

**March 4, 2010**



**COACH DANA ALTMAN  
JUSTIN CARTER  
CAVEL WITTER**

THE MODERATOR: Number 4 seeded Creighton Bluejays will be up next. Coach Dana Altman, student-athletes Justin Carter and Cavel Witter will be with us. Coach Altman will start with a statement on his club, and questions for all three participants. Dana, please.

COACH ALTMAN: Well, we're excited to be back in St. Louis. You know, it's kind of been an up-and-down year for us. We haven't met our own expectations along with those expectations of our fans. So we're excited about this opportunity. Like a number of teams are, we've come to St. Louis with a hope, and our guys have played well the last couple of weeks. So hopefully we can continue that.

We know we've got a tough game with Bradley. We've had two really close ballgames with them this year. We know this will be a very difficult challenge for us. But by the same token, we're really looking forward to it.

**Q. What is it about Bradley that gives you guys trouble when you have a match-up with them?**

COACH ALTMAN: Well, their athleticism is good. Taylor Brown has really had two really good games against us. We've had a hard time matching up with him. You know, we rebounded better the second time than we did the first time, which I think will be a big stat tomorrow.

But, you know, they have the ability to score. Any time you get a team that can score points in bunches, you're always worried that they can get one of those rolls going that they become hard to stop.

We've scored on a consistent basis here down the stretch, and hopefully we can continue that, but, you know, Bradley's won five of eight and five of seven coming into our last ballgames. So they're playing pretty good, and we're going to have to play awfully, awfully well.

**Q. Is there anything specifically you've learned about this team in these past three wins that can carry over to this weekend?**

JUSTIN CARTER: The consistency in our last three games in scoring, scoring balance, rebounding and also getting key stops at key stretches of the games. When the team is making a run, we can make a run and also get some stops down the stretch.

CAVEL WITTER: I think we've been having better leadership from the seniors and juniors, upper classmen. We came close as a team. Not having an attitude on the bench. We're just focused right now on winning. It doesn't matter who plays more or gets the glory.

**Q. Dana talked about not meeting expectations. Talk about having another opportunity down here to get some things done?**

CAVEL WITTER: Well, you know, Creighton has come down to St. Louis a couple years more than that and won it. But the expectations, you're talking about the record 21 seasons, and also the ups and downs. We had a little bit of a down year in the loss column. But I think Creighton is back on the up right now with the three wins and coming in with a lot of confidence.

JUSTIN CARTER: I think this is the end of the season and a new part of the season. We can change all the mistakes we've had at the beginning of the season, so this conference tournament is very important for our team right now. We take it

one game at a time and somehow win it, our mistakes can be overlooked because of this conference tournament.

**Q. Is there a sense of momentum in the locker room right now heading into this tournament? You guys come in with a bounce in your step?**

JUSTIN CARTER: I think we do have a bounce in our step. We have a lot of focus within the locker room, knowing what it takes to win, and knowing what it takes to make a Creighton Basketball team in these last couple of weeks.

So I think we put together a stretch run that we feel comfortable a little bit just to get it going.

CAVEL WITTER: Yeah, I think it's more confidence right now in our team. You can see it in our swagger and our step. We're coming out with more bounce, we're coming out with more focus, more energy. We're playing through runs better. The last three games we were playing through runs better. The bench players, and all players have been more focused overall.

**Q. The depth of your rotation -- you guys usually go 10, 11 deep -- in coming into the possibility of playing three games in three days and just to win a championship, does having that kind of depth and the ability to get production from anywhere in your roster add to your confidence and to what degree does it add?**

CAVEL WITTER: I think it's the fairness right now. I think right now there is no let-up on our bench. Players come in and provide a spark on defense and offense. I can come in for Antoine comes in, Kaleb can come in for Josh comes off the bench, and you have players that make an impact.

JUSTIN CARTER: I think it's a confidence level. The guys coming off the bench, coming off with a lot of focus and know what's really needed. Just giving us some energy and things like that.

**Q. Switching gears a little bit. I know you're focused on your own match-up. But Kevin McKenna was second in the "Coach of the Year" voting, and well aware a protege of yours. You two are friends. What's it like for you to watch the progress of his program and what he's done in Terre Haute from the perspective of being a former colleague of yours and a competitor at the same time?**

COACH ALTMAN: Well, there was no doubt in my mind that at some point in time Kevin would get it going. He got it started. He'll keep getting State going even more.

