



2007 State Farm Missouri  
Valley Conference Tournament  
Game Six Press Conference  
March 2  
St. Louis, Mo.

## Missouri State Head Coach Barry Hinson and Student-Athlete Quotes

### Barry Hinson

Opening Statement: Well, I know it was a heck of a game for you to watch. It was a heck of a game to coach in, and I mean, they played outstanding, and our kids played outstanding. I just think it's one heck of a college basketball game to watch, and I told you this yesterday. I'm going to tell you again. I love my players. That's good enough right there.

**MEDIA:** Nate, can you talk about your offensive rebound and the foul shots towards the end of the game?

**NATHAN BILYEU:** Well, I figured I'd make it interesting by missing one, you know. It really wasn't the game plan but it worked out. On the offensive rebound I knew we had to get the ball back and get to the line. I knew if I wouldn't have got it Deven would have got it because I shoved him out of the way.

**MEDIA:** Deven, can you kind of talk about it's been a year since you guys waited to get back to the spot how you made the most of it tonight?

**DEVEN MITCHELL:** Me sitting out last year, I seen how upset the team was out there getting beat last year, but we had a good hard practice. Everybody was prepared for this you know. They said beating a team three times in a row, the third time is the hardest. We had to come out and do what we needed to do.

**MEDIA:** This is for Blake and Nate. Can you talk about the lift Deven gave you guys in the first half?

**BLAKE AHEARN:** Well, we kind of expect it from him. When he checks in the game, we know what we're getting from him. He's bringing energy and effort and you know, he's -- we missed him last year. We missed him a lot, and we're glad to have him back and it just shows how much he helps us out.

**NATHAN BILYEU:** Basically you can't replace Deven Mitchell. You know, when he went down last year, it was a killer for us. He stepped into his role this year and fulfilled it and actually surpassed it. We're just lucky to have him here and healthy.

**MEDIA:** Blake, talk about Wichita State's 3-point barrage and how you had to weather that.

**BLAKE AHEARN:** They got some open looks. We weren't talking too well, communicating on defense. The coach talked about it at halftime how we need to step up and communicate more and just contest. If they're going to make 3s, coach wants a hand in their face to be contested, so there's definitely an emphasis as far as coming out in the second half.

**MEDIA:** Nate, you might have talked about this already, I'm sorry. I just came in. Can you describe your two three-pointers. Those were your 11th and 12th of the season. Were those set up or you were just feeling it?

**NATHAN BILYEU:** I don't know if coach has ever set up a three-point attempt for me, but I don't know. I was just in the flow with it. The one I hit from deep was because of the shot clock running down and just thankfully it went in.

**MEDIA:** Deven, I won't get to see you much in the box score, just two points. That dunk that got you guys started tonight, tell about how that started you guys.

**DEVEN MITCHELL:** We really -- I don't know. Rico, he's our top man. When Blake threw that pass, Rico just seen all rim. He wouldn't have cared who was in front of him. Kyle, he dunks out at practice every day. In the last couple days that's all he's been trying to do. We need that killer instinct to attack the basket. I was yelling for him and acting like I dunked it. That's what we need.

**MEDIA:** And for Blake and Nate, just talk about playing Creighton tomorrow, the third meeting with them.

**BLAKE AHEARN:** You know, we -- the first time we played them, we played good for about 36 minutes and then at the end we gave it away the last couple minutes. When they came to our place, it came to the wire. They're a good basketball team, and I think it will be a good game. It might come down to the wire just like this game did. We'll just go out there and compete.

**NATHAN BILYEU:** Since I've been here, Creighton has been one of our rivals, and it's a great thing to have a rivalry because it's so competitive, but they're a great basketball team. I know we have to show up with our best effort to compete with them and that's what we plan to do.

