



2007 State Farm Missouri
Valley Conference Tournament
Pre-Tournament Press Conference
March 1
Quotes listed alphabetically
St. Louis, Mo.

Bradley Head Coach Jim Les and
Student-Athlete Quotes

Jim Les

Opening Statement: Just looking for this opportunity. Playing a very good Northern Iowa team, and they've beaten us twice during the regular season so it will be a great challenge for us. These guys have had a good week of practice and we're looking forward to the game.

MEDIA: This is for all three of you guys. If you just look at the season overall, it's a grind particularly the conference season playing two, sometimes three games in a week. You've had almost a week now to prepare for this game, and maybe get your legs back. You kind of just -- do you feel better? Do you feel a little more rejuvenated physically with this time off?

J.J. TAUAI: I feel like my legs are a lot better now. Coach did a good job of saving our legs this week, trying not to push us too hard but still enough to keep us in shape.

WILL FRANKLIN: I agree with J.J. I think my team is ready. As far as me, I feel like my legs are okay. I'm ready and getting excited to play.

DANIEL RUFFIN: I agree with J.J. and I also think this is the start of a new season, really, you know, coming into the conference tournament. I think Coach is getting us mentally prepared and physically prepared. I think the last couple of days of practice coach got us ready for it.

MEDIA: Will, not to put negative thoughts in your head, but I mean, it's no secret you struggled with your shot the last couple of weeks. Did you look at that as being due to some leg weariness or just a little off or one of those things where shooters go hot and cold.

WILL FRANKLIN: I wouldn't say that. I've just been missing. Ain't no excuse for it. Just ready to correct it. Let's put it that way. I mean, my legs is ready. I've been working on it. I'm not stressing about it. I'm just ready to play.

MEDIA: Daniel, what's the toughest thing about playing Northern Iowa? Where have they given you the most trouble from your perspective?

DANIEL RUFFIN: Well, I think they just, you know, they have the knack of just being patience, and you know, our job is to try to speed teams up to play our pace. I think they did a great job just kind of slowing us down and running their offense, and we just pretty much having trouble speeding them up.

MEDIA: J.J., you played three games down here last year. How important is that just in terms of familiarity with the court and getting used to the format, the tournament, all those sorts of things?

J.J. TAUAI: I think last year's season was a good thing for our experience. One of the things we did last year was take one game at a time. I think that experience from last year is going to carry over from this year. Obviously we don't want to look too far ahead. We're only looking at tomorrow's game.

MEDIA: All three players. If you can talk about the style of play last year when you had bigger guys and now it's gone to a perimeter game. When did you really embrace that?

J.J. TAUAI: Last year team's obviously had bigger players. With Pat O'Brien down in the post, we just wanted to give him the ball a lot. This year it started in the summertime. We decided we were going to start with a little more pace. We had a smaller team so we started in the summer in open gym trying to get our shot up, and I think it's paid off.

WILL FRANKLIN: I agree with J.J. In the off season we tried to bring our game up tempo and move at a faster pace. Last year we had big people to give the ball to. I like our offense. I think it works well for us.

DANIEL RUFFIN: The main difference from last year to this year, last year our main focus was getting it to our front court and getting it to Pat and Marcellus down on the block. This year we're a little more guard oriented and just getting it on the floor and making teams run with us is our main focus this year.

MEDIA: Given that change in style and pace, I know coaches complain sometimes about, you know, you lose attention on defense occasionally. Is that a pitfall of the style you play, pushing the pace and getting to the speed you like that you find yourselves at times not thinking about defense the way that you should and how does that come about?

J.J. TAUAI: I think the whole defense aspect is just a mental breakdown at times for us. A lot of times I think we let our scoring decide how we play defensively, maybe shots aren't falling, guys are not in tune, but I think that's something we've worked on to be more of a focused defense. I think going through ups and downs of the season and trying to learn that, I think everyone pretty much is playing that system right now.

WILL FRANKLIN: I believe the same thing. It's a lack of concentration. You've got to stay concentrated and focused the whole game. I mean, you have bad offense. You should be excited to go or get a stop, you know what I'm saying. Your defense should be better.

DANIEL RUFFIN: I also agree with J.J. and Will, you know. It's a lack of concentration. I think, you know, we miss a shot, particularly good shot, you know, you'll head down sometimes and your man gets you back door or may score on you, so I just think it's just a lack of concentration.

MEDIA: Daniel, can you kind of assess where you guys are right now having, you know, the last couple weeks winning 4 of your last 5. Are you playing as good as you've played all season?

DANIEL RUFFIN: Yeah. I think we're playing pretty good as a team overall, you know. I think we can play a lot better than we have been. We've just got to be able to put our offense with our defense and our defense with our offense, you know. When we're not playing as good on offense, we've got to get even better on defense. I think our defense will carry us through this tournament.

WILL FRANKLIN: I also feel that you've got to start off with good defense, and I mean, defense wins games. You play good defense, and the team -- the opposite team's not able to score a lot of points. I mean, that's a good thing. That's our main focus.

J.J. TAUAI: When you say 4 of the last 5 games, I think what's important of that is two of those were on the road, especially this last one at home was good for us to come to St. Louis with this win. Those two games on the road, especially the one at Virginia Commonwealth was a big win for us. It got everyone's expectations up, and we're just good to go.

MEDIA: Jim, I'll just ask you the same question. How do you feel your guys are playing at this point in the season compared to other points in the season?

COACH JIM LES: Good. I think my biggest concern in stressing with them is 40 minutes of consistency. I think we've -- we've played periods of some really good basketball on both ends of the floor, and then, you know, we've had some droughts on both ends, you know, for particular points in games that either allowed teams to catch up if we've been ahead or maybe pull away if we've been behind, and just trying to avoid those droughts and continue and harp on consistency, and I think the guys have done a good job of eliminating and really shortening those periods of time. I still don't think we've put the 40 minutes together which I think is really a good thing. We want to be peaking now, so that's what we continue to stress, watching film, in practice, and you know, I think we're closing that gap to putting that 40 minutes together.

MEDIA: Jim, do you agree that Northern Iowa's managed to win the battle of tempo in those -- in those two games and that's a big reason why they've been able to win those games?

COACH JIM LES: I think that's a part of it. They've also executed extremely well, you know. This is a team that when they get into a rhythm offensively, they have so many weapons, and they just not only control tempo but have gotten into a rhythm offensively and once that boulderer started rolling down the hill, it's awfully hard to stop. You know, they've shot the ball well, but to me, that's not a fluke. It's a result of their really good execution, and you know, we've got to find some answers defensively to try and break up that execution.

