



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

March 1

St. Louis, Mo.

## Indiana State Head Coach Royce Waltman and Student-Athlete Quotes

### Royce Waltman

Opening Statement: Well, I'm pleased with the win mostly because we've had so many games here late in the season where we played teams even in the first half and they make a little run on us and we sort of fold and let it get away. Tonight we battled back. We were down 11 with about 9 and a half minutes to go. We did a good job of fighting back, something we haven't done.

**MEDIA:** Talk me through the final play and what created the shot that put you guys ahead.

**MARICO STINSON:** It was penetration, and when he got the ball, he looked up and seen me and passed and I was waiting and I just shot.

**MEDIA:** You guys have had so many times in the last 10 minutes where you kind of faded down the stretch and tonight was the opposite. What do you think was the cause of you guys going the other way tonight as opposed to some of the other games late in the season?

**GABE MOORE:** Well, either you win or you go home, and tonight we didn't want to go home, so we just -- we just kept battling just like Coach talked about in the locker room. I think there was nine minutes left in the game and we was down 11. We was like come on guys, you can do it. We came up with the victory.

**JAY TUNNELL:** I was going to say the same thing. The bench support we got tonight was huge. Every time they made a run on us, the guys behind the bench kept us in the game, and we put a little run together and everybody found a little bit of life and we were able to pull it off.

**MEDIA:** Jay, you had a great first half. You got a lot of free throws. Was it something you were able to take advantage of in the Illinois State defense?

**JAY TUNNELL:** In the first half they didn't double as much. I got a couple of offensive rebounds which always helps. We've been making an effort to try to get as deep as we can in the post lately, and it's been paying off for me and the rest of the guys in easier buckets.

**MEDIA:** Gabe, talk about how you and some of the other guys played defensively, your upswing especially against Eldridge who went 0 for 5. That's another pattern that you guys haven't been strong. At what point do you think it changed for you guys.

**GABE MOORE:** It was a lot of team defense, you know. Sometimes he would beat me off the dribble, but Jay was coming over and trying to take charges. I think that affected his shot, so on the defensive end we started playing more team defense instead of one-on-one. Once we started playing team defense, we got a couple stops to help us get back in the game.

**MEDIA:** Jay, how did you guys when you were down, you were actually down 12 at the 11:41 mark. How did the temptation to sag as you guys have had in the other games, how did you fight this off this time?

**JAY TUNNELL:** I mean, you have to. Like Gabe said, this is the time of the season where you lose or go home. You can have regular season games where you have a bad night and go to the next one, but with this, this is our season. As soon as we lose, we're done. We're fighting with our backs against the wall. We have no intention of going home quietly.

**MEDIA:** Jay, what were you thinking when that last shot by Illinois State went off?

**JAY TUNNELL:** Don't go in. I came over to help Gabe. We weren't supposed to switch that screen but it ended up happening that way anyway. I got over there and he kind of threw a little bit of a floater. As soon as he shot, I whipped my head around and hoped it wasn't going in. I saw Trent going down on the ground to get it and they pointed to Trent for the last foul. It felt great.

**MEDIA:** To any of the guys, could you talk about the challenge of playing Creighton tomorrow night?

**GABE MOORE:** It's a big challenge. Creighton is a very good team, a very well coached team. We have to come with the same intensity, defensive pressure, and come in and play. Hopefully we can play better basketball and get another victory to advance.

**JAY TUNNELL:** I was just going to say that Creighton's a great basketball team. They're not second in the league for nothing, but I think we have a lot of confidence going into this game knowing that we have beat them before, and so I don't think there's going to be any doubt in our mind that we can go out tomorrow and get ourselves through the weekend.

**MEDIA:** Coach, just a follow-up question. You beat Creighton. A two-part question. You beat Creighton this year. What is the key to beating the Blue Jays? You've been in this situation. How tough is it to play late at night and turn around and play at 6:00 tomorrow night?

**COACH ROYCE WALTMAN:** You know, it's not as tough as like the winners of our first game tonight have to come right back at what is it, noon? I try not to look at it as being tough because those are advantages given to the team who finish the regular season first and second. They deserve those advantages. We'll be able to sleep in, and then get up and get going on Creighton tomorrow morning, so yeah. It's always tough to come back that quickly, but even the teams that didn't have to play, if they're going to win the thing, they have to do it three days in a row.

**MEDIA:** When you look at these two games together tonight, is this session a pretty good reflection of what this league has been about, what you've been going through in the last few months.

**COACH ROYCE WALTMAN:** I think that's a great comment. You come in here watch four teams that finished in the bottom of the league and you saw some pretty good competitive basketball out there. I agree completely that it's a reflection of how this league is. The good guys didn't even play tonight. They looked pretty good to me.

**MEDIA:** Royce, you know, it was clear that there was some shots made that kind of got you guys going, several 3s. Defensively was there any point where you think the team kind of got it together kind of collectively, pulled it together, because this was looking like a lot of the games in the last half of the season?

**COACH ROYCE WALTMAN:** That's a good question, Tom, but I can't say this is where we're going to stop. We did a little bit down the stretch where we tried to get the better defenders in on those possessions. I'm talking about the last 2, 2 and a half minutes, so no. I didn't see a point, you know, they missed a few outside shots, and I don't want to bring it down to luck, but we were defending I thought okay in the first half. Man, they made every perimeter shot. Down the stretch they missed a couple of those shots.