**MEDIA:** Nate, the defense on Kyle Wilson, how important is it to keep him under control?

**NATHAN BILYEU:** It's very important. He's one of their main guys, a go-to guy, you know, and Deven did a great job on him tonight, and I tried helping out a little bit, but it was mostly Deven Mitchell and Drew Richards, and he just continues to show everybody that he's a great player in the league, and he's going to be a great play overseas.

**MEDIA:** Barry, at halftime they made every 3-pointer in sight.

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** The biggest thing at halftime is they were making 3 pointers because they were penetrating. We felt we had to do a better job of containment. There's no question our game plan was to stop Wilson. I think our guys did a great job. We were going to give up some three-pointers. We didn't realize they were going to set a Wichita State tournament record tonight shooting 3s but they made the shots. They did great job executing their stuff. It was an unbelievable call by Mark when they had to have a basket. They ran the 3 in the corner and what a great call. What a great execution that was on their part, but I just -- at halftime we said we just gotta extend their defense a little bit better. We've got to be able to contain them, and we did that. I thought for the most part, we did. I thought for the most part our defense in the second half was outstanding. We had 10 steals tonight. That's pretty good defense.

**MEDIA:** Elaborate a little bit about your love for this team. What makes you love this team?

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** Listen to their comments. You asked Nate what a great job he did. He talks about Deven. He talks about Drew. You talk to Blake about something he did, he refers to Deven. You talk to Deven about something, he refers back to somebody else. I mean, I just -- that's what these kids are about. You go back and you look at all the newspaper articles and they don't ever talk about themselves. They talk about everybody else but themselves. How in the world can you not love people like that, and you know, we have a saying in our locker room. It's the first thing you see. It's the first sentence of the first chapter of *The Purpose Driven Life* written by Rick Warren, and the first sentence in the first chapter says it's not about you, and our kids literally believe that. And to see a guy like Deven Mitchell that plays in pain, that wakes up with it every day, spends more time in treatment than he does on the court to have a game like he did tonight and then turn around and thank his teammates, that just makes my life so much easier, and it's a blessing to me.

**MEDIA:** Barry, you probably addressed this at the start, but didn't this look like a game where the two teams wanted the game so badly. Did you have the sense that they wanted it every bit as badly.

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** You saw two teams tonight that just refused to get out there and lose, and the Wichita State that I think you saw tonight is the Wichita State that played earlier in the season. I mean, I don't know. We played about as good as

we could play, and we squeaked out a three-point win, and we've got to give credit to Mark. I mean, they were ready to go, and it certainly started like that with 7-0. I didn't know if we were ever going to score.

**MEDIA:** Just regarding Blake, his numbers may not have been great numbers tonight, but it look like he played with a certain –

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** I'm glad you brought that right now. I'm going to handle that right now. You're right. That's why I like you so much. Blake Ahearn played a great game tonight. He did not play bad in the Scott Trade Center. He missed shots, but he played great. The jinx is gone. Blake played good. Next question.

**MEDIA:** Coach, I know you're a little distanced from it, but can you make sense of what happened to the Wichita State team this year? They start so hot, get up in the top 10 and they just -- whether it's the food poisoning to injury, it seemed like it just spiraled out of control.

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** Well, first of all, in their defense, they're playing in the sixth best conference in the country. It's a bottomless league. You can't take a night off at any time, and in their defense, too, they got off to great start, and you know what? It's hard to come right back in here. In all honesty, they played a great team at first, but it's not near as tough as what we're going to see when we get in the conference. We created a monster in this league. We asked to be one of the best conferences in this country; we got it. Be careful what you wish for. You may get it. That's what we've done. Don't point the finger at them, point the finger at 9 other teams in this league that are doggone good. It's not all their fault. We lost 4 out of 5 in January. We come back and lose on our home floor to SIU and get beat by Winthrop, but they were two great basketball teams. They played their butts off tonight. Did you not think they were pretty good?

**MEDIA:** I don't mean like that. I mean to go from just the high to the low. Regardless of who you're playing against, just sort of, in the coaching profession how tough that must be.

