



# 2007 State Farm Missouri Valley Conference Tournament Game One Press Conference

March 1

St. Louis, Mo.

## Drake Head Coach Dr. Tom Davis and Student-Athlete Quotes

### Dr. Tom Davis

Opening Statement: I'll just start by saying that that's -- if that game isn't a reflection of what this league is all about this year, I don't know what is. Each team just played lights out on the offensive end. Neither team could get any defensive traction because they both shot so well. We turned it over 10 times in a 100-point game. That's pretty low. They only turned it over 8. That's a reflection of how well both teams played. I congratulate Steve and Evansville. He does a heck of a job coaching. I'm very proud of the team. The way we played tonight is a picture of our season, too. We just hung in there and tried to find a way and didn't give up very easily. I'm really proud of these three guys as well as the whole team.

**MEDIA:** Klayton, that play looked pretty familiar. Is that the same play from the game on Saturday, I take it?

**KLAYTON KORVER:** Yeah. I just caught it and shot it. I figured since I made it the last time, I might make it again this time.

**MEDIA:** This is for any of you three. How much fun is game like this, and especially how much fun is when you come out on the winning end?

**AJAY CALVIN:** It's very fun. It was a hard-fought game. Everybody fought hard. Everybody played good defense. We rebounded. We hit big shots. Josh hit a couple big shots. Klayton did, too. Al did, too. We all fed off each other the whole game.

**JOSH YOUNG:** These are the kind of games you play for. You have to give a lot of credit to Evansville, but we wanted it a lot. We wanted it more. We shot the ball well and picked up the win.

**MEDIA:** Could you talk about how getting your first Valley experience? You didn't seem to back down much.

**JOSH YOUNG:** I played these guys for the conference season so I kind of knew what to expect. I had mindset coming in that it was another conference game, and it worked out.

**MEDIA:** Klayton, can you take us a little bit more through that play?

**KLAYTON KORVER:** I go in the corner, and Al is in the high post looking for Ajay. He tries to draw the guy guarding us in the middle. If I have room, I shoot it. I can kick it back to Al or whatever. I kind of made up my mind if I had room, I was going to shoot it. I thought I'd make it. I'm glad it went in.

**MEDIA:** Ajay, what's going through -- and Klayton, what's going through your mind at the end of the second half in regulation, those last 25 seconds of regulation?

**KLAYTON KORVER:** The free throws, that he missed the free throws. I was wondering how much time was on the clock when the ball was getting so slapped around. We kept hitting the ball, and I'm glad that he missed them and that we were able to get the ball in our hands.

**AJAY CALVIN:** I don't know. There was a lot going through my head. My mom didn't make it to the game. She said if we win, she'll come tomorrow. I was hoping she didn't have to change her flight plans. I would be real disappointed.

**MEDIA:** Josh, I mean, you answered so many of Holsinger's points and kept up with him.

**JOSH YOUNG:** He's a great player, and he had a really good game. My teammates did a good job of getting me open and getting good looks. Today I was able to knock them down.

**KLAYTON KORVER:** Josh is fearless. He's older than he looks. He told me he was 17, but he's 18. He's fearless and not afraid to shoot it. We're glad to have him on the team.

**MEDIA:** Can any of you guys talk about the Nick Grant steal and dunk? You guys hadn't had a field goal in a long time, and you really needed a stop, and he came up with about the biggest play you made.

**JOSH YOUNG:** Well, you know, Nick is one of the best defenders in the league. He came up with the play we needed, and he was able to get it for us. He stepped up and showed senior leadership at a time when we really needed.

**MEDIA:** Could each of you guys just kind of give your thoughts about playing Southern tomorrow and what to expect tomorrow?

**KLAYTON KORVER:** I think it's close so there will be a lot of fans. It will be the opposite of tonight's game. It will be 45 points or something like that. We have to play better defense, take our time on offense and try to wear them out. It will be a battle, but we're going to go out there and give it everything we've got.

**AJAY CALVIN:** I would say the same thing Klayton said, good defense. They'll hold us to a small amount of points. We can't be jittery with the ball. We've got to pass it around and get good shots.

**JOSH YOUNG:** They have the best defense in the nation, so we have to take our time and play like we know how, you know. It will probably be about a lot more defense and a lot less offense, but it still should be fun.

