

March 5, 2010



Bradley – 81
Creighton – 62

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: We have Coach Jim Les, Andrew Warren and Chris Roberts. Coach Les will open with a statement and questions for the student-athletes.

COACH LES: Just really proud of the effort of this group. In particular on the defensive end of the floor. It's something that we were talking about all week, and I thought in the previous two meetings, we didn't put our best foot forward like we can defensively. These guys were challenged to do it, and whenever they're challenged, they respond.

These two guys beside me led the way defensively in making plays. That's a great sign.

Q. You guys were switching up defenses a lot throughout the game. Can you kind of take us through your preparation for this game? Obviously having played them was that part of the strategy to kind of mix it up some?

ANDREW WARREN: I think overall we just wanted to play good defense. No matter what scheme we were playing because the last two times we've played them we didn't really have the effort. We were missing assignments on guys as far as matchups. We weren't playing them the way

we should have played them. That was just the focus.

We know it's hard to beat a team three times. We had to learn something over the first two losses to them. We just came out with a lot of effort and intensity, and we just executed defensively. I think a lot of what we did bothered them, and that's why we were successful tonight.

Q. Coach and Andrew both mentioned defense as the difference from your two losses to Creighton. But just what about offensively? Off obviously you scored more points this time than you have before?

CHRIS ROBERTS: Defense is a big part of our offense. I mean, we can create offense off our defense. But just offensive rebounding, being aggressive offensively, that's what really helped us.

Q. When Maniscalco started having cramps, how did you guys that were on the floor start to make up for his presence being gone? He really had a hot hand in it. How did you atone for him not being on the floor?

ANDREW WARREN: Any time that somebody goes down, we're always taught somebody has to step up and ask that's what we did. We just had guys step in and continue to stay aggressive offensively. I hit a couple of shots, Chris was aggressive driving the basketball, and Brown (Taylor) got some shots and it was three in a row. We were able to find the roll man off of screens a couple of times. Anytime someone goes down, somebody has to step up, and we had good contributions from Jake Eastman, and Simms-Edwards, the two freshmen. So any time somebody goes down, we're taught to step up, so a lot of guys did that tonight. A couple of guys filled in and we were able to keep it rolling.

Q. Creighton regained the lead and you got that rebound dunk that really got the crowd going, and can you describe that play and what happened after that?

CHRIS ROBERTS: We were rebounding hard and being aggressive. I knew the dunk would spark our team. That got our team and our fans to going.

Q. For both players, the decision to wear the black uniform today, have you guys planned this for a while?

CHRIS ROBERTS: I think it was a last minute thing, we didn't know about it. Coach surprised us, so we just suited up and played. You're in love with these black uniforms. We like them. We were surprised because we only brought our red and white when we went to breakfast this morning. So thank you Coach for allowing us to wear these. Hopefully we can keep wearing them with the win today.

Q. Can you talk more about crashing the boards in the second half and how offensive rebounds played into your strategy down the stretch?

ANDREW WARREN: Well, they hurt us with their offensive rebounding early on and even early in the second half. Later we started boxing out and getting a few more defensive rebounds. But offensively, Chris sparked us several times. Even when we had the lead late, we had a couple of big offensive rebounds and were able to kick it back out and run some time off the clock and score late in the shot clock. So it pushed our lead up further.

Anytime you're able to do that and teams make a run late, that is a momentum killer for the other team. We had some big rebounds. Taylor and Chris really stepped up and got us some big offensive rebounds. We really killed their momentum when they were trying to get a comeback in the second half.

Q. 27 for 28 from the free-throw line. Anything different you guys have worked on?

COACH LES: Who missed one?

Q. Sam.

COACH LES: Oh, well, not playing tomorrow.

Q. Chris, comment on the free throws, please.

CHRIS ROBERTS: That was very big for us. I mean, it was a spark offensively when we knock down free throws. So that was a big spark for us.