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** Oh, it's tough, but you can understand that the coach -- I'm getting fired up about them because it's part of our conference. That's a pretty doggone good record in a really good conference.

**MEDIA:** Barry, Drew played some great defense for you tonight and was the guy to really get you going offensively at the beginning of the second half.

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** Yeah, he really played offensively, too. The big fellow is getting a little bit of confidence, and we like it when he dunks it. Not a big fan when he shoots it outside the paint, but we really like it when he dunks it. He's got a really high percentage when he does that.

**MEDIA:** Barry, I wonder what you think of this. I sort of think it might be the topsy-turvy twist of the year that the top 4 seeds in the tournament have advanced. Just the way things have gone in the Valley, that seemed almost unpredictable. Do you agree with that or disagree?

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** No, I agree with that. We haven't seen quote, unquote a seed upset yet, but hopefully that will start tomorrow.

**MEDIA:** Barry, I'm going to ask it any way. You can only ask it one way. Some view your game with the Bluejays as being the winner goes to the tournament, the loser goes to the NIT.

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** Those people viewing it, they have no clue. They have absolutely no clue. You know what? They have no clue.

**MEDIA:** Can I follow up a little bit on that.

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** Creighton is going to the NCAA tournament.

**MEDIA:** How about Southwest Missouri State, Missouri State.?

**COACH BARRY HINSON:** I think they deserve to be in the tournament. They deserved to be in it last year. I know one sure fire way we can get there. We can start by winning tomorrow.

## Wichita State Head Coach Mark Turgeon and Student-Athlete Quotes

### Mark Turgeon

Opening Statement: I was really -- I was really, really proud of my guys. Probably the most proud or the best I've felt about us in a long time. We played with tremendous effort. We got in foul trouble. During the game Ryan Martin had to leave and go throw up, come back, try to play, and he just played with tremendous effort and energy. The last 3 minutes we just didn't play smart defensively. We sent them to the foul line twice. We tied it at 6. We fouled Ahearn on a screen, and then we fouled Mitchell on a shot. I just felt like we would have made them take jump shots instead of fouling and putting them at the line, I think we could have come out on top. We could have quit. Bileau throws in a 30-footer, put them up 8, it's been that kind of year for us. I don't know how many that's happened to us this year, but our kids didn't quit. They battled. Matt made shots for us. P.J. made shots, and I was really proud of them. We lost to a hell of a team, Missouri State is really good. Hopefully that will get them in the NCAA tournament because they deserve it.

**MEDIA:** For any of the guys, I'm just curious. The emotions tonight, going from one place in November, December to sitting here now. it's been a roller coaster that I don't think many teams have had to endure.

**KYLE WILSON:** Yeah. It's been hard, you know. We've had our struggles for sure, but you know, coming into this weekend we forgot about all that or tried to, and we were -- we were so focused, I thought, coming into this game. I mean, the looks in the guys' eyes before we went out on the floor, it's something I hadn't seen, you know, in a while. It was good to see, so me personally, I was very confident. I mean, I was thinking, you know, no matter how good Missouri State was going to play, I just thought we were going to battle them and, you know, be in position to win it. I mean, we still were. Things just didn't go our way down the stretch.

**MEDIA:** Is it too complex to pinpoint one moment where things happen, or does it start with something as simple as food poisoning?

**KYLE WILSON:** You know, I mean, I guess you can -- I don't know. I mean, there's a lot of stuff that happened. I mean, you can't pinpoint it on one thing, I don't think, you know. College basketball these days, it's so hard to win games. I mean, our league, it's tough, and you know, I think we proved that this year just with, you know, how well everybody did, and it's tough.

**MEDIA:** For any of the players, was it the break that kind of rejuvenated you guys or what got you focused and ready to go?

**KYLE WILSON:** I don't know. I don't know if it was necessarily the break. I mean, what I've been saying is, I mean, our goal from the beginning of the year was to get to the NCAA tournament, and you know, this was our last chance. I mean, our backs were against the wall, and you know, I think everybody knew that, and we were just determined to come out here and be successful, and you know, it just didn't work out for us.

