

**March 5, 2010**



Northern Iowa – 55  
Drake – 40

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: The victorious Panthers are with us, and Ben Jacobson is here. The procedure is the same. We'll have Coach Jacobson open up with a statement, and then we'll go to questions for the student-athletes and then we'll go to more questions with the coach.

COACH JACOBSON: Thank you. You know, Drake obviously got off on to a nice start, and I think we saw the advantage of playing the game on this floor early with the way that Drake played and making shots and playing well. And fortunately, our defense kicked in a little bit. I thought we guarded pretty well the last 30 minutes of the basketball game. Fortunately they missed a couple of shots, but Josh Young got them off to a good start.

Obviously, this league is going to miss Josh. He is one of the finest players to play in this league. In all aspects. One of the best players, but one of the finest kids to play in this league. Our league is going to miss Josh. He got them off to a nice start, and fortunately again our defense kicked in and was good down the stretch.

**Q. You're a defensive guy. Have you ever seen a game shift or just change that abruptly? From you guys down 11, till you look at the scoreboard and you are up 10. And you did it with defense.**

JOHNNY MORAN: Yeah, that's definitely unusual. They came out, they were hitting every shot. We slowed down and gathered ourselves, and defensively we just stepped it up. We knew that was going to win us the game. The defense always does. And we found ourselves on the shots and the ball started bouncing our way.

**Q. At what point did you say to yourself, man, it's been a while since these guys scored?**

ALI FAROKHMANESH: I don't think we really noticed it that much. We were just more focused on getting stops. We were not looking up the score a whole lot. But it was probably just -- it was probably just more that we were looking at getting stops than anything. We weren't looking at the score and thinking about it as much. It was more that Coach was focusing in on getting one stop at a time. And it carried over to one stop, two, three, four, and then, you know.

**Q. What did you guys do different in the second half with your defense than what you did in the first half?**

JOHNNY MORAN: We didn't really change much. We just came out more aggressive, I think. We had that run in the first half and the energy from that carried over and we started playing with more energy. That really helped us out.

**Q. Talk a little about that sequence. You hit a three, I think Johnny draws a foul and you hit a shot later. Can you take me through**

**that sequence a little? Because obviously six quick points.**

JOHNNY MORAN: It comes under hustle. Luke got the offensive rebound and kicked it back out to me. And Johnny's just always making plays that probably a lot of people don't notice out there. But everyone on our team noticed it. So he makes that play and my teammates find me open again on the other corner. That was one of the big keys in that stretch. But it definitely comes under hustling. And that's what Coach preaches all the time. We look up to Johnny and Luke, and they made plays for us in that stretch.

**Q. Talk about the total team effort on the defensive end, and how you kind of used that as energy to fuel your offense in that run there?**

JOHNNY MORAN: Yeah, our offense was struggling a little bit in the beginning, and our defense really picked up. The big guys were doing a great job in the post down low. The guards were doing a good job guarding the ball, making them kick it out and contesting shots.

Defense gets us going. I think that's our thing. When we pick up our defense, we pick up our energy. Like I said, that run in the first half led to even more energy coming on out in the second half.

**Q. You were shooting 0 for 5 in the first half from three point. Pretty uncharacteristic, but then you picked it back up for 2 for 3 at the start of the second half. Was it just a matter of keep shooting and they'll eventually go in? What were you thinking throughout that time?**

ALI FAROKHMANESH: It was a little frustrating coming in there and missing the first five shots. I thought I had good looks at it. My teammates told me to keep shooting, my coaches told me to keep shooting. I'm never thinking about it a whole lot. If you worry about the last three shots you're not going to make the next one.

**Q. How much of a difference is it, and how much of a benefit is it to go into this game and be down and know we've done this before? We've been here, we've made this run, just the confidence that the experience gives you?**

ALI FAROKHMANESH: It makes it a whole lot easier. We look at each other and nobody's really stressing out. There are probably people in the crowd freaking out that we're down 11 and not shooting the ball well. But if you look at

each other, we're just calm face. We're not worried. We know we're going to make a run.

