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An Interview With:

CONNECTICUT

Hartford, Connecticut

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MODERATOR: Gentlemen and ladies, joining us right now from the UConn Huskies, we have Head Coach Kevin Ollie, senior Ryan Boatright and sophomore Rodney Purvis. With the win tonight, the Huskies will advance to the American Championship semi-finals tomorrow at five, it will be on ESPN-2, and they did this in a game that was tied nine times and featured four lead changes. Coach, an opening statement?

COACH OLLIE: It was just a gutty win, and everybody knew it was going to come down to possessions and I think we just did a great job. What we did, we took care of the basketball. I thought our guards played excellent in this magnitude type of game with that match-up, and then guys really being able to turn over their opponents for us to get three turnovers and 12 assists, I thought they did a great job. We hit timely shots in the second half, we really started understanding our open spots in their match-up zone, and I thought we just took the game at the end. Ryan stepped up, Purvis stepped up, and that last play by Ryan was just a great crossover, just great individual move. I wanted to put the ball in his hands because he deserved it. He's a senior and he came through for us. I'm very proud of him but I'm very proud of our team. We hung in there today, tonight, and we live to play on Saturday. And that's what UConn basketball is all about --

MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach, questions from the floor?

Q. Ryan, could you just describe that last drive and what you did and did you take a lesson from Kemba there or what was going on?

RYAN BOATRIGHT: No, I'm going to start with the free throw, man. I thought it was good.

That felt better than the first two I made. Once I missed it, man, they got that put back, it was like deja vu, this is Texas all over again. Once we got to the huddle, Coach kept us composed and he told me he's going to give me the ball. I told myself I'm not going out like that. We going to take this last shot, and I'm going to make it, but when I came off, Coach drew up a great play for the slip so they couldn't double me. Once I came off, he was so nervous and he beating them baseline, gave him one good crossover to give myself a good look and knock it down.

Q. Ryan, as a senior playing in front of your home crowd potentially for the last time, what is the moment like that mean to you to make a shot like that to survive and advance?

RYAN BOATRIGHT: It's unbelievable, man. I'm just blessed and fortunate to be in this situation and have the opportunity to play with this team and play for this great program and just to make a shot like that man, great guards that we done have, Shabazz, Kemba, we put in that work to be in that situation and be able to make that shot, but without my teammates, we not in that situation for me to be able to take that shot so I give all the credit to them.

Q. Can you talk about the noise from the crowd tonight and how much that helped you guys?

RODNEY PURVIS: Oh, yeah, definitely, it was crazy. I felt -- I just couldn't wait for one of my teammates, somebody to make the next shot, that's how loud it was in there. I wanted to jump in the crowd with them. It was exciting out there, but that's what you come to UConn for. We're fortunate to have the tournament here and we're just giving our crowd something to be here for.

Q. Coach, Rodney's really stepped up these last couple days, 13 yesterday, 17 today. What are your thoughts on the way he has

played in this tournament?

COACH OLLIE: He's just playing with confidence. He's not looking over at me and that's a good thing. He's just shooting the basketball, he's playing great defense, you see his enthusiasm. I never want my players to dictate the passing by making shots or not making shots, I want you to play hard, and he's understanding that now and he's just playing with supreme confidence. We've given him a lot of responsibility, we putting the ball in his hands and he finally rebounded, too. I like that, too. That means he's sacrificing his body, getting in there, but he's been doing an amazing job, he's allowing me to coach him, and I just love that about him and I just want to keep giving him all the confidence in the world and he knows I believe in him, know I love him, I want him to keep playing this way, keep playing at this high level. It don't have to be 17 or 13, just have to be engaged on every play offense and defensive end, and I think he's doing an excellent job of that.

Q. Ryan, last week against Memphis you took the ball to the hole on that last play. Tonight were you looking for more the jumper because there will be some contact, no call? What was your outlook going into that play?

RYAN BOATRIGHT: I was just trying to make the right play, wasn't trying to make a great play. I was just trying to make the right play. Like I said, Coach drew up a great play involving the slip so they couldn't trap me. In the Memphis game, we ran a pick and roll and they just trapped me, and I had to make tough shot. So when they made the slip, I just wanted to give myself the best opportunity to make it. And I knew I had a big on me, so I just gave him one good crossover just to give myself enough space and I just locked in and followed through and made sure it went in.

Q. Ryan, last night you said you expected this game to be a dogfight and that's what it turned out to be. Do you expect there to be a level of fatigue tomorrow, especially having it be the third game in three days?

RYAN BOATRIGHT: That's what why we got the hardest conditioning in America. If y'all there and you in the preseason you understand why we can play like this. Being here with this crowd and with our pre-season, I'm sure we're going to be all right. We're warriors.

Q. You heard what Ryan said in the huddle, that I'm not going to go out like this, I'm going to make this shot. What did you think? What do you feel like the team thought when they heard that and he had the ball, what was the level of confidence with the ball in his hands in that shot?

RODNEY PURVIS: I just knew after he missed the free throw, like he say, he wasn't going to go out like that, I knew he was going to give a great move. He is great for crossing people over. I saw the ball going in the air and I started celebrating before it even went in the air because I knew it was good.

Q. I know you want to go all the way to Sunday and do this the automatic way, but if you could talk to the selection committee right now, how would you build your case? What would you say about this being one of the top 68 teams in the country?

COACH ANTIGUA: I'm not even worried about that now, I'm going to go back and we going to take possession by possession and whatever happens, happens. We're going to go out there and play Connecticut basketball. If the selection committee thinks we worthy of it we worthy of it, but I want to put ourselves in a position to get in the tournament, and that's by preparing ourselves well, so we don't under-perform, that's my motto. I'm not trying to build a case. We're going to go out there and try to beat Tulsa, and we go and try to beat whoever we play on Sunday and then they can't deny us after that.

Q. Kevin, the situation you're in tonight with the bigs you had to play Rakim quite a bit. How important were his contributions particularly --

COACH OLLIE: Oh, it was huge, and he played so well because he gave us that physical presence. You know, those guys couldn't back him down. I put him in the second half, he had a huge block and he just always stayed with it and you know, Rakim's been up and down, hasn't been getting a lot of minutes but you just never know when your name is going to get called. I think Glenn Miller does a great job with our bigs, just always having them prepared and getting ready to play. I thought he did a great job, his defense was great, he moved his feet and he just gave us that presence and you know we always say it commit to it and

you know that's one person I don't have to tell him to hit, he just goes out there and throws his big body around and we love it and we want him to continue to do that. Don't know when Kentan is going to be back. Hopefully we can get him back here soon, but Rak is going to keep giving us good minutes, Amida, we have three bigs, that's my fourth guard but he's my big now at 190. We going to go out and we just going to play hard and we going to stay connected.

Q. Ryan, in a lot of games you have to match teams shot for shot. In this game it seemed you had to match them stop for stop. Can you talk about what that was like when they would make a stop at one end and what your focus was on defense?

RYAN BOATRIGHT: We going to live and die on this defensive end. That's what we build our program on and build this team on, defense. We had some good looks, we missed a lot of shots tonight. We made some fortunate ones but we missed a lot. I told the team in the huddle that we couldn't see-saw. We had to get stops and we came together and we got the stops that we needed to win the game.

MODERATOR: All right, gentlemen, thank you.

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