Q. If you can just speak about beating Creighton. Kind of your nemesis this year, and you guys hadn't even had a lead on them until the end of the first half this year. Can you just speak on playing on the big stage and what it means to beat Creighton?

ANDREW WARREN: We wanted to beat whoever was in our way today. We wanted to beat them. Was it last year or the year before last? We lost to them down here. We lost to them in the regular season twice this year.

It's not so much about beating Creighton. When you come to the tournament, whoever you're facing, you want to beat them. But I guess we could use this as a victory for next year. But we wanted to beat them. It didn't matter today whether it was them or any other team in our league. We wanted to do the best we could at trying to beat whoever it was, and it happened to be Creighton today.

Q. You guys seemed to really feed off the crowd's energy today. Can you talk about what a big enthusiastic crowd it is that helped your play?

ANDREW WARREN: It was very big for our fans. For them to come down and support us. They've been supporting us all year. So we just feed off whoever is supporting us. Like I said, we're one big family, so it helped us a lot.

Q. Big challenge tomorrow against Northern Iowa. Can you speak about playing well against them this year. Can you just speak about that rematch?

CHRIS ROBERTS: Yeah, we're looking forward to the challenge. We've proven that we can beat this team and we've done so in the past. We know that it's elevated down here at the tournament. So we're just going to have to go tonight, watch some film, get physically rejuvenated and be ready for them tomorrow. They're a tough team. They're not the No. 1 team in our conference for no reason. They've proven that. We have to execute like we did today and do the same thing tomorrow.

Q. Have you ever had a guy get three free throw attempts three times in one game?

And second, could you just talk about getting to the line and making all of those shots making the difference today?

COACH LES: Well, first of all, Sammy's a ton coming off ball screens, and he's really worked hard at his set up and reading ball screens. They were really chasing hard over the top. When you chase hard and he rises up and shoots it, the momentum carried him in. So I thought he was smart based on how they were playing him and trying to take advantage of that. He's a really good free throw shooter. Him getting to the line is a positive for us and our whole team.

We just talked about being aggressive and being in attack mode. Whether they were in match-up, man-to-man, we wanted to get paint touches with our dribble drive and read and make good basketball plays. You know, we've got some guys that are awfully good off the dribble. And I thought getting in the bonus early in the second half and continuing to put that pressure on allowed us to get to the line. You know, we think we've got some pretty good shooters, too, and they knocked them all in.

Q. Can you talk more about being aggressive and how getting in the bonus so early in the second half affected your game plan down the stretch?

COACH LES: We're the type of team that I think we can score in a variety of ways. We don't necessarily have a low-postgame. But the ability to get paint touches off the drive and then kickout's or get to the basket and get multiple drives is for us as effective as maybe having a low-post score. So that's maybe how we substitute getting paint points.

I look at the numbers and we have 28 points in the paint. We don't really have a post-up player, but we get them off our dribble drive and that is multiple opportunities to get into the paint. And I thought our aggressiveness to do that. You know, then you pick up some fouls and guys are aggressive attacking the rim.

Q. Obviously big game tomorrow against UNI. What do you take from this game to bring to that one?

COACH LES: Well, I think what we take is on our defensive effort and intensity. This team can really defend and create some havoc on that end of the floor. We've got to stay with that formula. And that defense helps create some offense for us.

We know how good Northern Iowa is especially with their defense. It's going to be a defensive grinded-out struggle tomorrow and we're looking forward to it.

Q. I know you were talking about your scoring in the paint. But after that first five or six minutes did you think you'd come away with a positive in the paint? Holding Lawson and all those guys quiet in the second half?

COACH LES: Well, I just thought they were the aggressor. And tonight, over the course of 40 minutes, whoever was going to establish themselves as the aggressor was going to win the game. Initially they had us back on their heels and they're a good basketball team.

I like the fact that this team weathered that storm. They just continued to battle. And then establish themselves as the aggressor, and that was the difference from probably middle of the first half on.

Q. You got on Eastman a little bit in the first half. He responded on some big plays for you. Can you talk about his game?