**MEDIA:** Matt, talk about what you saw on the last play and what happened. Did you feel that you had to rush that shot at all, or what happened on that last play?

**MATT BRAEUER:** Kyle picked up his dribble so I tried to go help him, and whenever he passed to me I looked up and I had about 4.8 seconds or so, and Kyle had the ball screen on the other side but I knew they would switch it, so I figured the best -- the best shot was to penetrate or at least get myself a little open, and I did, and I didn't feel like I needed to rush it, but as soon as I shot it, I knew it was long. I was just praying for about a 4-bounce and it going in.

**MEDIA:** For any of you guys, just talk about the energy and intensity and emotion. It seemed like this was the most we've seen out of you guys in a long time. Just talk about that sort of effort.

**KYLE WILSON:** I mean, we were just -- we were ready to go, and I think the coaches prepared us. I mean, we just played, you know, Missouri State a couple weeks ago and I think we liked our matchup against them, and then I mean, we were just excited for the opportunity. I mean, really no pressure, just go out there and play and have confidence, and I think we did that. I mean, it's just -- it's just hard.

**MEDIA:** Mark, you went with Gal in the starting lineup. You switched a lot of defenses, played a lot of zone. Can you just talk about throwing the changeup and what your thinking was tonight in particular with doing that?

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** Well, if you've followed this for seven years, this is the worst defensive team I've ever had, and I just wasn't going to be able to sleep all summer unless I tried another defense, unless I tried a couple more things. At times I thought it helped us, at other times I thought it hurt us and we didn't practice it enough, obviously, to win a big-time college basketball game, so we just tried to change it up. They're a team you really don't want to zone because they've got a lot of good shooters, but I made up my mind I was going to try it, and so we did. We did some things differently offensively which I thought helped us, and we just keep trying, you know. We just keep trying. That's what you try to do as a coach. You try to make things better, but I was proud of our group tonight, you know. This team's had a lot of things go against it. I mean, it just has, whether it's shots going in from 30 feet or you know, missing layups or, you know, breaks, it just seems like things 7 have gone -- injuries, but our kids really battled tonight, and lost to a heck of a team.

**MEDIA:** For the last shot, I don't even know. Did you have a timeout. Did you think about that?

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** No. We were out of timeouts. We knew they were going to switch everything. The guys were just going to have to make a play, and I thought Matt made it. He had a good look. He shot faked the guy and he got a clean look at the rim. We're putting a ball in a freshman's hands, but he's usually pretty good at reading things. His height usually helps him get a shot off, but we were one play short, you know. It came down to the rebound, and it would be nice to get a rebound down there. We got a stop, and like I said, we talk about getting stops and putting pressure on them because they're thinking NCAA tournament if they win this game. We're thinking about playing Creighton tomorrow, and we're still two games away from that, and you know, we put them at the foul line. That was the difference. If we could have just made them shoot shots every time in the last three minutes, it might have been a different outcome. Instead they got 5 of their last 7 points at the line. To me, that's the difference.

**MEDIA:** Do you think the season's over? Are you hoping for the NIT?

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** We've got a heck of a league, you know. Gary's asking what happened to us. You have no idea unless you're with us what this team's gone through this year. I think we're a pretty good basketball team. Whether we deserve post season, that's up to the experts. Our league will get a lot of recognition. You know, it took a lot of guts to go out and do what we did and play those games. You ask what's wrong. That might be something that's wrong. We went out and played those four straight Saturdays on the road, and then we had seven games on the road in January in the league, and you don't recover from that in a league like this, and we lost our confidence by the time we had only games, so we'll see, you know. The NCAA works together, and I don't know if we deserve it or not. I'm not going to sit and politic. We lost five games, but we'll see. I'd like to coach these guys again, especially after tonight.