**MEDIA:** You gave the steal up to Eldridge, and that's when they were up 1. Did that turn the tide?

**COACH ROYCE WALTMAN:** That was a big point. He does that about once a game.

**MEDIA:** How big is that shot for Marico since he's a freshman to hit that shot and win the tournament?

**COACH ROYCE WALTMAN:** That's great for him, but I just think, first of all, freshmen aren't like they used to be. They've all played AAU basketball against great players. They don't have quite the anxieties that they used to have, and now he's played a whole season. He shot the ball. When he's been open, he shot the ball well. He and Cole when they've been open have shot the ball well. They've had difficulty knowing when they're open, but I was not surprised he made that.

## Illinois State Head Coach Porter Moser and Student-Athlete Quotes

### Porter Moser

**Opening Statement:** Obviously it's a really heartbreaking loss for us. I felt we were in control most of the game, and going into this game, a couple things that we, you know, felt about Indiana State is we were afraid of the barrage of 3s, a barrage of 3s. We've seen them do it this year. They haven't done it lately, but when they do it, they have a chance to beat you. They made 7 of 10. Wurtz hit one, Stinson hit the big one in the corner. Combine that with our inability to make the free throws, we had a chance to make some separation with the free throws, and we didn't do that. Combine that with the barrage of 3s that Indiana State hit. I hate to see Greg Dilligard go out on a game that was -- that we felt was right there, and we let it slip away at the end.

**MEDIA:** Well, Osiris, do you guys think you got a little tentative once you got the 12-point lead in the second half?

**OSIRIS ELDRIDGE:** I think so. We let up a little bit and stopped being aggressive, and doing that, you know, caused them to like score, score baskets. I think so.

**MEDIA:** Osiris, you had -- in the first half you had a couple big buckets. In the second half you couldn't get quite as much to fall. Was that something they switched up you on defensively, or did you just go cold?

**OSIRIS ELDRIDGE:** I think I went a little cold. I tried to get to the basket. I kind of forced a couple shots. I was trying to get to the basket to draw some fouls to get myself in the game, but I think I did get a little cold toward the second half.

**MEDIA:** This is for either one of the guys. Offensively the last 9 and a half minutes you guys had 6 points after being pretty hot up to that point. What happened? Was it just missing shots, or did they do something different defensively, or what do you think caused that kind of dry spell at the end of the game?

**ANTHONY SLACK:** Basically it was just not executing things like we've practiced all year, a couple bad turnovers and they started hitting shots, and that gave them confidence. That basically let them back in the game.

**MEDIA:** Osiris, talk me through the last 14 seconds when you guys called that time out and you had the shot there. What was the play in the huddle? What did you guys call? What were you looking for there?

**OSIRIS ELDRIDGE:** It was supposed to be a play to get to the basket and kick out for a shot, but I had drove. I thought I had it, and I think I put up a forced shot. It had a chance, and it rimmed out.

**COACH PORTER MOSER:** It was a ball screen play. We had Osiris coming off a high ball screen. We cleared out that side, and we let Osiris go one-on-one. He got to the rim. In the next three years I'm going to call a lot of plays for Osiris to get the ball to the rim, that's for sure. I don't think it was forced. He's made big plays all year long for us at the end of the games. We cleared out a side for him and he got to the rim and he missed the shot. I'm going to take that shot and go with him a lot in his next three years.

**MEDIA:** Coach, the same question the last half of the second half. What do you think happened offensively that you were not able to get much going?

**COACH PORTER MOSER:** Well, I think we got to the foul line, and we missed some free throws. I thought we took a couple quick 3s. I remember Boo took one and Dom took one in the corner. We didn't convert that. Levi was in and out of foul trouble. I don't think Levi ever got in the flow the whole game. He's been our best offensive threat, and I don't think he ever got in the flow. When you give a team like that -- we gave them confidence like one of you guys said. They made 7 of 10 3s, and that barrage of 3s combined with our missed free throws gave them confidence. You can see -- no matter what we were saying in the huddle for them to keep their head up, you could see they were starting to play not to lose and you can't play that way. The momentum switched, they had the confidence, they hit some threes. Wurtz nailed a 3 and you could see their confidence going. You can't play that way. They were a little tentative on the shots and you can't win that way.

**MEDIA:** Coach, you alluded to earlier Greg Dilligard's final game. Can you just talk about the career he's had and what he's given you in his time here?

**COACH PORTER MOSER:** You know, as -- as a coach, the profession I signed up for, I'm defined by wins and losses. I accept that. Greg Dilligard will never be defined by wins and losses, in my book. He didn't have a championship ring on his finger in his time at Illinois State, but he will never be defined by this game, by not winning 25 games. He's as high character as kid. He's as hard working kid as I've ever been around, and I hate for him that he didn't win. I accept it. I know coaches and myself, you get defined by wins and losses. I'll never define Greg Dilligard. I hope none of the people who watched him play, you know, remember him that way because he was -- he's an unbelievable character kid who laid his heart on the floor tonight.

**MEDIA:** Coach, I don't have the statistics here, but in the first half you gave up a lot of second-chance points. Can you talk about offensive rebounds?

**COACH PORTER MOSER:** Well, we call them trouble plays. We're up 3 at half. We had one play, Roberto through it in his hand and laid it up and Dom did the same thing. That's 4 points right there. Then we had 15 second-chance points. I thought we had an advantage inside and let them have 15 second-half points. It was a 3-point game at half to Indiana State's credit the way they battled on the glass, and you know, we had too many trouble plays in the first half with just two passes just handing it to them for lanes and the rebound. Definitely the rebounds hurt us in the first half.