**MEDIA:** Josh, there's a stretch in the first half where I think you guys scored 19 points and in three minutes you got several 3s. Did you feel like you were back in Lawton in the stretch?

**JOSH YOUNG:** I felt like I was in high school letting it fly. My teammates helped me get in a rhythm, and I shot well.

**MEDIA:** Ajay and Klayton, the team has been criticized in the past for not winning close games this year. In this kind of atmosphere and this type of level, can you tell us what it's like to get a close win in this type of tournament atmosphere?

**AJAY CALVIN:** It gives you a lot of confidence for other games. You never know what will happen tomorrow. It might be close tomorrow. We've been through it today, and it will help us.

**KLAYTON KORVER:** We just like playing. I'm sure everybody saw the shaved hair. That shows the kind of team we are. We all like each other. We're going to do it together. That's what we say every time we break the huddle is together. We're just trying to play our game.

**MEDIA:** Tom, no hesitation calling Klayton's number again. The play worked, and in the timeout you had no doubt that's what you were doing.

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** Yeah. You know, Klayton described it pretty well, I think, but it's a multi-dimensional play, so he can look in other directions, but when you can go to your best pressure player like that first, then he can look at Ajay or he can look at Nick or Al or Josh, whoever -- wherever he wants to look, but you could tell the way he described it, you know

where he's looking first which is what you want, and you know, we're a pretty good ball club. I don't know how good we could have been had he been healthy the season. He's still not a hundred percent. He wasn't able to practice much this week, and he still can play that well which tells you how good a player this guy is. If we could get him healthy, the league would really see something. Next year, his senior year. I think there are enough good young guys along with him that he could -- it could really be something to watch. He just sort of is scratching the surface health wise, and yet he's still a pretty good player.

**MEDIA:** Tom, can you talk about Bucky Cox and him coming in?

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** That's a good point, Jennifer, because Klayton was mismatched. Bucky has two or three inches. Lou was in foul trouble. Lou couldn't get himself going on the defensive end last night. He was a real stopper at our place. Tonight he just didn't get there, and so Bucky Cox came off the bench and gave us some really good defensive moments. He battled, which I'm really proud of, because Metzger is physically stronger and more mature. Bucky went to war with him down there, and he got some fouls. They're hard to beat. They've got a good inside game, both he and Strickland inside as well as their two guard shooters. I thought Bucky was key in our being able to hang in there tonight.

**MEDIA:** Coach, was the game plan to shoot the 3, or was that just, you know, once they started going in, you just kept putting them up?

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** We've not been a good three-point shooting team primarily because Klayton has not been healthy, and Josh, as he gets more games under his belt, is getting more confidence in his shot. He's been somewhat streaky. He's had some really good moments. You get a little hesitant when you're a freshman. Tonight was one of those nights with those two leading us, it gives other guys the confidence to look for the outside shot, too. It only takes a couple of good shooters. Evansville is a good example of that as well. We made 15 3s, and Josh and Klayton made 10 of them. Al Stewart was 2 for 2.

**MEDIA:** He was 0 for the season.

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** He's so unselfish. One of the reason he had so many assists is he's looking for someone else first. He can see it pretty good. He's got a pretty good shot. That made us a little better ball club in the last several weeks.

**MEDIA:** Tom, 5 seconds to go in regulation, Webster at the line for 2, probably in that situation, what's going through your mind right there?

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** You're just trying to weigh the options. The first thing is to call time out or not, and we decided not. We were going to try to grab the ball and go with it and run and get it down the court. Of course, you saw what happened. It got tipped around, and we didn't get possession. We were a little lucky in that instance to be able to go to overtime, and we were able to take advantage.

**MEDIA:** Was it difficult for the team to adjust to so many defensive schemes on both sides?

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** I don't know what Coach Merfeld said. We tried everything. We tried the triangle and 2 and box and 1 and straight zone and straight man and switching man and trapping man. Both teams were sharp with the ball. They were passing it well, getting it to the open man and then they were sticking it, so there was no question that the offenses were superior to the defenses tonight, and that's what Southern Illinois has going for it is that they are very, very good on the defensive end, so we know it's going to look like a different game tomorrow night for sure, partially because of how strong they are in all ways but in particular on the defensive end. They're very, very good.