MEDIA: Jim, especially given the outcome of the previous two times that you've played them, is it a blessing, then, that you had what, six days to prepare for this game, extra time, if you will, to try to sort out what went wrong in previous wins, what you need to do differently and better this time.

COACH JIM LES: I'm not sure I needed six days to figure out what went wrong. I guess we'll see tomorrow if it helps us correct it, but I think the week, as important as it is for extra preparation time as you go through the conference and sometimes it feels like when games are hitting you right and left, I think for this team it was a matter of also getting them some time to rest and recharge and reenergize, both physically and mentally, and you know, as much as we talk about their legs, it's also the mentality of, you know, getting up for opponents and continuing to change little nuances from game to game, and I think this group and especially, you know, the minutes they play and as much detail as we go through they kind of needed a couple days, you know, some time away from the game. They probably would dispute that because they want to play game, game, game and not have to practice as much, but I just saw in particular yesterday in practice just kind of a renewed energy and enthusiasm that I'm hopeful will carry over into tomorrow. I thought it was not only physical but mental.

MEDIA: Coach, when you look back on how you've had to reinvent this team this season coming off the Sweet Sixteen appearance, how enjoyable has this ride been for you? Is it something you won't be able to enjoy until the season's over and you look back on it?

COACH JIM LES: Well, I've enjoyed coming to work every day with this group. They are an extremely fun group to be around. They have a lot of personality, and they can separate the fact that when they step between the lines, it's work, it's competitiveness, it's intensity, it's concentration, and I demand a lot from them. Off the court they're just a fun group, and I love the fact that, you know, arguably they will tell you they're not the most talented group, but they've been awfully competitive night in and night out just because of the makeup of who they are individually as well as collectively, so I just -- I'm proud to see what they've accomplished, and I certainly don't diminish that, but I still think that they have another level to go to in terms of how good they can play, and you know, I want them to extend their season, and I think they have a great capability to do that and a confidence in themselves to do that.

Creighton Head Coach Dana Altman and Student-Athlete Quotes

Dana Altman

MEDIA: You guys feel lucky you got out of Omaha?

NATE FUNK: We're fortunate we got out last night, that's for sure.

MEDIA: How bad is it up there? Have you talked to anyone?

ANTHONY TOLLIVER: I heard it was the worst storm in Omaha in ten years or something like that, so I know someone that went to sleep at 2:00 a.m. There was no snow on the ground. Woke up at 5:30 and there was 4 or 5 inches or something like that, so I guess it's coming down like crazy right now.

MEDIA: Guys, can you get a feel for how you feel right now, almost in a must-win situation? Are you tight, are you loose? How do you approach tomorrow's game?

NATE FUNK: We're going to go in pretty loose. We know what's at stake. We know we're not in the best position right now to get in the tournament, but like every team, we're going to try to win the first one and see what happens.

ANTHONY TOLLIVER: Kind of the same thing. I mean, we know that, you know, as of right now, you know, we don't like our chances. We know we have to come in here and just play hard, you know, and things will take care of themselves, you know. We hope that we can get this first one out of the way, you know, and like you said, see what happens and see if we can get a couple more

NICK PORTER: I feel the same way, too. The first game of the tournament is going to be crucial. I think that we're all pretty focused on what we've got to get accomplished down here in St. Louis. That's the biggest thing is just winning games and taking it one day at a time.

MEDIA: You've lost to both of these teams. Is there one you prefer to play.

NATE FUNK: No. Whoever we get, that's who we get. That's who we have to focus on. We'll pay attention to the game tonight. They're both playing pretty good basketball at this point. Obviously they just clipped us earlier last week, and they both present big challenges for us, but whoever we get, that's -- that's who we're going to focus on.

ANTHONY TOLLIVER: I mean, like you said, both teams have beaten us. We know that both teams are capable of beating us, and we're going to have to come in with tremendous focus and just start out really well and, you know, just see how the game goes. Both teams are very talented. They both have different personnel, so it's going to be, you know, tonight we're going to have to see who wins, and really get focused because we're not going to have very much time to prepare for them.

NICK PORTER: I think that both teams are talented as well. I think that anybody can be beaten down here, so the big thing for us is just to focus on what we need to do and accomplish what we're down here to do, so I mean, like I said, both of them can beat us, so we need to focus on what we're doing.

MEDIA: Nick this one is for you. What did you learn from the conference game.

NICK PORTER: Don't turn the ball over. Coach doesn't like that. That was the biggest thing for me. That really hurt. I wanted to stay here a little longer and enjoy the tournament, and it's just a feeling you get just walking through the doors and see all the media and just want to stay down here a little bit longer and to exit like that, it wasn't fun. That was probably the biggest thing I learned, just take care of the ball. Hopefully you're going to win by doing that.

MEDIA: You guys put any kind of a number on how many wins you think you might have to win down here to get into the tournament?

NATE FUNK: Well, I'm going to start out by saying three because that's the only definite that you have. You have to win the tournament to get in, so that's what we're going to shoot for. We're going to -- we're not saying we're going to win one or two, and that will get us in because we don't know for sure. The only definite answer to that and the only definite amount of wins that you'll get or that will get you into the tournament is three, so we'll just leave it at that.

MEDIA: Nate, that answer has come up with several of the players on the previous teams that have been in here today. Do you sense that -- do you look at it as this meaning that this tournament has a greater sense of, you know, desperation or -- or importance, if you will, than maybe -- to more teams than perhaps it did last year?

NATE FUNK: Yeah. This year more teams are sitting on the edge trying to get in. The only way for those teams, us included, is to win the tournament. Southern Illinois is the only clear-cut team that's definitely going to be in because of the success they've had this year, so the rest of us, you know, it's going to be a fight to get in, and the own way we're going to be assured of it is to come out with a victory on Sunday.

MEDIA: Coach, not to take anything away from anybody else, but this goes to the player awards. Were you surprised at all that Anthony wasn't the scholar athlete of the year?

COACH DANA ALTMAN: Well, you know, I don't know their academic backgrounds, you know, except for Anthony, and all I can tell you is that he's an outstanding student. I'm sure Jamaal is a very good student, but Anthony, you know, has been such a good representative for our university in a lot of different ways, and you know, he came and he was in pre-med for the first two years and obviously that's not real easy, and then he went into finance and business, so he's done a great job, and he's been a great representative for our university. I'm sure Tatum, Jamaal has done a great job for them also.

MEDIA: When you have a whole week to go and not knowing exactly what team you're going to play, how do you approach that in practice?

