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An Interview With:
HOUSTON

Hartford, Connecticut

HOUSTON - 66
TULANE - 60

MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the Houston Cougars to the interview room. We've got Head Coach Kelvin Sampson in his first year, Jherrod Stiggers and Devonta Pollard.

Coach, do you want an opening statement about your first tournament win this year?

COACH SAMPSON: Yeah, I'm just proud of our guys. We've obviously, with all the transfers and kids quitting, and LJ and Mikhail breaking their feet, we've had so much adversity, we've got seven guys on scholarship. When you have only seven guys on scholarship, they tend to come together a little bit. We know what we can't do, but these guys have really balled into playing for each other. Our offense has gotten a lot better because we move the ball and share it a lot better. You know, I think you have to give a lot of credit to Jherrod Stiggers because he's going from, I don't even know how to describe him earlier, just crazy, crazy shots, but some of that he had to. We were all over the place. But now his shot selection's better, our team's playing a lot smarter. It always helps to bring Mariano Rivera off the bench, AKA, Chuck Baker.

MODERATOR: Questions from the floor?

Q. Can you expound on Baker's second half?

A. Baker actually did the same thing, maybe not the same thing, but played similar at Tulane. We actually ran a good offense tonight, our guys really executed, but when Chuck's in the game, he's the one guy on our team that can put the ball on the floor and create. That's not Stiggers' deal. If he puts it on the floor he's usually helps to shoot a jump shot. Pollard can. Barnes,

you know, we don't have an overly skilled team. Chuck can do that and I think he was steaming a little bit and didn't get in the game first half, but when he did get in, he made up for lost time. When he gets in the game we give him the freedom to create, he's good at that.

Q. That intentional foul?

COACH SAMPSON: Yeah, what was that? I didn't see it, did you see it? No, that's Chuck Baker. He's, you know, a box of a sorted chocolates with that guy. You just don't know what Chucky B's going to do. That's why his playing time's what it is, but he's capable of doing some really good things to help us. I'm not sure, you know, the last two times we've beaten Tulane, I'm not sure we beat them without Chuck's contributions. One thing about Chuck, it's easy to figure out what guys can't do. The thing I like about Chuck, he's a tough kid, he really is a tough kid and I respect that about him.

Q. New York or Philadelphia guard in Chucky?

COACH SAMPSON: Oh, yeah, yeah, I'm not sure what side of New York he's from, but he's exactly what he is. He's a New York guard, that's a great analogy. What did he have tonight?

MODERATOR: Career high 20.

COACH SAMPSON: Did he really? 20 in 12 minutes? Well, maybe if he had a smarter coach, he could have had 40.

Q. And a dunk.

COACH SAMPSON: How about that? He had fresh legs, for sure. Stiggers was solid at the point. We're going to turn the ball over, we don't have a point guard. Pollard did some good things until he picked up his fourth foul, but our team, everybody has to contribute, everybody has to give us something. That's why we won four games in a row.

MODERATOR: Anyone else? Thanks,

Coach, good luck to you.
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