The big thing is our defense is going to be there no matter what, it's just a matter of time before our offense catches up to our defense.

**Q. You talked about your perimeter game. But in the second half you guys really outscored them in the paint. Was that something you were planning on doing earlier that just didn't work? How did you adapt to DOMINATE in the paint so well?**

ALI FAROKHMANESH: I think we just started attacking more. I think we probably said it a little too much in the first half. But it was more our Coach was telling us to attack the zone. Sometimes you get those looks and think you're going to make them but they're not always falling. We were trying to drive to the basket a little more because they were pressuring so far out there. Our coaches told us to do that and we made the plays.

JOHNNY MORAN: Yeah, our game plan is always to get the ball on the post as much as we can with Jordan and Lucas and Adam down there. They really do a great job for us. We just did a better job of finding them in the second half.

**Q. When you've looked at your team this year, you've had a lost runs where it's a 10-1 run. You just seem to ride waves of momentum. What do you think accounts for that, I guess?**

COACH JACOBSON: I think the guys mentioned it a little bit. Our defense has been very consistent, as you know. That's been where the guys take a lot of pride in rebounding. If we're doing that right and our communication is good, our rotations are good, and if we're blocking out, if we're doing it the way we're supposed to, eventually we feel our offense is going to catch up and kick in at some point. Once we get some rhythm going there, certainly that helps when you go on a run. But really it's just standing on our defense.

**Q. At one point you were down by 11 in the first half, and cut that down to one at the half. Then clearly that led straight into the second half. What did you do differently in the second half than in the first half?**

COACH JACOBSON: I think the biggest difference is we finally got some stops. One of the keys for us coming into this basketball game was trying to find some transition baskets, and Drake made just about everything they shot for the first ten minutes of the game so there were no transition opportunities to have.

So that really slowed us down offensively. Then you have to play against their zone in the quarter court and their zone has gotten very good over the course of the years. So we had to find stops. When we did and finally got some misses, we got a couple of opportunities down the stretch in the first half.

In the second half it really felt like we were pushing the basketball and finding some stuff in transition, just the result of getting some stops.

**Q. You guys went on a 29-2 run, they went 21 minutes without a basket. Is that the best your team has played over maybe a period of a game?**

COACH JACOBSON: Certainly up there with some of our best stretches defensively. That's a long time to go with just one basket. I mentioned Drake making shots early and kind of benefiting from playing yesterday and being on the floor. I think maybe -- I don't want to speak for them, obviously -- but maybe some of those jump shots are a little longer in the second half. They're a game and a half in, and we're just 20 minutes in.

So we may have caught the better end of it in the second half with our guys not having to play yesterday. But I did think we did a better job of defending. We were in front of them more often. We contested more shots. I think that was really the key.

**Q. A lot of people focused on the RPI when they talk about the National Tournament. What would today's game show your team or show about your team that the RPI might not?**

COACH JACOBSON: I think when you watch our basketball team sometimes you've got to watch us for a little while. We're not a team you can watch for ten minutes and say okay, that's one of the top 25 teams in the country. It takes longer than that with our basketball team. If you'll take time to watch us, I think you'll see an efficient team at both ends of the floor. Because we are solid defensively, we've got guys that are willing to take charge. We've got guys that are willing to come up with loose balls and offensive rebounds. When you watch us long enough, I think you see a very

efficient team at both ends of the floor. And because of that, up five, down five, it really to these guys doesn't make that much difference. We can play and we can play different styles and different circumstances because we have the experience and depth to do it.

**Q. Obviously we don't know who you're going to play tomorrow. But can you talk about the two possible opponents, Bradley and Creighton and what you've seen of them?**

COACH JACOBSON: At Bradley in our second game with them I thought they played a very good second half. We had a nice lead at halftime and played well. Bradley played a good second half and able to win that basketball game at their place. Obviously with Taylor Brown at the four, really playing four perimeter guys presents some challenges because they can drive it. And Maniscalco played at a high level for a couple of months now, and Warren has continued to play better the more he's played after sitting out last year. And Roberts is doing a nice job as a senior.