COACH DANA ALTMAN: Well, we've concentrated on the things that we've been deficient at all week, and you know, we've just added some periods of time where we've not played very well. We haven't been as consistent as what we'd like to be, so we worked on a lot of our weaknesses and hopefully, you know, we'll play a little bit better, and Indiana State, Illinois State, you know, both defensively do about the same thing, so offensively it wasn't a hard adjustment for us. Now on the defensive end they're different, so we've tried to cover just some general principles to guard them, but you know, as the players mentioned, we've lost to both teams. I don't think it will be hard for our team to get focused, get their attention because we have lost. I mean, we swept Missouri State. We swept Bradley. We swept Northern, the teams right behind us, but we didn't fare as well as Indiana State which I think is really an indicator of the balance in our league.

MEDIA: Coach, did your team see this opportunity with the tournament as a shot of redemption after the early exit last year?

COACH DANA ALTMAN: Oh, I don't know. I mean, last year's team was last year's team. This year's team is this year's team, you know. We don't try to draw too many parallels between teams. I think each team has its own personality, and you know, last year, you know, to be real honest, we limped into the tournament. I mean, Nathan had gotten hurt early in the season, and we kind of overcame that, but then Josh went down with, you know, 6 or 7 games to go, and we never really recovered from that. It happened so late in the season, and you know, we never really recovered from that injury, so you know, last year was just a different year.

MEDIA: How would you compare it to this year?

COACH DANA ALTMAN: I'm sorry?

MEDIA: How would you compare it this year meaning coming into the tournament this year compared to last year?

COACH DANA ALTMAN: Well, I don't think we're limping in quite as bad, you know. I think we're healthier now than we've been, you know. Josh started the season very slowly, and trying to come back from that knee injury, and then he was just starting to play well the latter part of December and he broke his finger, and so then he had to spend the month of January not

playing again, but he's -- he's back and I think he's playing a little better, you know. Nate's healthy, Anthony's healthy, so we're probably as healthy right now as we've been.

MEDIA: Nate said three wins gets you in the tournament. You've never used this podium to politic for a spot. What do you think you need to do to get in?

COACH DANA ALTMAN: Oh, I don't know. I don't know -- I'm not on the committee. It doesn't really matter what I think. I just go play, and I know there's people a lot smarter than I am making those decisions, and they'll decide we're either in or out, you know, based on the criteria, whatever it is they use. We're just going to do our best to try to win a few ball games here. Like Nate said, we'll try to win three and take all the questions out of it. Again, you know, whatever the committee decides, we'll -- we'll live with it. That's not in our control. The only thing that's in our control is how we play on the floor and we'll go do the best we can there.

Missouri State Head Coach Barry Hinson and Student-Athlete Quotes

Barry Hinson

Opening statement: Well, once again we're excited to be in the community of St. Louis and the surrounding area. We get excited every year at this time of the year, and the Missouri Valley tournament has been very special to Missouri State as well as all the other conferences or all the other conference schools, but we've got a great group of fans here and we're just excited and ready to go. I'll let you guys ask the questions.

MEDIA: Blake, could you talk a little bit about playing in St. Louis, and some of it obviously hasn't been that much fun for you the last several times you played here. Is there a common denominator when you look back to some of those games and your struggles, pressure, anything?

BLAKE AHEARN: No. I just think each time we come here it's a new day, and you know, we've got to -- we've got a chance here to, you know, go play Wichita State and that's really all we're looking at right now. What's happened in the past, you know, is over. We don't really think about all that, and you know, the only thing we're looking at right now is Wichita State.

MEDIA: Blake, you've had two nice games against Wichita State this year. What is it about them that has allowed you to get off like that?

BLAKE AHEARN: I think the reason everybody was playing well, you know, it helps me out, too, and you know, I think we had three or four guys both, you know, both games who played extremely well, and that gave us the opportunity to win. When we have, our multiple players play well, you know, that's generally when we're successful.

MEDIA: For Tyler and Nathan, when you have a late tipoff, how tough is it the waiting all day and what do you do to try to help calm the nerves or stay focused?

NATHAN BILYEYU: Well, typically our games are usually in the evening so it's not too bad, and I mean, you just -- you come prepared to play basketball. That's what we've done in the past. That's what we're going to do now.

TYLER CHANEY: Just like Nate said, we just stay focused all day. We had a couple of TV games so we just come and try to stay focused all day and keep everybody prepared.

MEDIA: Not to pick a sore spot with any of you guys, but I mean, after what happened last year, do you come in here this year with a bigger chip on your shoulder of sorts and with any sense of, you know, more have to than you did a year ago? What are you doing to fuel your motivation?

NATHAN BILYEYU: Basically we know the only way that we're going to get in the NCAA tournament is to win this conference tournament and that's what our goal is, and you know, we can start that off with Wichita State.

BLAKE AHEARN: What happened last year, you know, coming in, we had a lot of people patting us on the back, you know, stuff along those lines, and you know, we didn't come in I guess with the right attitude, and this year we have to come in, you know, with a sense of urgency, you know. Nothing's guaranteed, and you know, like Nate said, there's one sure way to get yourself in the NCAA tournament and that's to win the conference tournament, and that starts one game at a time with Wichita.

TYLER CHANEY: For us three seniors, it seems like we've gotten in the tournament one game each year. We just have to take it a game at a time and just control what we do.

MEDIA: Blake, you're such a creature of habit. How were you prepared? What will your routine be for tomorrow night's game?

BLAKE AHEARN: The same as usual. I think, you know, it's -- I try not to treat anything different, you know. I wake up, have breakfast, go to shoot around, come back, pregame meal, get ready for the game and you know, hopefully come out with a victory. Found a couple pennies heads up today, so hopefully that will bring us some luck. Coach actually did and gave them to me. I hope it's good luck.

MEDIA: Blake, what was it about Wichita State that allowed you to really open your game the last couple times you played? What was it that allowed you to really rotate around and penetrate through the back court and get so many open shots?

BLAKE AHEARN: You know, just working hard without the ball, and that's something the coaches, you know, try to talk to me about is, you know, working hard and trying to get open, making catches, and these guys do a great job finding me, and you know, I just try to knock down a few shots when I can.

MEDIA: Tyler, you're probably closer to Deven than anyone in the team. What do you think it means to be healthy to him and play in the tournament this year?

TYLER CHANEY: Deven's always ready and he's not going to say much. He'll say what needs to be said. It will help us out tremendously for him to be able to play on the court with us and get us going.

