, Eddie Jordan, Student Athletes, Wally Judge and J.J. Moore. Eddie?

COACH JORDAN: Obviously it was a very disappointing performance for us. A game like that really tests your character, and they're a good team, top-5 in the country. They've been to the top of the mountain and we're starting from the bottom of the mountain and we want to get to where they are.

It's going to be a process for us, it has been a process for us, but I thought our guys had a lot of character and we just need to know how hard we have to work to get to where we want to go.

Again, we were picked 10th, we ended up 7th, we won a first-round game. Again, it was a disappointing performance and disappointing loss but we achieved some things that was probably overachievement this year.

Q. You talked last night about slowing down against the press that sometimes that can break it but it seems like --

COACH JORDAN: Nothing worked tonight so just the X's and O's, throw it out the window. It was something that we said in pregame, the X's and O's are probably not going to be the most important part of our success tonight, it's going to be making basketball plays, making plays, keep your spacing, what do you see, being able to make passes, be receivers and make a good pass to get a good, quality shot.

That didn't work for us, either. We tried, we gave great effort. There were times when there was a crack in the armor where we didn't give it

100%, we didn't get back, we threw lazy passes, we were hoping instead of doing. That's where the two programs are right now. That's reality.

Q. Coach, you talk about testing your character. What did you tell them at the half? What do you do to try to get their minds into the game?

COACH JORDAN: We wanted to slow the game down a little bit and move the ball and not really look at first shots. Probably get into a scoring mode, run about fifteen seconds. I don't know if it worked but after a few possessions I said to myself, just do what we have been doing all year, but let's still move the ball a little bit more, let's not take, again, tough attempts, let's get the ball in the paint, keep running.

So let's just go out the way we have been doing all year, just do what we have been doing but with more patience.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

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