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THE MODERATOR: League Champion UNI Panthers are with us. "Coach of the Year" Ben Jacobson, Adam Koch, Ali Farokmanesh are the two student-athletes. We'll go to questions for all three participants. Coach?

COACH JACOBSON: Thank you. Well, with the very good win over Illinois State. Obviously they were playing and have been playing great basketball and continue to do that. So a good win. Gave us some momentum. Had some good workouts and things we picked up that we had to try to sharpen up the last few days before we got down here. So I liked the practices that we had. And we're looking forward to playing tomorrow.

Q. You guys come in here as the defending champions and regular season champions with a little bit of a target on your back. Are you okay with that or would you rather fly under the radar a little bit? Ali you start, we'll go to Adam next?

ALI FAROKHMANESH: I don't think we're too worried about that. Obviously we're used to being under the radar. At the same time we're not too worried about that. We're worried about ourselves and how we're going to play.

ADAM KOCH: Yeah, you know, we know there are a lot of good teams here. And everyone's going to be playing really hard and really tough. Because the three games and you're into the NCAA Tournament field. So, you know, I think every team needs to just concentrate on being at the top of their own games and we're doing the same thing.

Q. Talk about how difficult it is to get ready for this tournament not knowing who your opponent's going to be until 8:00 o'clock

tonight with the quick turnarounds you had before the noon game tomorrow.

COACH JACOBSON: That's what we're used to, and the guys are used to. And I think one of the positives to that is you spend more time working on your own stuff. We spent more time working on our offense and our defense. I like that part of it. And having an experienced team, obviously a bunch of these guys were here last year and we had the same situation, not knowing who we were going to play until later tonight.

I think having an experienced team and the opportunity to work on our basketball team, you know, those things will help us.

Q. Along the same lines, can you just talk about the potential problems that a southern Illinois or Drake would pose for you tomorrow?

COACH JACOBSON: Both games. When we played Southern Illinois at our place. I thought they played very well. Tony Freeman has had a good year. Gene Teague, the way he emerged over the course of the season has really helped their basketball team and given them a presence inside. And they've had some other new guys and younger guys that are playing really well of late. Southern Illinois played very well, and we had to make some plays late in that basketball game to get a win. You know, Drake, they're a little bit different than most of the teams in the league because they're going to play the zone the entire time.

And they've certainly gotten better at that as the year has worn on. And they have a group of seniors. Southern with the one senior with Tony, and Drake has a number of seniors led by Josh Young and Adam Templeton, and Craig Stanley being back now. So certainly some real challenges with both basketball teams.

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Q. Would you talk about the difference in feeling from a year ago when you guys came into here until now basically the entire team back and the feeling of experience that you have getting ready for this run in the tournament?

THE MODERATOR: Adam, first for you this time.

ADAM KOCH: This year's a little different feel to it. We had a shot to win it. And this year we might have had a little better resume going into it. But at the same time you're guaranteed a spot in the field if you win this. So we're excited about that are opportunity and excited about the upcoming games.

ALI FAROKHMANESH: Yeah, I agree with Adam. It's a little different, but at the same time I think we're all looking forward to being here. Last year was an awesome experience for us winning the whole thing. This year there's a lot of parity in the league, so it's going to be extremely difficult.

Q. There's been a considerable amount of talk of the players over the last couple of weeks about your resume and whether you should be in it or not be in it. Do you watch that or if so, what do you think about it?

COACH JACOBSON: We don't let them watch TV (laughing).

ALI FAROKHMANESH: Yeah, we do watch a little bit (laughing). But it's more interesting and fun to look at those type of things. But at the same time we can't worry about it because it's not in our hands. That's interesting. It's fun to look at. But at the same time it's not going to help us a lot with 30 people's different opinions.

ADAM KOCH: Along the same lines, take it for what it's worth, I guess. But those guys aren't the ones who are actually deciding the field. We've got a chance still to put it out of their hands and playing well in this tournament. So hopefully we can do that.

Q. What did you guys learn last year going through this tournament that can help you this year?

ADAM KOCH: I think the biggest thing is having confidence. Knowing we've done it. We've gone through three games in three days and come out on top of it. I guess that is the biggest thing is

the confidence. We realize it will be tough to do that again this year.

ALI FAROKHMANESH: Yeah, definitely the experience helps us. But it's still a whole new tournament. Completely different than last year at the same time. It still will present more difficulties or different difficulties than we had last year.

Q. You guys are seniors now, you played basketball for a long time. What differentiates Coach Jacobson's style to all the other coaches you've had through the ranks?

COACH JACOBSON: I don't have to start you tomorrow (laughing).

ALI FAROKHMANESH: He definitely instills a sort of confidence in you that coaches have done in the past. But he instills confidence in you with his actions and the way he talked to you. You know whatever happens in the game, his confidence is never changing throughout the game about you.

If he makes a few mistakes here and there, he's always even keel about the situation. That's been the biggest thing through our team. Through the ups and downs he's been high on us the whole time.

ADAM KOCH: Yeah, we trust what Coach Jake's telling us to do, and the game plan of the rest of the coaching staff. I think that's one of the reasons we've had some success this year.

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