MEDIA: Coach, given Wichita State's success last year and the way they started the season, do you guys regard them as a very dangerous team right now.

COACH BARRY HINSON: Let me say this first, pert near, reckon howdy, ya'll. I love to watch these ladies type. I like to see them spell reckon and pert near. To answer your question yes, 6 seed in the conference tournament was No. 8 in the country. I rest my case. Our players know that. They've beat us 8 times in a row. We're a long ways behind catching up, so we know what we're up against. It's the only thing we've talked about this week is Wichita State. We've not talked about the past, we've not talked about the future. We've talked about Wichita State and literally our focus has been simply them. I reckon.

MEDIA: Barry, when you look back on Blake's struggles in this building, what do you see are the common denominators. It's not that he's really missing shots. He's not taking very many shots.

COACH BARRY HINSON: First of all, when we get in the building, Blake Ahearn is a focal point for everybody that we play. That's first and foremost. Blake has success when everybody else on the team has success. I think he answered that question pretty good. The third thing is and probably a large denominator or a large factor is that Blake puts an enormous amount of pressure when he comes into this building. He wants to win so bad because he's on his home turf in front of his family, friends, and I mean, this kid loves St. Louis. He is St. Louis, and you know, he just puts an enormous amount of pressure on himself. Now, I've done one thing this week with Blake. I've assigned Steve Woodberry to visit with him about this situation. We've got a guy that's played in two national championship games, played in big games, and he's new on the staff, and he's never seen anybody other than the St. Louis gang and Blake struggle in this building so I asked him to speak with Blake. That's the one thing I've done to hopefully help Blake this week. We'll see. I don't think he's spoken to him yet. I don't.

MEDIA: Just a new voice?

COACH BARRY HINSON: A new voice? You know, new advice, you know. I don't mind telling you. I rely on my assistant coaches in a lot of ways. When you've got a guy like Steve Woodberry on your staff and a player like Blake, certainly Blake's not the magnitude of the player Steve was at the University of Kansas. At least he is in my eyes. I think Steve can help him.

MEDIA: Barry, you just mentioned, I mean, your focus has been entirely on Wichita state. You're saying there's been no talk about this tournament, we're going to win.

COACH BARRY HINSON: Absolutely zero. I promise you. That's a Baptist doing that, too, so that's pretty good. You know, let me -- let me explain that. We got up here last year, and everybody's telling you you're in, way to go, great season, finished second. 20 RPI, 20 RPI, you're a lock, and we did everything we could do to explain to our players that was wrong, and it's hard to combat that, and you know, in their defense, they're 18 to 22 years old. It's hard. It's hard for me, you know,

when people are telling me hey, you're 5-8, you're 5-9. I'm 5-7. No matter how good it makes me feel, the reality of it is I'm still short. It's not going to happen anywhere different. We just told ourselves we're going to take as much pressure off these guys as we can, and we're going to do it by focusing on Wichita State. Like I said before, we're lagging way behind on these guys. They've beat us 8 times in a row. We've got a long ways to go to catch up with them. I start using these Southernisms and it just stuns them.

MEDIA: Just on Deven, did you have ever have to do a sell with him at all about the importance of that role of sixth man? It's pretty vital.

COACH BARRY HINSON: He's the most unselfish kid I've ever been around. I love him. I absolutely love him. And he's the type of young man that would just say whatever we need to do for this team, you just let me know. Deven Mitchell is a starter. He just doesn't start the games.

MEDIA: Just to follow up, have you ever had to weigh for yourself to what degree that fits for you.

COACH BARRY HINSON: Yeah. If I just look after -- we go to Evansville. Here's a great example. We start him at Evansville. I pull two guys out of the lineup, and the next day I show up with moving vans at my house. I put Deven in against Evansville. He gets 20 and 9 rebounds. I don't start him the next game, and he's just like Coach, I don't need to start. I'm a spark off the bench, and he said you don't have to start me to prove points. I'll just prove the point when I come in the game, and he's done that, and you know, I mean, Deven, he's got all the tattoos and he's got the mean stare and the mean looks. He's absolutely one of the most loveable kids you want to be around. He will put everybody else before himself and he always has. That's why I just love him so much. You know what? We've got 13 guys like that. I wish you could have read their comments last week when they got their awards. I wish you could have seen them interviews on team. Every one of them. If I did wasn't for my teammates, I couldn't have done it. We had more guys get awards this year and every one of them are thanking their teammates. That's what I get to go to work to do every day. I said this today at the luncheon. I absolutely adore this basketball team. they mean the world to me.

UNI Head Coach Ben Jacobson and Student-Athlete Quotes

Ben Jacobson

Opening Statement: " COACH: Thank you. We're coming off a good week. We were fortunate to go to Bradley and get a win, and then get home and get a win over Illinois State. Those two wins I think really helped our guys put a little bounce back in our step. We came out of a tough stretch where we lost some games and worked very hard during that stretch, practiced very hard during that stretch, and just didn't get some results on game night, but I was really pleased with the way we practiced and our guys stuck together and it paid off for us the last week of the regular season with the win at Bradley and getting a win against Illinois State. Proud of the way the guys hung together for that three-week stretch. We're looking forward to tomorrow's game.

Question: Grant, Brooks, you guys were on the team when you made a run for the championship of the Missouri Valley championship. what do you remember from that time, and what do you hope to use from that experience to hopefully do it again this year?

BROOKS McKOWEN: Something I remember is that every team is good. You've got to take it one game at a time. You can't look ahead to any other teams or who you might be playing or when you might be playing. You have got to go out and take every game one game at a time. Every team is good in our conference. Every game is going to be tough. I remember playing those three games. You don't get tired. Every game is a big game. You have to go out and take it one game at a time and one play at a time and try to execute the whole game.

GRANT STOUT: Pretty much for me. You lose that first night, you're done, so it doesn't matter what you prepare for the next day so just like Brooks said, that year, you know, we just approached it the same way that we're going to approach it this year, you know, just one game at a time.

MEDIA: Guys, at one point you guys were 13-2 this year. Is there any disappointment, you know, being seniors the way things went, unfolded the last three weeks like Ben said?

BROOKS McKOWEN: Not necessarily disappointment. We wanted to win the games we got beat in. We worked hard this year. Our team worked hard this year. We feel like we're playing our best basketball this year. When you go through a season, you want to be playing your best basketball at the end of the season. We didn't have a few things go our way. Like coach told us all year, we have to get those 5 to 10 plays in a game that are crucial to go our way. We feel like we've been doing that the last few games. We hope to continue doing that through this tournament.

