

**March 14, 2014**



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## UConn

THE MODERATOR: We will get started with the UConn Huskies, head coach, Kevin Ollie, Shabazz Napier and DeAndre Daniels, Coach?

COACH OLLIE: It was just a great game. Seems like every time we play Cincy it comes down to a one-possession game. They're well-coached and they play hard and I think we stood up to them and we stayed in the middle of the ring and kept throwing punches. It was a great victory for UConn and for our program and I told everybody coaching is overrated. This is a players' game and my players stepped up tonight and took over the game and they matched their intensity and then we brought it up a notch. We got down by 7, wasn't anybody pointing fingers, we just came together and stayed connected and everybody did their job tonight. Not only the players on the floor but the players on the bench and it was a collective team win and we go to the next one, that's what it's all about.

**Q. Coach, how does it feel in the first season in this brand new conference for your team to be playing in the conference championship?**

COACH OLLIE: It feels great but, you know, it started last year, when we couldn't perform in a conference tournament or go to the NCAA Tournament, those guys still played for our great university and they stayed loyal to the program and they planted seeds and that's what it's all about, now you seeing the plant grow but they planted seeds last year. I want them to continue to plant seeds and we keep moving on and it's another 40-minute war and we ready to battle.

**Q. Coach, one week later you get Louisville again. We know what happened a week ago. Why will this be different in your mind?**

COACH OLLIE: We going to come out and play. This is the postseason and that is behind us. I think we're a better team and of course Louisville is a better team and we're going to face out in the ring and see who comes out but I like my guys and I wouldn't trade 'em for the world and we're going to play solid and hopefully we come out with the win tomorrow.

**Q. Kevin, how did the defense change so quickly and early in that second half. Obviously Amida was a big part of it, what was the difference.**

COACH OLLIE: Amida, DeAndre took it personal. They wanted to win individual match-ups with a team concept and that's how we got back in the game. We started rebounding the basketball better, we got out on the fast break and started converting a little bit but that defense was stellar.

To hold a team town to 37% and then we held down our last team 27% and it's a great feeling when you know you can get stops and we call three stops in a row "kills" and I believe we had five kills tonight which is a great attribute to bring at anytime when we not scorin', we can always rely on our defense that's what we hang our hats on and that's what we been doin' since I was a player?

**Q. Coach, it was clear like in the first half, 11 turnovers, second half, 4. Once you got to a point where you started protecting the ball and responding to the pressure how much did that change the shape of the game?**

COACH OLLIE: It changed the shape of the game because they were getting live turnovers, I believe they had 12 points off of turnovers and 18 points in the paint. It was leading to easy buckets and we started being more solid with the basketball, keeping them in front of us and it allowed our defense to stay solid and with Bazz taking care of the ball, Ron taking care of the ball even DeAndre and Niels it allowed us to get shots up to the rim and it wasn't empty possessions. So we was just down by 4 halftime, and we was smiling, down by 4, 11 turnovers, I didn't show that to them but I was happy. It was a grind-out win. That's why this team is so fun they get down and

dirty and I love 'em. I love 'em to death!

**Q. Shabazz, take us through the last play with Shawn having the ball and talk about guarding him down the stretch.**

SHABAZZ NAPIER: I picked the ball up and Shawn was behind Justin and Shawn was running down setting him a pick and I was trying to bait him on one side and he came down on the other side and I'm not sure, I think it was DeAndre or Amida, when I cut him off he went back middle and they contested his layup and I thought it was going to go down but he definitely put too much spin on it and it went out the other way and the big guys were smacking the ball up in the air in case one of the guys was trying to grab it and that buzzer sounded off and we were straight to win it.

**Q. How much were you able to enjoy the win? It was a great come back but after everybody started celebrating you started shaking your head because you missed the free throw it looked like.**

SHABAZZ NAPIER: I'm happy because we won but I'm so much of a competitor I'm upset that I missed the free throw. I'm upset I put my teammates in that position. I understand it's over with and we went in the locker room and guys was hugging and I was definitely happy we won but I'm so passionate about the game I just hate missing free throws, I hate turnovers, it's who I am. I'm definitely happy we won the game.

**Q. Coach, I know he's been professional and complimentary of you but I'm curious how badly you want to beat Rick Pitino going back to what happened at the Celtics.**

COACH OLLIE: I really don't care about the Celtics. Rick -- actually I grew so much with Rick that summer, so I became a better point guard with him and he came to the decision where he had to let me go but when you have a set-back like that it just gets you ready for another opportunity. It's nothing against Rick, I love Rick to death. He's a Hall of Fame coach, he's a great coach, a good friend of mine and I could learn a lot from Rick Pitino.

**Q. DeAndre, we have seen you guys grind out these wins and it's been sustained throughout the year. What do you think it says about you guys that you have been able to do that consistently now into March?**

DeANDREA DANIELS: Like you said we have been through it all season and we always have fight and we never give up. Everybody has heart on this team and when it comes down to the end I put the bet on our team.