He's a coach who knows what he wants and how to build a successful program I think. It doesn't surprise me. He had some players really step up this year. Harry, I thought, really did a great job. And Reed, his two senior guards are really good. And through injuries he kept them together and found a way to win a couple of games at home and kept him in the hunt. That's really important.

I voted for him second. I thought Ben did a great job. And everybody says well, they were picked 1. Yeah, but that's just as hard. When you have to keep a team out front to win the league by three games. Ben deserved it. But Kevin was right there. And Gregg did a good job at Wichita State, and Marty did a heck of a job at Evansville. So I thought there were a lot of good performances this year, and Kevin's was as good as anybody's. It doesn't surprise me. He's a competitor. And he'll continue to do a great job at Indiana State.

**Q. How much do you touch on the past success here as you prepare your team for tomorrow and whatever comes after that.**

COACH ALTMAN: I want our players to be proud of it. I want them to know that they are trying to represent. We've got a lot of former players coming back to this event. They'll be in tomorrow and hopefully they'll behave themselves. We've got a lot of former players coming back.

You know, these guys, there is a little at stake here with our former players, our reputation. I want them to feel that excitement. It's a great feeling to win this tournament. Northern experienced that last year, Gregg. The teams that win this tournament, you know, remember that for a lifetime. It's a big-time tournament. The fans are great, and the support and how it's grown. I've watched it the last 15, 16 years grow. It's a heck of an event.

I want our players to experience it. So we do talk about the past. Hopefully guys take pride in being part of it, and hopefully we'll figure out a way to get another one.

**Q. Who would you have voted for for defensive player of the year? Who is a guy from another team around the league that really**

**gives you problems defensively?**

CAVEL WITTER: Another team Defensive Player of the Year? I don't know if I would have voted for a player. Maybe Drake's zone defense. But I can't really think of just a certain player at this moment.

JUSTIN CARTER: As a player, I think I'd say Adam Koch from UNI. Also their team defense. They really flow to the ball and get into the help side a lot. So I think I'd say Adam Koch.

**Q. You mentioned ex-players are returning. Which ex-players and is that an organized thing?**

COACH ALTMAN: Yeah, they come every year. I'm not sure who organizes it. We've always got a big group of former players that come in every year. They come in from all over the country, you know. It's kind of their reunion week. So, again, I'm not sure how many are coming, but I've received a few calls and a few emails from some of them warning me that they're going to be in town.

So it's a great opportunity for them to get together. Lot of good memories for those guys. So I know there's a bunch coming in.

**Q. Jim has been talking about how much deeper the league is. Is that true and what comprises that? We look at historical things, and Creighton events litter that 20-year thing that we've been reading about. Do you look back on that with great joy and pride?**

COACH ALTMAN: Yeah, we do. You know, when I got those two sheets, you know, and saw Kyle and Rodney and Nate and Ryan, you bet. That was great. To look at the events and, you know, that Nate's performance in 2007 was recognized. Ryan's in 2000, Bobby Hardhead who is a great friend of the program, and Booker Schott last year, you bet. I'm not going to lie. We saw those. And it felt really good. I hope it felt good for our fans. I know all of our players took a great deal of pride in that.

To answer your question on Jencks, you know. You won in the league by three games, I mean, you you've won the league. To say it's anybody's, I can't say that. If you win by three games, you're the favorite. By the same token, when you have Missouri State at 7, that's a pretty good seventh place team.

So Indiana State and Illinois State split, you know. And I mentioned how close our games with Bradley were. I don't think there's anybody

feeling too good about their first round game or any game after that. Yeah, I agree. I think every year they come in with a lot of teams that can win this tournament. But I don't want to take anything away from Northern because they won the league by three games. They're the favorites.

**Q. One of those former players you talked about is going to be inducted into the Hall of Fame tomorrow. Can you talk about Kyle and that honor?**

COACH ALTMAN: Well, he's special. You know, we've won three tournaments with him, letting him shoot it. He was a special player when he was with us. His work ethic and passion for the game, obviously, has gone on for a seven-year pro career here already. We couldn't be prouder or happier for him. No matter where he would have played, he had a passion and love for the game. And an unbelievable work ethic. So we were just fortunate enough to be the school that he chose. I just happened to be the coach at that time and had the pleasure of working with him.

No matter where he would have went and no matter who he played for, he was going to be successful. We were just really fortunate that it was Creighton, because we won a lot of games with him. As I mentioned with him, it's hard not to mention the long careers of Funk and Toliver and all the good players with Buford that we've been able to have. Because those guys won a bunch of games and took me a long for the ride. And it was fun to be a part of it.

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