COACH LES: Well, Jake -- both freshmen guards, Jake and Dyrucus gave us a lot either starting or coming off the bench. Jake's playing with a lot of confidence. And those guys really respond. They respond when you get after them and challenge them. He's been a play maker for us.

When he gets on the floor I thought our run as being the aggressor started with him getting on the floor, getting after the loose ball. He gets the rebounds, takes the ball to the basket strong, and that's what you need off your bench. Those guys being freshmen, had they know how important they are to this team and they're responsible for production and they generally produce for us.

Q. Couple key points in the game, end of the first half when you went on that flurry and took the lead and then I guess you were up 4 in the second went on that 14-0 run and caused turnovers in that stretch. Can you talk about both of those periods?

COACH LES: I thought we just became very stingy defensively. And we did for one stretch there finish our defense and hold them just to one shot. During that span I think Sammy got hot. We called his number a few times running some ball screens. He knocked in a couple of threes and

combined that with some stingy defense, it allowed us to get the lead at halftime.

Then I thought Chris really established us defensively in the second half. I told him after the game I thought his activity was unbelievable to start the second half. That is infectious, when a guy puts that much effort. And we all know, those of us around our program, how dominant he can be defensively getting his hands on balls and making plays and lo' and behold now we get out in transition and get some fast breakpoints and get Creighton back on their heels.

But I think it started with our defense in both those segments.

Q. Talk about the black uniforms?

COACH LES: Well, I'm giving all the blame to Rob Bogardus. On the plane coming home from Creighton, he was adamant about breaking them out. He went to Sammy and asked him if it mattered. It really doesn't matter to me, Sammy thought for some guys it would matter. I let Mike Cross carry that football to President Glasser's office and decide how we wanted to handle it. I don't care if we wear the short shorts. As long as they play. So I think it was that. It was not a big deal to me, but the guys seemed to like it.

We're not trying to change our colors; okay. I'm entrenched in this tradition in history as much as anybody else. So I believe Bradley red and white, but if we've got to mix in black for a little motivator, I guess that's okay.

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An interview with:

Jays

THE MODERATOR: Creighton Bluejays are here. We'll have Coach Altman start off with a statement on the game, then questions for the two student-athletes.

COACH ALTMAN: Well, they really got away from us in the second half. Sam just beat us up, 18 of 19 from the line. And hit those 3- threes off his favorite move, and we just didn't do a good job on him. We had held him in check the first two times and we were able to win. But today he was the difference.

He's a good player, and he really made plays. We had some bad turnovers and took too many threes. We went to the boards, but we weren't able to really cash in on a lot of our offensive rebounds. And they came up with some timely offensive rebounds. I remember twice it was a four-point game, and they got a two-pointer, and we fouled them on the three pointer when we got a chance to go down four with the ball.

We credit them, they played a wonderful game and we just got beat.

Q. You really had a good game on the boards. Can you talk about your mentality of attacking the glass, please?

KENNY LAWSON: I think a lot of guys went to the offensive glass. But we knew they

were in a zone and anytime a team's in the zone, you have to take advantage of that. Not only myself, other guys did a great job of it.

Q. They switched defenses up a lot today between man and zone. Did that affect you guys? Was it confusing at times?

JUSTIN CARTER: Well, we were standing up when they switched the zone either the two-three or the one-three-one. And that's what the zone makes do. Stand up. I think we stood up and just settled a lot for the three.

Q. I guess you guys knew they were capable of scoring points in bunches. Could you just talk about, I guess, some of the runs they went on and what you guys tried to do to stop them?

JUSTIN CARTER: Can you repeat the question?

Q. Just their ability to -- Bradley's ability to score points in bunches. How did you try to slow them down?

JUSTIN CARTER: Well, they're very good in transition and they try to get a lot of easy buckets out of the transition. So we tried to slow them down in transition, and get them out of that rhythm. In the second half, they had a lot of runs that we didn't answer to. They scored a bunch of runs in the second half.