**Q. Shabazz, when you made the surge to take the lead by 8 what changed offensively that allowed you guys to get goin'?**

SHABAZZ NAPIER: Coach telling guys keep the team, move the balls when they were gettin' tired and crackin'. In the beginning we didn't move the ball as much as we should have but after that we was able to do so and DeAndre was able to get mis-matches and Amida was able to get the ball in the paint because we was penetrating off of passes. We ended up sharing the ball more and that's what Coach said, we gotta share the game more and we ended up doing that and we started scoring. He's the brains of this.

**Q. Shabazz, are you ready for your match-up with Russ Smith?**

SHABAZZ NAPIER: I'm ready to play Louisville, I don't see no match-up between me and him, I'm not here to play a one-on-one game, it's a five-on-five game, so I'm ready to play Louisville.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

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An interview with:

## CINCINNATI

THE MODERATOR: Okay we'll get started with the University of Cincinnati, head coach, Mick Cronin, student athletes Justin Jackson and Sean Kilpatrick. Coach, your comments on tonight's game?

COACH CRONIN: First of all, I thought UConn played extremely well. They made shots. We had defensive breakdowns that for us are inexcusable, that led to that, and that's disappointing. That's probably our biggest problem that I would have with tonight.

Second thing is we didn't shoot a free-throw in the second half until 2 minutes

roughly left in the game. That was a big problem for our offense. Five times we point blank hit the rim, came up empty. Gotta do a better job of making sure we're getting fouled and finishing around the rim. Can't continue to come up empty at the rim. We were getting the ball where we wanted it, but like I said, disappointed because we showed that they're leaving their feet, trying to block every shot.

We didn't fake and get fouled until two minutes left. The last part of it is we didn't get the ball inside nearly enough, either, which in the second half, which I thought was a huge problem for our offense.

**Q. Did you see somebody hit the net when Sean's shot didn't go in? Did you think there was a goaltending call?**

COACH CRONIN: I'm already worried about Selection Sunday in the NCAA Tournament. I'm not tall enough to see stuff like that. You really think they're going to call that for Cincinnati? What games you been watching all year? Seriously.

**Q. What are your thoughts on Selection Sunday and where you might be seeded in the Tournament?**

COACH CRONIN: I was proud of our effort tonight, I thought that our fight was excellent, our competitive desire was excellent.

I think the biggest thing is making sure our players understand why we lost. Winners know where they win and why they lose. That's what we just talked about. Two things: We had a lot of defensive breakdowns, everything I told you that is inexcusable, we gotta get fouled more at the rim and get the ball inside more and be accountable to each other and make sure that we know that we can do better.

The last part is we had great practice tonight at making a come-back. Other than the tying the game we executed in the last three minutes every time, every possession. We either got a great shot, got fouled or got the ball at the rim. When you get the great shot you have to relentlessly rebound because you can't come up with empty possessions or you're never going to catch anybody. The only empty possession we had in the last three minutes was the missed layup at the end. That stuff just happens. Really proud of that. It was a great segment for us and our press did wonders for us tonight. We're probably going to have to use it more going forward.

**Q. When you see S.K. drive the lane like that he makes that shot 99 out of 100 times. You had to feel good about your chances?**

COACH CRONIN: I did feel really good about it. Right now getting back to Cincinnati, getting rest and getting ready to go next week.

**Q. Justin, can you talk about when you went into the scoring drought, it was a 17-2 run. Why was it hard for you to score? You were getting to the rim and couldn't score or what was going on?**

JUSTIN JACKSON: Like Coach was saying, UConn played great defense and played great as a team. We couldn't execute in the end but like Coach said we came back in the last three minutes and do what we needed to do. And S.K. hits that shot 99 out of 100 times, I can't tell you why, it just happens.

**Q. How do you feel you're playing as a team going into the tournament?**

JUSTIN JACKSON: We are going to get back in the gym and do what we need to do and we're going to play what we need to do, play Cincinnati basketball, like I've been saying.

**Q. Sean, you guys were able to cause turnovers in the first half, a lot of steals and not so much in the second half. Did they change something that you guys were doing as far as combatting the press or it was something that they were doing that led to the lack of turnovers on their part?**

SEAN KILPATRICK: No, I don't think so. We applied the pressure that we needed to apply. I think our press worked pretty well. We did pretty good and it was something that happened down the stretch.

COACH CRONIN: Can't press if you don't score. We couldn't get the ball in the basket.

**Q. Sean, with respect do you think you guys should be seeded based on the resume that you've built all year?**

SEAN KILPATRICK: I don't know.

JUSTIN JACKSON: Not our choice.

SEAN KILPATRICK: I've been focusing on the game today and that's what Coach teaches us, to take it a day at a time and I let the guys that place the seeding and everything take care of that. I don't think about things like that.

COACH CRONIN: That made my night.  
We don't worry about things we can't control.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very  
much.

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