**MEDIA:** Mark, what's it been like for you personally to enter this trying last few months?

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** The most difficult part is I didn't feel like I could help my team. I wasn't doing enough to help them. I was trying to figure it out. We got on a roll. We won 5 out of 6. The only team we lost to was Southern Illinois and they're pretty good, so I thought we had it figured out. We go to Drake and the day before probably 10 minutes in practice Sean Ogirri twists his ankles. I'm not making excuses. We had 29 against in the first time. They had a 4 point play on us late and they beat us late in the game, and we just -- we didn't really recover, and I can think of about 10 possessions in the last -- in these five games. You flip flop those possession you come out on top. Last year we did. This year we didn't have enough in our tank this year. P.J. played his tail off tonight. It's been one of those years. We've been fortunate in the past. We've stayed healthy. We weren't as deep as we've been. We haven't done our job building depth, and at one point I just said okay, just try to coach them as well as you can. You can tell that we never stopped trying. We never stopped trying. We kept trying to do the right things, and we had a lost holes, a lot of limitations defensively. It wasn't what we've been in the past, and offensively it's just a battle for us to make shots. We made a lot of them and still lost. That shows you how good Missouri State is. It's been tough, Gary.

**MEDIA:** I know the guys didn't want to speak to it specifically, but was the first thing in terms of illness, injury the first thing that went wrong?

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** We lost a game we shouldn't have lost there. We lost to a good USC. P.J. played a few minutes. Matt got hurt in the first half. Everybody has injuries. We didn't build enough depth to handle injuries and that's our fault, so -- and then our league is just really good. You know, we lost a home game to LSU, then we go to Southern, then we go to Missouri State, we had Bradley at home, beat them by 21, you know, and so we hadn't lost all our confidence, but everybody's asking you what's wrong. Everybody's saying you're not good and maybe we started to believe it at some point, but we lost a couple road games we haven't lost in the past in our league and we just never recovered. You start 1-4, you start 3-6, in this league you just can't recover.

**MEDIA:** Once you get in a hole –

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** It's hard. It's hard. We battled all the way back to 8-7, okay, and lost to Drake, lost to this team at home, had them down 8 and then lost to Creighton, so to get to 8-7 with all the things we went through was a minor miracle in itself, but I want to give the league a lot of credit. I just think the league is really good, but we'll be back. We'll be back.

**MEDIA:** With post season up in the air, what do you do the next week? What do the players do?

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** We'll take a few days off, we'll recoup a little bit, and we've got to look at the numbers. Jim and I will probably look at some things and we'll see what happens in the next -- all top four seeds won, so that's good for us, you know. I like to think all four our teams are in, our final 4 teams, and that helps us. If only two get in, that hurts us, okay, so I feel confident with Bradley's win, Missouri State's win, and Creighton's win today that they could be in because of what our league's all about. If they all four get in, I like our chances, especially because I had the guts to go out and play Syracuse, play LSU, and we won those games, you know. I think, you know, the sixth best league in the country, you know, that we might deserve it. Probably not a home game, but we just like to keep the post season streak alive.

**MEDIA:** Mark, on a positive side, can you talk about like what Kyle and your other seniors have brought to the program the last four years?

**COACH MARK TURGEON:** They've been great. I had Karon, a conference transfer, for three, I had Kyle for four, I had Ryan Martin for two. They put us on the map last year. Karon and Ryan came off the bench and Kyle is a big time starter for us and him and Paul were really just great together. Tremendous kids, all three great graduating, and it just didn't go well for them. That's probably what I'm the most sad about. I'm going to coach the next year and the year after and the year after. For those guys because everybody's going to look at them differently. I told them last year, I said after the Sweet Sixteen they're going to look at you differently but you're still the same person. I'm going to tell them the same thing. People are going to look at you now because we didn't win as many basketball games but you're still a great guy and a winner and champions, and this will teach you more about life than winning all the darn time, so you guys know life's not easy.