GRANT STOUT: Yeah. You know, we were playing, in those games we were winning earlier in the year, we were getting those key plays in the game, you know, to go our way, and then we went on a stretch there where, you know, crucial plays, you know, that went against us, and you know, that was just the deciding factor, you know. It just seemed like it was just happening, you know, over and over again throughout that month or whatever it was.

MEDIA: This is for both you guys. You went through a stretch just in the last couple weeks where you played like five games in 11 days, and now you've had almost a week off in preparation for this game. Can you feel it in your bodies and your legs? Do you feel rejuvenated a little bit physically?

GRANT STOUT: Yeah, you know, it's -- it's tough, you know, to play those five games in 11 days, but I think most of them were on the road, too, and you know, that's traveling and all that, you know. It is tough, but you know, we would like to come out a little more than, you know, but this week was good for us. We get our legs back and we just get ready to play.

BROOKS McKOWEN: Like Grant said, this week was good for us not only to get our legs back but to work on our stuff, too. You get an extra week of practice that you don't get during the season. A lot of it is preparing for that team. It gives you a

chance to work on a lot of your own stuff and work on your own things and back to the fundamentals a little bit. You also get your legs back.

MEDIA: Brooks, when you play a team like Bradley that makes so many three-pointers and so many different guys make them, you go into a game kind of expecting they're going to make some, and what do you do to try to limit the shots they get?

BROOKS McKOWEN: Bradley's a very good three-point shooting team. They're a good team all around. We've just got to make sure we try to make them take as tough a shot as possible and stick with the defensive play and stick with the game plan. We know they're going to make shots throughout the game. They're going to make tough shots because that's what they've been doing all year. They're good at it. They make shots. Go to the game, stick with your plan. Next time come down the court and work harder to make it tougher on them.

MEDIA: You guys have seen the highs and lows of the season, 13-2 and then a tough losing streak. Do you think there were some positives that came out of that at all in the losing streak, and with that, what did you guys learn about your team and yourselves that maybe this team hasn't gone through before?

GRANT STOUT: Yeah, you know, each one of those losses we were learning something different, you know, because it was just little things different, you know, pretty much every game, and you know, we've just been looking back at it and trying to learn from it and I think we've done a good job -- a good job of learning from those games, and you know, got a couple wins now and hope we keep going.

BROOKS McKOWEN: Yeah. You know, you've just got to try to learn from every game whether it's a win or loss. You try to pick out things you did well on that you did bad. You try to watch as much film as possible. Our coaches do a very good job of knowing what we did right and what we did wrong. The stretch was tough, but you have to learn from the game. You can't get down on yourself at all. We have to stay positive and keep fighting as a team. We feel now we're playing our best basketball, and we hope to continue to do that.

MEDIA: Coach, how has the confidence level of your team heading into this tournament this year?

COACH BEN JACOBSON: I think it's really good. Largely due to the week we had coming in. As I mentioned briefly, that win at Bradley, you know, in particular because it was a road win and it's a place that we have had a hard time winning over there, and then on top of that, Bradley had won 4 to 5 games. They were coming off a road win in Bracket Busters and playing very good basketball, and we were coming out of a really tough stretch. We had just been beaten at Nevada and, you know, probably our worst defeat of the year, you know. Five minutes into the second half we were done at Nevada so come out of that tough stretch and a game like we had at Nevada and go to a place like Bradley where we've had a tough time winning, that was great win for us. It gave our guys a lot of confidence, and we were fortunate to get home and get a win over Illinois State. I think that's why the guys have some confidence right now. They feel good about the way we're playing, and mostly, you know, I feel good because we've worked hard through that stretch. The guys stuck together and we got some positive results last week, so the guys feel good.

MEDIA: Ben, as a rookie coach, what have you learned or what couple things have you learned that will make you a better coach next year, do you think?

COACH BEN JACOBSON: Well, I can say that I didn't think I'd see both ends of the spectrum like we saw this year, getting off to that 13-2 start and then 15-4 and 6-2 in league play and you know, Trav misses a shot to win a game. We were in a pretty good spot at that time. We had a number of guys playing very well, and then we hit a tough stretch. We hit some road games, and we didn't play quite as well through that stretch, and so you know, we lost 7 of 8 games. Within one season, you know, you just -- I don't know if you see that very often, I certainly didn't expect that to happen to our team, and you know, so I -- I think the one thing, the biggest thing I learned is that the importance of the guys being able to stick together when things aren't going good, you know. Through the -- our leadership was very good, the guys, our chemistry was very good through the first 20 games. When we hit that tough stretch, it didn't change, and I think for me, and for our coaching staff, it shed some more light on how important leadership is, how important team chemistry is because had those things changed during the tough stretch, we wouldn't have won two games last week and our guys would be in a little different mindset coming into the tournament. We've got a much better chance to win a game tomorrow and you know, hang around for a little bit this weekend because of the attitude and the approach that our guys took during the tough stretch, not during the time when we were winning

games, and so for me, I think that's the biggest thing that will stick with me from this season is how our guys handled themselves and how they approached practice during that tough stretch we had.

MEDIA: Ben, when you guys went through that tough stretch, did you find yourself trying to push buttons, trying to you know, go through what you've learned under Greg and just in your career, did you find yourself just -- were you disappointed? Were you struggling a little bit?

COACH BEN JACOBSON: You know, struggling only from the standpoint that obviously, you know, we knew we had time that was good enough to win basketball games, and we knew we were in a tough stretch, and we were just trying to find a way to win a road game or pick off a couple games and stay in a good position as you get toward the last two weeks of the conference season. You know, the part I didn't struggle with and it's because our leadership was good and our chemistry was good was trying to get our guys to practice hard or trying to get our guys to continue to listen or come in and shoot extra shots or come in and watch extra film. They were doing all those things, and so, you know, as hard as it is to go through a stretch like that, you know, from a coaching staff standpoint, we were really lucky because we had guys that were doing the same things they were doing when we were 15-4, and working just as hard and shooting extra shots and doing all the things that the guys have done in our program the last three plus years now to get us to this point. They continued to do them, and I think that's a very hard thing to do. It would have been a lot easier for some of those guys to, you know, go different directions or think maybe they had some answers. It didn't happen. So that was something that we were able to feel good about even though we were trying to do the right things from a basketball standpoint, from an X and O standpoint to trying to figure out how to win some games. We were fortunate from a team aspect that our guys were doing the right things.

MEDIA: Coach, I know you have a lot of freshmen contributing a lot. Could you talk about what they've done for you? I'm interested particularly in Stephen Jones, a local kid.