So having four perimeter guys is a real challenge to defend. And Creighton has had a nice two-week stretch winning basketball games and playing good basketball. And obviously this time of the year they've always played well. They're going to play 10 or 11 guys, so depth isn't going to be a problem. Guys being tired isn't going to be a problem. So, there are real challenges with both teams.

**Q. Lucas, four offensive boards, eight boards in total, eight points, diving on the floor. Did he have a little extra jump today?**

COACH JACOBSON: Yeah, I think so. We see what we saw today most of the time. But this is probably in the top four or five games of our season this year in terms of his energy level and his toughness.

We felt like trying to find some transition baskets and really rebounding. We had to have some offensive rebounds and look got four of them today for us. Today he might have been even a little higher level, yeah.

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THE MODERATOR: Drake Bulldogs are with us. We'll ask Coach Phelps to make a statement, then questions for the student-athletes.

COACH PHELPS: Well, it was an extremely tough game for us. Obviously, a physical game. To summarize the game, I felt like the shots that we were able to knock down in the first half were good shots. Just from recollection of the rest of the game I'm not so sure if we didn't also have some good looks the remainder of the first half and the second half.

Certainly, UNI is an outstanding defensive team. Their numbers confirm that throughout the season. Points allowed and also field goal percentage defense.

But we had a couple of shots not go down in the first half. I thought we could have built a little larger lead. Two that come to mind are Craig Stanley's shots. One from the right side, one from the left side. Over the course of the game when you play a physical style of defense which they're very, very efficient at, the shot typically goes like that. We may have hit most of our shots in the first half and it evened out in the second half where our shooting percentage was really poor. We knew we'd have to make some tough shots.

We tried to get to the free-throw line as much as possible. That was intent. Didn't get

there as much as we'd like. But, in the end, we played an outstanding team. They are the regular season champions. And they had a real identity about who they are and how they go about their business. They executed that well today.

**Q. You guys had a tough win yesterday, a very emotional win. Obviously it looked like you guys were riding that at the very beginning. Did fatigue finally set in? Because Josh you started off 3 for 3, and then just couldn't seem like you could get the ball to fall later on in the game.**

JOSH YOUNG: You know, I think that we were, you know as you said coming off that emotional game. I think that we had some momentum going there in the first half. But I think that UNI made some adjustments defensively and they were really able to key in on our shooters and did a good job on our shooters. I think they made some good looks in the second half, just they were knocking down shots and that really hurt us.

RYAN WEDEL: I think fatigue could have been a factor but it's not a good excuse. There are not any good excuses out there. This is our last game to play. We were leaving it all on the court, and fatigue wasn't a factor for I don't think any one of our guys. It's just UNI played a lot better than us this afternoon. You know, we didn't finish up.

**Q. How disappointing was it for your team to go 21:01 without a field goal?**

JOSH YOUNG: I think the most disappointing part about it is I know how good a shooter our team can be. I think yesterday in the second half we showed we can shoot the ball pretty well. Just to not see those shots go down and knowing we could have knocked them down was kind of frustrating.

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**Q. You guys ended up finishing the game 6 of 19 from behind the arch. Was there any point in the first half you thought of stopping shooting threes and trying to work it inside more?**

RYAN WEDEL: Later in the second half we started to drive more. We got in the bonus and got some free throws. It was a little too late. We thought we had great looks and we've just got to knock them down.

ADAM TEMPLETON: Just to echo what Ryan said and Coach, too. He said that our intent was trying to get to the line. We were going early. But when you have those open looks as our team did, as good of three-point shooters as we are, we have to take them. That's part of our game, so to answer your question, our intent was to get to the line. At the same time we were shooting threes when we were open.

**Q. At what point during the game did you guys feel like you were in a shooting drought? And does pressure start to build and you start to press a little bit?**

JOSH YOUNG: I'm not exactly sure. It was the mid point there in the second half where we were really having a tough time knocking down our shots. I think there were a couple possessions where we really started to press. I know in particular myself I took a couple possessions myself to score. And kind of got away from team ball and I think that really hurt us.

I think we tried to get back to distribute the ball and finding each other, but once again we were just not able to knock down shots.