KENNY LAWSON: Same thing Justin said. They have great players offensively and it takes extra focus to stop a team like that. We showed that a little bit in the first round and a little in the second half and we just didn't do the things we needed to to get stops.

Q. Can you talk about handling the ball and stripping the ball? Talk about their defense a little bit. Was it different today than

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it was in the previous two matchups with them down low?

JUSTIN CARTER: Not at all. Coming in we knew they were fluent to the help side and also a lot of hands in the zone and the man. So coming into the game, we didn't feel that it was nothing new. They got their hands on the ball, and corrupted us when we drove and got hands on passes.

Q. You guys shot 9 for 33 from the three-point line. Can you talk about your struggles from the three-point line today?

JUSTIN CARTER: I think it was the zone. We stood up in the zone and couldn't knock it down. We felt comfortable coming in and shooting the ball, but the zone made us stand up. And we just settled too much.

Q. When you have a guy that's on fire like Maniscalco was today. How do you play defensively? Do you "D" up on him like anyone else?

KENNY LAWSON: When a guy's on a roll like that you have to do something to stop him. We understand he's a good player, but we didn't focus enough on the things we needed to do to slow him down. Once he gets on a roll, like Coach said, the basket just keeps getting bigger and bigger.

Q. When you have a guy like Maniscalco going off, is there a sense of helplessness that you felt in the second half at point?

JUSTIN CARTER: We just have to be more focused and understand that he's on a roll. Kind of stop him and make him do what he doesn't want to do, and I don't think we did that in the second half.

Q. With a guy like Maniscalco, what makes it so tough to guard him and what makes him successful at the line?

JUSTIN CARTER: He's a great free-throw shooter. I think we let him go through his strengths in the second half a couple of times. And getting over the ball screen, we couldn't get him over to his right-hand. We had a couple of calls on the three pointers when he was shooting it, and we knew he was a good free-throw shooter. But we didn't take away his strength and that was his right-hand. He just knocked down the free throws.

Q. Basically that question that I asked Justin. With a guy like Maniscalco, how come he is so successful at getting to the line even when you know you're trying to take his strength away what makes it so difficult?

COACH ALTMAN: He's good at drawing fouls. He kind of leans into you and throws his arms. You know, he draws fouls.

I think he had the two big threes in the first half that we just made defensive mistakes on, and we didn't make those mistakes in Omaha. We took that move away.

He had 15 points going off of that pick to his right. He had three threes and six free throws. That's the difference in the game right there. He didn't get those when we played him before. And he's a good basketball player. He's tough, he's hard-nosed. I like everything about him. He's really good.

Q. Have you been involved in a game where you had had an opposing player have three attempts at three free throws?

COACH ALTMAN: That's bad coaching when you foul a three-point shooter three times. That's nine points. That's a season's worth right there. So, that's obviously not very smart.

Q. Coach, your athletes from the three-point line, at any point in the game did you feel maybe we should try to work it down the paint instead of these three points because they're not falling?

COACH ALTMAN: Well, my man, we were 12 for 33 inside. So if you do the math we were more productive on the three-point line. We went to Kenny, and they collapsed on him pretty hard. We just weren't effective offensively at all. But I agree, we took way too many threes which didn't allow us to get to the line.

We had a lot of offensive rebounds where we adjusted our shots instead of getting to the line. Antoine wasn't very effective in drawing fouls when he took the ball to the basket.

So I think a lot of those things, you know, kind of went into it. I apologize to be sarcastic there. We didn't score very well either way. You never want to take 33 threes, but we weren't scoring inside either. We scored 12 baskets inside, nine baskets outside. We just weren't good offensively. We had played a little better on offensively.

But, with that being said, what got us into trouble was the defensive end and them shooting

52% in the second half and putting themselves on the line. However, many times we did, there's too many to count. He shot the heck out of free throws, 27 of 28. But we put the wrong guys there and they have really good free-throw shooters and those are the guys we put on the line.