COACH BEN JACOBSON: You know, as a group, they've done a good job, you know. They've kind of each had different points in the season where they've played more, where they've contributed more. As far as individually, you know, Stephen Jones got off to a great start for us. He played some very good games in the non-conference portion of our schedule, and then we just ran into a situation where Adam Viet, one of our juniors, started playing really well. He was shooting 50 plus percent from the field, and you know, just really helping our offense because of the way people were guarding Eric and Grant. We needed Adam Viet on the floor, but Stephen did have a very good non-conference portion of the schedule. The two big kids, Adam Cook and Jordan Eglseider considered to get better as the season has gone along. Their confidence has grown especially Adam Cook. His confidence has really grown. Jordan Eglseider has been fully healthy for about three and a half, four weeks now and that's really helped him. He's playing his best basketball. He's -- for a freshman, he's a hard guy to stop down on the block. You don't see too often where freshman in this league are able to catch it down there against juniors and seniors and create space and score. Jordan's been able to do that. We inserted Kwadzo Ahelegbe into the starting lineup three games ago. That experience being in the starting lineup on the floor, that's really helped him. He's done a nice job, and in particular the last two games, the game at Bradley and the home game against Illinois State. He's done a good job. Those four guys have been important.

MEDIA: Ben, obviously you would like to have finished better and not had the bad stretch and so forth and had a higher seed and have your post season position be a little more secure. Can it be and maybe is it a little advantageous coming in here with a real sense of desperation rather than one that has to be manufactured?

COACH BEN JACOBSON: I'd rather have the 1 seed if that's what you're asking. I would have rather won the league and have the number 1 seed, but you know, for us this year, you know, I think the fact that we won two games coming in is having some confidence to go along with that feeling of hey, we need to win three games. That's a pretty good spot to be in. It would have been harder for us had we not won a game or two last week to come in, you know, without a lot of confidence, without some recent success and just the feeling of hey, we've got to win three games. I think that would be very difficult, at least for us, it would have been. But knowing our situation and our guys are, you know, they understand our situation. They know where we're at from a post season standpoint, and you heard from Brooks and Grant that we're just real tuned in to tomorrow's game against Bradley and understand how hard that's going to be, but to take it one game at a time and not try to win all three games tomorrow. I think that's the biggest thing for our guys and to not let that feeling of -- because our guys don't feel desperate at all. I don't see that in them, and they haven't practiced that way or talked that way, so we don't have that kind of feeling with our team. I think it's more our guys are excited. We're excited about having a chance to play tomorrow and knowing that if we can play very well and be fortunate enough to win to get by tomorrow's game that, you know, our guys have

been there before. They know what it takes to win three games and so I think it's more of a feeling of excitement for us, but again, those two games last week really made a difference for us.

Southern Illinois Head Coach Chris Lowery and Student-Athlete Quotes

Chris Lowery

Opening Statement: I really enjoyed coaching this group this year so far, especially two seniors. They've really been focused on when we need to do to win basketball games. I think when you have your seniors totally understand, totally get it, it makes it much easier to really get your point across to the other guys who are underneath them, the juniors and sophomores and freshmen.

MEDIA: Tony, Jamaal, Coach won Coach of the Year again today. I'm sure you guys are aware of that. Could you kind of speak to playing for him and what it's like and how happy you are for him to win this honor?

TONY YOUNG: I think it's well deserved. I mean, when he first came back, we thought it was going to be a hard time, but like I say, him being a young coach, I call him a players' coach because he understands what we want to do and he understands how we want to play. He tells us everything he wants us to do to make us feel comfortable. That's the reason we're so successful. I think it's well deserved. I feel good playing for him.

JAMAAL TATUM: I think it's well deserved, too. He's -- he's helped us come a long way as players. He's really done a lot with player development, especially with Tony and myself, helping us become better leaders and players and teammates. I think it's well-deserved, and he's coach of the year every year in my eyes. We see what he does every day. He's done a lot for us, especially me as a person, so he's coach of the year every day and every year in my eyes.

MEDIA: My question is for Jamaal as well as Tony. You guys coming in on an 11-game winning streak. How can you stay focused knowing you're the top team in the tournament?

TONY YOUNG: I think the biggest thing, it's happy to be satisfied with winning games. We can't be excited that we're on an 11-game winning streak or that we got the 1 seed in our conference tournament. We've got to continue to focus on the big picture. That will keep us going hard. Well, I mean, we just want to continue to keep winning. We start a losing streak, nobody will remember the good stuff we did in our season so you always want to keep winning and know it can get a lot better than it is. It's good right now, but it can be great, so we want to continue this winning streak and keep it going as long as possible. Once you have a downhill slide, people remember the downhill slide and not the good aspects you had in your season.

MEDIA: For both of you guys, I'm sure you know how long it's been since the top seed won this tournament since '98. Have you talked about that at all and what it will take to win the tournament.

TONY YOUNG: We don't focus, like I said, on being the top seed. We focus on one game at a time. We are the top seed, and there's a lot of myth saying about how long we've been. We've got to stay focused one game at a time and focus on the task at hand and what we've got to do to win games. I think we'll be okay.

JAMAAL TATUM: I agree with Tony on that 100 percent. It's all about taking one game at a time. You realize when you start winning games they add up. I want to win 10 games, I want to win games. You win one game at a time. Over a period of time it becomes 11 games. You don't know get it right away. It's just like basketball. If you're down by a certain amount in the game, you can't make that play right then. You can't make a 5-point play. You can't make a 10-point play. You have to come back in small sections. We just take it one game at a time, and it adds up at the end.

MEDIA: Tony, Jamaal, just talk some about Coach Lowery's philosophy on defense. There have been a lot of games where guys have been able to hold your opponents to low scoring nights. Maybe that's been the difference.

TONY YOUNG: I think our philosophy is just do anything to win. Really. You go out and play hard on defense. We know what we've got to do. We go at each other so hard every day at practice. We practice doing like so many small things to get

our team better defensively. When we get in the games, it's pretty much set in stone what we need to do. I don't think it's a big secret about it. We just play hard.

JAMAAL TATUM: I think the philosophy was set on defense before the season started, you know, through the conditioning and the pre-season workouts, the individual workouts we had. It was kind of a given, you know. It was kind of a known thing that we were going to have to play hard, and on defense and on offense on both ends of the court. As soon as coach came back, our first individual workout we had, you know, he said this is the way it's going to be and this is the way you guys are going to play. We weren't too happy about it. We didn't like it at times, but it's made us be a great team over the -- over the years now and continuing into this year.