**Q. Talk about was there a surreal aspect to that drought? You had played well. No team goes 21 minutes without a basket. How did that play out to you guys on the floor? Was it kind of surreal?**

JOSH YOUNG: As a shooter, one of the things you have to have is confidence. All of our guys have that. So to not see those shots go down shot after shot was kind of difficult.

At the same time, when the shots are falling, you have to hold down the fort on the defensive end, and we weren't able to do that either.

**Q. Has it set in yet that you've played your final game for Drake?**

ADAM TEMPLETON: It definitely has set in. There are already a few tears dropping in the locker room. It's hard to believe five years for me and four years for Josh have already gone by.

What I can say is I've had a remarkable time here at Drake University with great teammates and great coaches that care about each other. And it will always be remembered.

RYAN WEDEL: To echo off of that, there were some tears shed. I sat in the locker room the past three years, and when you get to the last game of the season, you see it's an emotional time for the seniors. I thought to myself that probably won't happen to me. But as I look at it now being here, it's the thing that you're going to miss is the experiences you have with these people. All the interaction with your teammates and your Coaches, your strength and conditioning people, all the people you see every day.

So I think as I started to think about that it was kind of emotional. Even being able to deal with the media on a daily basis during our games is something I'm going to miss.

I want to thank you guys right now. I won't get you guys in the room together. So I appreciate everything you've done for myself and my team these past four years. It's been great. I guess it's kind of surreal now that it's over.

**Q. How would you best describe your four years?**

JOSH YOUNG: I'd say it's been amazing. You know, I've had difficult times in my career, but I think that the difficult times is what's made me stronger. Ups and downs and I've always had people that have given me support. My family, my teammates, and my coaches. So I wouldn't trade my experience here for anything.

**Q. Talk a little about UNI in terms of how far can this team go in the tournament? And when they get to March, how far can this team go?**

COACH PHELPS: They're good. They're a very good defensive team. They have good balance. Making it to the NCAA Tournament, they'll have to get a couple of breaks. You typically make your own breaks. They're a smart team and very well coached.

Having said all of that, they could cause some havoc in the tournament.

**Q. On that note, there was some national pundits saying UNI either needed to win today or win the whole tournament. What statement did they make today about the tournament worthiness, I guess?**

COACH PHELPS: They didn't have to make a statement today. Their body of work up to this point clearly puts them as one of the best teams in the country and clearly one of the 65 teams that will get invited to the tournament. They didn't have to win today in my opinion. They're a very good team. I don't know if he has a lot of company with that opinion.

**Q. In the first half you guys had an 11-point lead, dwindled down to one point at halftime. What happened in the second half? That drought happened, but what changed in the second half compared to the first half?**

COACH PHELPS: More of what happened at the end of the first half. We missed shots. When we missed shots there's always a combination of why that happened. Certainly defense has to play a large role in that in their ability to defend at a high level. And then sometimes you just miss shots.

So that drought continued, and we'll look at the film and we'll evaluate it and learn from it for the future. But I certainly can't break it down fully for you right here to why it happened.

**Q. Everybody kind of poo-pooed the tired legs theory, which is a popular one when you have to play in games in two games that close together. Did you see any short shots?**

COACH PHELPS: There were some short shots late. But I thought we did a really good job last night. I think guys were talking to the sandman about 9:30. They didn't get up until 8:15 this morning. They were full of fluids, full of food. I thought our training staff did a great job.

I'm sure UNI was a little fresher but fatigue, I don't see that playing a major role in today. I think it was more those guys and the way they defend and their physical nature.

**Q. You obviously had some good young players with Seth and Ryan coming back. But have you thought about it a little bit of going on? This program moving forward now without Josh Young?**

COACH PHELPS: Yeah, I'm going to miss him a lot. He's, you know, the poster child for what we want to do on the court, off the court, in the

classroom, leadership-wise. We're going to miss him a lot next year.

Not just his 15 points a game, we're going to miss him in a lot a lot of ways. The other thing he's done is left a legacy for the Young guys to follow in his footsteps and become leaders themselves. So we'll miss him a lot.

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