**MEDIA:** You said tomorrow night, but I think actually it's a noon start, Tom.

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** I was going to try to get them to switch that to a night time game. I guess they probably won't do that. You just get ready to go, you know. The guys are young guys. They just -- they think they're ready now. They think they're ready to get back out there and play again. We'll see if we can get them ready by -- what time is it, noon? 12:00 tomorrow? We've got 12 hours, you know, so that's about what it will be by the time they get back and shower and get something to eat and calm down. The pregame meal will be at 8:00 tomorrow. We'll probably have an hour and a half practice in there or something. I'm just kidding.

# Evansville Head Coach Steve Merfeld and Student-Athlete Quotes

## Steve Merfeld

Opening Statement: That was a hell of a college basketball game. It's really been the story of our season, and I have no answers. These guys deserved better. For whatever reason, we just haven't gotten it.

**MEDIA:** Matt, with five and a half seconds left, you were -- you did all your free throws I think up until then. Was it -- were you feeling pressure? What happened there, I guess?

**MATT WEBSTER:** I just missed them, I guess. I don't know what to say, I guess. I was just trying to be a team leader, and in order to be a leader you've got to step up and hit the clutch shot. I feel like I let my whole team down, including me and the other four seniors, and it's a tough way to go out. I just missed them, and I let my entire team down and my coaches.

**MEDIA:** Jay, how hard was it staying composed when they kept hitting shots? They hit at one point 8 straight three-pointers in the first half, but you guys were able to keep it together and stay in the game. Can you talk about it at all?

**JASON HOLSINGER:** It's college basketball in the Missouri Valley. Teams are going to make shots. That's not we're not used to. We made some runs of our own.

**MEDIA:** Matt, I know it's a little tough to think about it now, but sitting here looking back, can you summarize your four years at Evansville?

**MATT WEBSTER:** Yeah. Obviously like coach said, it's the same outcome. We fell pretty much short every year, but if I had to do it again, I would definitely come back. I enjoyed being here, the community, the school, the coaches, the players. It's been a good career. I just wish obviously a few things would have went differently.

**MEDIA:** Jason, what is it about Drake here in the last week? Is it just the looks they're giving you or are you just shooting with a whole ton of confidence.

**JASON HOLSINGER:** I think I'm shooting it with some confidence the second half of the season. With the way they play, you get a few more looks than you normally would when teams play man to man. That's about all I've got to say.

**MEDIA:** For either Matt or Jason. There's a lot of games in the Valley that 96 points would be a winning score. Does it make it that much tougher to swallow?

**JASON HOLSINGER:** The way Drake plays, get up and down, they press, and it was an overtime game. It's a lot of points, but in this league to win you have to defend, and we just didn't do that tonight.

**MEDIA:** Steve, the play of Korver, you've seen that three times now, twice in a week. Were you looking for that option, or is it just the matter of a kid hitting the shot with the guy in his face?

**COACH STEVE MERFELD:** We talk about it for sure in the timeout, and the kid's just amazing making shots. Same location, same result.

**MEDIA:** You get 29 points out of Matt Webster. Is there anything else he could have done to win the game?

**COACH TOM DAVIS:** He had a great career. It's like in my opening statements. He deserves better, and I'm baffled. I have no answers. Again, it's been the story of our whole year. We were right there, right there, right there. You just don't get a bounce, don't get a shot, don't make a play. I feel bad for those kids because they've done a hell of a job for this program and they deserve better. That's all I can say.

**MEDIA:** I'll ask you the same question I asked Jay. That had to be maddening sitting on the side line watching a team that's shooting 31% on the year on three-pointers hit 9 in a row at one point against you. What was going through your mind at that time?

**COACH STEVE MERFELD:** Well, you know, it was Klayton and Josh I think had 7 of them. That's what they do. Stewart banks one in at the end of the first half, you figure it's going to be a long night. Our guys hung in there, made some plays, put ourselves in position to win, and again, it's -- we've been there and just for whatever reason cannot experience what they deserve.

**MEDIA:** You talked about it a little bit after the SIU game last week, your team having a never say die attitude. Was tonight just another example of that?

**COACH STEVE MERFELD:** We're going home, so I guess we're done, but this team, this group has had tremendous resilience. They never quit, they believed in themselves, and it's just very, very frustrating.