MEDIA: Jamaal, a little change of subject. I've got to ask you about your tattoos, especially the left. How many are there because it's not just one run on. How many have you got and how do you decide when it's time and what to get for a new one?

JAMAAL TATUM: You know what? I kind of want to talk about my academics because you know I made second team academic All-American, you know, but it's just one of those things. I got a few tattoos. That doesn't represent the person I am or anything like that. It's something that I really don't speak of much. I kind of like to speak of, you know, the academics and the basketball part of my -- my character.

MEDIA: Coach, your two players alluded to it. You guys just take it one game at a time, but you've obviously taken this program to places it's never been. How do you keep them focused on the main goal?

COACH CHRIS LOWERY: We talk a lot to them, and you know, if you're at practice, we do an emphasis of the day every day, and we help them and we talk to them a lot about other things outside of basketball and learning how to keep focused and learning how to deal with pressures and learning how to understand that you are a role model. We just give them a lot of stuff every day other than basketball stuff, and I think they respect the basketball stuff because of it, because we are consistently talking about act like you've been there, do you want more than this, is this all you want, being 11, do you want more than that, so I think that constantly challenging them to want more and constantly challenging them as individuals to do the right things, I think they respect the basketball side of it more.

MEDIA: Chris, you won coach of the year two years ago. Does this one mean as much or more, or is there any difference?

COACH CHRIS LOWERY: I think it means more. Obviously when I came back we were pretty set, and you know, it was -- I didn't need to screw it up. I think that was the biggest thing. We were so veteran, and it was really the fact that you know, we really just had to -- to just keep those guys focused. We had the player of the year back and we had very good players in place, and we knew we had a chance to be special again, but this one we felt like we cultivated these guys because they were mostly sophomores and freshmen, and we really had a chance to put our mark on them as a staff. That's why it really means much more because I really had a bigger hand in recruiting these guys. The other guys came when I came, so obviously it was a tremendous relationship I had with them. It's much more special with these seniors being involved in their recruiting process.

MEDIA: Coach, will you just talk about the development of Randal Falker and where he was when you got him coming out of high school and how he's developed into the player that he is right now?

COACH CHRIS LOWERY: I think the biggest thing, you know, is the kind -- to kind of sum it all up, which one wasn't going to watch him play. We saw him and didn't like him. Payne went back and I was like well, you know, then we sent Coach Weber, and he didn't know for sure what he wanted. Randal would tell you why are you guys watching me. He would say those things. I'm glad we kept recruiting him because we obviously saw something in him that he didn't see within himself, so he's -- he's probably gotten yelled at more than anybody in our program the last three years, but he's obviously grown the most as a player than anybody in the last three years, so we've been very tough on him and very demanding of him because we -- we can see how special he can be if he consistently shows up. That's what we've talked to Randal about, you have to show up, Randal. You have to try to be dominant every time you step on the floor. sometimes it's hard for him to be that consistent, but he's really grown by leaps and bounds.

MEDIA: Chris, how when you look at your own development, how have you progressed? Where are you better as a coach today than you were the day that you took this head coaching job?

COACH CHRIS LOWERY: I'm three years in. I think that's the biggest thing. Obviously I was very young when I had a chance, and those guys we had my first year really understood everything verbatim that we needed to do and could repeat it without me saying it, and in that second year most of them didn't know what we were doing, and we had to really focus and get back into doing a lot of teaching, and taking the program where the vision that I had for it to be, so I mean, obviously I've grown, you know. Hopefully we've grown as a team and a program in those years, but I think any time you have consistency with success, it obviously looks like that I'm becoming a better coach, I guess. But you know, we have good players. That's a direct reflection of those guys and their willingness to sacrifice self for the team.

Wichita State Head Coach Mark Turgeon and Student-Athlete Quotes

Mark Turgeon

Opening Statement: Like every team, it's a new season. I'm sure you've heard that a few times today. We're excited with the opportunity. We've got three guys up here obviously that could be their last hurrah so it's an important time for our team. We've had a great week of practice and looking forward to, you know, playing in this tournament. We know we got a tough draw with Missouri State. They've had a heck of a year, got a nice team. We're looking forward to playing them tomorrow.

MEDIA: Could you guys just summarize the attitude as you hit St. Louis here?

RYAN WILSON: I think our attitude as a team is really focused. We've had a really good week in practice, and I think everybody on the team knows the task that we have at hand is huge, but we've just got to take it one game at a time and see where it goes from there.

KARON BRADLEY: Yeah. I mean, just like him, I mean, I think we're more focused as we've been all year. I mean, this is a new season for us. Everyone is excited to be here, you know, and we're just ready to play.

KYLE WILSON: Same thing these two guys said. I think we're pretty loose. I mean, there's really not a lot of pressure on us. We're just looking forward to getting out there and playing.

MEDIA: All three seniors, just talk about the team that swept you guys this year, your thoughts going into that game.

KYLE WILSON: I'm looking forward to it. I've always – I don't know. I've always like playing against Missouri State. I feel that me personally I usually play pretty well against them, and you know, they've beaten us both times we've played them, so obviously we want to get a little revenge back, so I'm looking forward to it, you know. I was happy when I found out that is who we were playing.

KARON BRADLEY: I mean, I was just as excited, too. I think it's just all about doing the things that we did do in those two games against them, you know. It's just all about what it comes down to is playing hard, taking it possession by possession.

RYAN WILSON: I think we have to go into this game with a little chip on our shoulder. We have to not make the same mistakes that we made the first two games and try and come up with a victory.

MEDIA: One of the big problems in both the Missouri State games was the number of 3s they made against you and the percentage. Karon, could you talk about your challenge defending the 3?

KARON BRADLEY: Yeah. That's something we have to do a better job, you know, getting out at the shooters. We need to be able to step out, you know, especially with guys like Blake Ahearn, you know. They've got a lot of other great shooters out there, so it's very important for us.

MEDIA: Coming into this game, just the excitement, the beginning of the year to where it is now, how do you reenergize yourself going into the tournament? It's something you probably shouldn't have to do but as seniors coming into this game, having to win three?

RYAN WILSON: I think as a team we know if we don't win a couple games down here this weekend, they could be our last. Especially for us three up here, this could be our last games for Wichita State, so we've got to focus, you know, and do the task at hand and just take it one game at a time.

KARON BRADLEY: Yeah. I mean, just like he said, I mean, this -- this could be it, and you know, you've got to give it all, you know with your time on the court. Like he has been saying, it's been an exciting time for us, you know, this whole year. You know, it's just exciting to keep playing right now. We still have an opportunity, and that's the great thing that everybody's got to look forward to.