Q. Can you talk about Bradley's runs and how much of a healthy run that is?

COACH ALTMAN: Nine 8 point runs in the first half. And as you know, we jumped out. And our bench today, we can count on our bench. You know, we just really struggled off the bench today.

There were a lot of factors. Those runs, especially in the first half, we build the lead and gave them some easy baskets. We built another lead. We worked pretty hard for ours and gave them some easy ones.

I thought the key, we had the seven-point lead with a couple of minutes left in the half and Sam hit those two threes. I thought those were two really big buckets and kind of changed the momentum of the game.

Q. In one of the story lines of the season, you have gotten off to a good start in games you ended up losing. I know it's been a frustration for you, but when you watch on film, what happens with the team when they go up like that? Do they relax?

COACH ALTMAN: I don't think so. You know today, we didn't have our bench respond the way we wanted to. Our problems stem from not getting stops we need in the second half. So, you know, our consistency all year has been a problem for us. We haven't done the things necessary to have the type of team we need to have. And a lot of that goes on my shoulders. I recruit the guys, I coach them, if the mix isn't what we need to have, then that's my fault.

So, you know, we've got some work to do here. We've got a good base. We've got some good players. We've got some good young players. But we've got a tremendous amount of work to do here in the off-season, and a lot of guys are going to have to recommit themselves. It's just not going to happen for us to get the winning seasons and things that we've had.

Guys have worked awfully hard for that, so we're going to have to evaluate everything we do and recommit to a lot of things.

Q. Bradley switched up its defense quite a bit today. What affect did that have on your offense?

COACH ALTMAN: Well, they did a good job with that. You know, we had a couple of bad turnovers. We really had cut down our turnovers. Today, we had 12 which isn't a great deal, but they were really bad times that we had the turnovers.

And so, you know, I thought they were switching defenses was effective. But it was effective against us in Omaha, too. But we got more stops there in Omaha. We scored 62 and kind of got in a hurry in the end. We wanted to keep the score around 65, but by putting them at the line and giving them easy baskets. I can't -- I think -- oh, let's see. Who got the first one? Roberts got the first one there and then laid it back up. And they got one and we fouled him for a three. So it went 4-6, then we came and scored, and it went 4-7. I'm testing my memory there, but I think that's right. So those two offensive rebounds and as much as it wasn't us scoring, I think a larger part of it was our inability to get them stopped.

Q. You mentioned a couple of big rebounds. There were times during the game where it got hard to hear and the crowd just drowned everything out. Do you think that had an effect on the players in the second half at all?

COACH ALTMAN: I don't think so. Bradley's guys are used to playing in a great atmosphere. We've been blessed. Our fans have been unbelievable to us.

We had a big crew here. The thing that probably hurts the most is how much we've let them down, you know. So, you know, it was a great crowd. Our people that came, you know, like I said, I feel bad because we've got a little further to go than most. Our fans have really made a commitment to us both at home and on the road and I feel really bad there.

Q. Do you anticipate the possibility of getting to play another game? Would you be excited about such a game?

COACH ALTMAN: Oh, you know, there's a couple of new tournaments that we've never played in before. We've been fortunate the last 12 years, and that's not going to happen this year.

I want to play, I just, we're starting a couple of freshmen and you've got a sophomore point guard and Kenny's going to be back. So you kind of like to play, but that won't be my decision.

That will be the decision of Bruce and the University. You know, whatever they decide, you know, it's their decision. But we've got some young guys on our team that, if nothing else, we need another week of practice.

I don't know. We do at 16-15 I think we're eligible. So if Bruce and, you know, I'm sure we'll talk to the Valley and see what they want us to do.

But we did finish fourth in the league. Our league's solid. I think Bradley will give Northern a tremendous game. They had two great games during the year. We've got good basketball teams in our league. And we did finish fourth. I'd like to play, but again that's Bruce's decision. And if he decides, you know, that we need to put the uniforms away and start focusing on next year, I'll definitely do that.

So that's going to be his decision though. I'm sure he'll talk with Doug and get the Valley's point of view. Then we'll just go from there.

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