KYLE WILSON: Looking at the big picture, our goal from the beginning of the year was to get to the NCAA tournament and we still have a chance. That's a big motivator for a lot of us is trying to get back there and that's why we're motivated to win games here.

MEDIA: Kyle, is there -- when you talk about that motivation and getting back to the NCAA, do you feel any sense of desperation at all, and is it an advantage in any way to come in here knowing that you have to win as opposed to last year when you knew that your fate was pretty well in hand?

KYLE WILSON: You know, I'm not feeling any type of desperation. I think that's when you start putting pressure on yourself and then you don't play as well as you're capable, so you know, I'm just looking at it as an opportunity, an exciting opportunity to go out and play the game that we all love, and you know, I think if I approach it that way, then I'll be more successful when I'm out there.

MEDIA: As compared to last year, is it easier to play with -- from this spot? Obviously you'd rather be in the number one spot. As far as being motivated and so forth, is it easier to have that motivation there for you as opposed to having to manufacture it?

KYLE WILSON: I don't know if it's necessarily any easier. I mean, every time we come in to play in St. Louis, I mean, we want to win it. Wichita State hasn't won the tournament here in a while, so I mean, that could be motivation, too, just to win the tournament.

MEDIA: For all you guys, I'm going to ask Missouri State this question, if they think that you guys are a dangerous team, and I'm sure they're going to say you are. What do you guys think? Are you a dangerous team?

KYLE WILSON: I think so, definitely. You know, I think we've proven this year that we can be a really, really good team, and it's just, you know, whether or not we show up ready to play, and I think right now everybody's really focused, looking forward to the game tomorrow, and you know, I think if we keep that mindset, keep focused, we have a chance of playing the way we want.

KARON BRADLEY: I mean, once this team is playing on all cylinders on the defensive end and really sharing the ball and playing together, you know, we really have shown how great we can be. We get hot and our defense is going good and we're knocking down shots, I think so.

RYAN WILSON: I think we're a dangerous team. You know, in a few of our ballgames this year, a few possessions here and there determined the outcome of the game. I think if we just shore up stuff like that, we'll be fine.

MEDIA: Talk about P.J. and his availability.

COACH TURGEON: He's fine. P.J. is the same. He wears a cast all day and tapes it up for practice and games, so a tough kid. He's coming off a big game. He played really well at Creighton, 16 and 12, you know. He's got a tough matchups for him. Chaney is a big body, can battle him, and then, you know, he's going to have to guard multiple guys again tomorrow for us and do a good job. He's important. I thought the game changed in Wichita when P.J. picked up his third foul, and so he's important, but he's available. What he can do, he'll do as well as he can.

MEDIA: Mark, just to follow up on what Ryan was saying before he left, that there have been a lot of games where there have just been a few plays either way and you make those plays and the outcome changes, but obviously last year you made those plays. You won those games. This year you're not. How as a coach do you, you know, what do you say to the players. How do you get them to really believe that that's what they're going to do and then to actually execute and make those plays and turn this around?

COACH TURGEON: We have this year, too. We won a lot of close games early, so this team's done it. We've won some close games in the league play. Just more so than -- than any team I've had, I think we've lost those close games, so how do I do it? You just keep coaching them. You keep tweaking little things to help them. You know, the big thing I've talked about with the kids this week is playing with confidence and having fun. It's easily said, hard to do, so we've been talking about it quite a bit, and a lot of our so-called failures this year, if 17-13 is a failure, has been confidence in close game situations. We put our heads down a little bit too quickly, so that's what happens when your expectations are so high and you don't quite meet those, so we're going to coach with a lot of confidence, and hopefully we'll play that way, and hopefully tweak just enough things to -- to help us, you know, win a close game tomorrow night. I hope it's close. It's expected to be close, and if we just do enough and give them confidence, maybe they'll overcome it.

MEDIA: Blake Ahearn, except for his freshman year, has really struggled in his building and this is his home town. I'm going to assume your defensive strategy will be more than relying on past history. What's some of the keys to shutting him down?

COACH TURGEON: I didn't realize he struggled in this building. That's good news. I'll sleep better tonight. No. I think in our building, just a few weeks ago, a couple weeks ago we let him get behind us on penetration. He's really good at circling behind penetration. We have to stay a lot closer to him, not let him make his first shot. If they make the first couple, shooters tend to get hot, and I think you've got to keep him off the foul line. Blake is one of those guys that is pretty dramatic. He flops around and throws his arms around. Hopefully we'll have strong enough officials that they won't give him the calls. If you can be aware of him and not let him get to the foul line, you've got a good chance, but boy, has he gotten better as a player. It's amazing. He was just a shooter when he got here. Now he's a driver, he gets to the foul line, and he has a big range game and is a great passer on top of it. It's kind of neat to see guys evolve like he's evolved. He used to be pretty atrocious on defense as Barry would tell you, now he's a pretty good defender.

MEDIA: How is Sean's ankle this week?

COACH TURGEON: Sean's had a tough week. He reinjured it on Monday, limped on it on Tuesday, and we gave him yesterday off. We'll see how he is today. I'm not expecting -- I'm expecting him to play, but I'm not expecting him to be, you know, a hundred percent. I'm thinking 75, 80 percent, and we'll just see if the adrenaline kicks in and he can show that he can guard somebody. We'll keep him on the court, but otherwise, we'll just give him a few minutes and probably not go back with him.

MEDIA: Mark, is there a number of wins or a goal for this tournament that you feel like you have to get just to have a post season?

COACH TURGEON: All we've talked about is three. I mean, that's what everybody's talking about. Some teams are talking about four, obviously, but you know, Jim, I've been so down is a good word to put it with the way we've finished. I haven't even looked. I couldn't tell you -- I couldn't tell you standings. I mean, I know where my friends stand. I know where North Carolina stands in the ACC. I know where Kansas stands. I know where Gonzaga and all those teams are. Besides that, I really don't know. We'd just like to win a game first and then see where that takes us. Like -- like Ryan said, we know what we have to do. We know we're capable of doing it, and you know, the hardest one is the first one, and if we can figure out a way to get the first one, I think that would help. I think one win helps if you're talking about keeping your post season streak alive. I think one really helps. I don't think it guarantees anything. Our league's got a lot of respect around the country. We've got some really good wins under our belt, a lot of good road wins, and but we can't finish the season with 5 straight losses and expect to be a part of post season, so we definitely have to win tomorrow night. You don't know that for sure, but I think that would really help us.