

**March 7, 2010**



Northern Iowa – 67  
Wichita State – 52

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: The regular season and Tournament Champion Panthers are with us. We'll have Coach Ben Jacobson open up with a statement on the title game. Then we'll go to questions for the starting five student-athletes of UNI.

COACH JACOBSON: Thank you. That was a very good basketball game. with two very good teams. Those of us in our league know and the country saw today why Wichita State is in that picture for an at large bid. They've crept back in there the last couple of weeks and they should because of the quality of team that they have. They've got the ability to play at a high level and they've done so a lot this year.

I think you saw two tournament teams out there today really battling hard. I'm proud of our guys for sticking with it and making plays. Our defense was good in the second half, and it had to be.

**Q. Adam, going in at halftime down by a free throw, what did you guys feel besides scoring that you had to come out and do in the second half to try to get this game away?**

ADAM KOCH: I think one of the biggest things we needed to do was try and continue to get some stops, get some defensive and offensive rebounds, to attack the glass, and get an advantage there.

**Q. You guys went on a 23-3 run for about a 12 minute period. Is there anything that you did differently during that time that helped you establish that big lead and eventually get a convincing win?**

ALI FAROKHMANESH: The 23-3 run, it was probably more had to do with our bench. Our bench stepped up huge for us tonight just like they did the night before. I think our bench was the biggest difference in that stretch and then probably in the entire game overall. They made huge plays for us and they wore down the starters for Wichita and the guys that were playing all the minutes for them.

JOHNNY MORAN: I have to agree. The bench did a great job. They sparked the defense and offense for our team. We just kept battling and they started knocking down shots and everything just kept going our way.

**Q. Adam, you're held to four points tonight. I don't know what they were doing on you. Talk about the way your little brother stepped up today?**

ADAM KOCH: Jake played great today. We've got confidence in him to make shots and make plays. He's doing it all the time in practice. It was great to see him today play with confidence and aggressiveness to start making those plays. When he's coming in and being that productive for our team, it just gives us a huge lift.

**Q. Ali and Johnny have referenced it in reference to today's game, but the bench**

averaged 21.3 points through the course of the tournament. We've got the starting five up here, but talk about their contributions throughout the entirety of the Tournament here in St. Louis?

ADAM KOCH: Definitely, when they come into the game, there's not a drop off. The energy and the level that they play at, it's tough for other teams to match up against when they come in and they're able to do the things that they do. For 40 minutes to have that kind of level of play from us, it's pretty tough.

**Q. Talk about the Missouri Valley Conference Championship games. What's with that? Is there a certain extra thing you bring to it or what's going on there?**

JOHNNY MORAN: I do love St. Louis. It's a great place to be. Sometimes it's the right time or my teammates have given me opportunities to score or pass. I think it's just how the game goes sometimes.

**Q. It was 46-42, they called the timeout, and you guys were smiling. Almost like you knew you had them at that point. What was going through your heads?**

ALI FAROKHMANESH: Kwadzo always smiles that's why he's got me smiling. That's just how our team is no matter what happens in the game, you can be down by 10, 12 points and we know we can make a shot and spark our run.

KWADZO AHELEGBE: Ali was telling me that I had to close out on Hatch or something like that. And I laughed and it was like all right, I won't mess up.

I've got two great shooters, so it's easy. Sometimes if the shots aren't falling, I'm sure it will next time.

**Q. Talk about how important it was to be aggressive? It looked like after the Opening minutes you got that lay-up, but it was attack, attacking attack. How important was it to take it to Wichita State?**

KWADZO AHELEGBE: I was focusing on the two games I had before. And I came out aggressive and they had a little success with that. So I tried to come with the main focus with that. But like I said, I have an easy job.

When you can get to the basket and nobody's there because you have two great shooters, it's easy, easy money.

**Q. For three straight days, we've seen teams go on long scoring droughts. Do you see them getting frustrated? It's got to be a helpless feeling for them when the shots aren't falling and there is somebody in their face all the time?**

KWADZO AHELEGBE: I don't really focus on that. I just focus on playing defense. Because if I don't, my coach might whoop my butt. (laughing).

**Q. Can you just kind of compare this year's MVC Championship to last years?**

JORDAN EGLSEDER: This year was huge for us. We worked really hard this off-season to get ready. And I mean as well as everyone did. But this is our last shot. So, this is huge for us. I mean, just for comparing to last year, man, we did it this year. We had Travis and Carlton with us last year. But this year we just played great basketball. Our defense has been great all season.

Just to be able to do that with everyone, with all the targets we had on our back this year, we got everyone's best game all year. Just to know that, we're really proud of that.

ADAM KOCH: I think the biggest difference like Jordan said was the expectation going into this year. Last year, I don't know if we were expected to win the conference championship, but this year, we definitely were. That makes it different this year. It's special though.

**Q. What is the feeling like knowing that you're going to be one of the team's selected to go and play in the big dance now?**

KWADZO AHELEGBE: It feels good. We get to practice for about a week now and wait for Selection Sunday. But I mean, it feels good knowing that we're going to be one of the teams. We don't know where we're going to be, but it feels good knowing that we can just worry about practicing and getting better now.

JORDAN EGLSEDER: Yeah, it's a great feeling to have. Having that experience last year, I'm going to do some things different. I'm sure we'll do some things different to prepare ourselves for this first game.

**Q. For Jordan and Adam, speak to how physical this game was. I mean, Kwadzo ended up with a cut over his right eye. Kind of looks**

**like a boxer a little bit. Speak to how physical this game was?**

JORDAN EGLSEDER: It was a really physical game. I mean, we like it that way. I mean, me and Koch were down there banging, you I mean, everyone, Jake and Luke. That's how it goes down here. Both teams want to win so we're going to give it our all. That's just how it is.

ADAM KOCH: Yeah, our two games during the year with them were the same way. So we knew going in it's going to be physical. When you've got so much on the line for this game and both teams want it, it just takes it up to another notch. You just couldn't back down. You had to keep fighting for anything you could get.

**Q. You had a steal from Garrett to help you guys build the lead. He had been dribbling a lot. When you see a 7-footer doing that, do you say at some point I'm going to get that?**

KWADZO AHELEGBE: No, I was actually denying him because I didn't want him to touch it. And you're right. I saw a 7-footer dribbling the ball, and for any guard your eyes are going to light up (laughing). Yeah, I got that one from him.

**Q. You said you loved St. Louis. Well, the NCAA Midwest Regional Tournament is here this year. Are you hoping to get in the Midwest region and if you get back to the Sweet 16, you're back here in the loop?**

KWADZO AHELEGBE: Let's take it one game at a time. And wherever we are, I don't think it really matters. But if we were close, it would be great for our fan support.

**Q. In previous tournament experience you guys have been not favored in your NCAA games, and now you're going to go into a tournament and you're probably going to be favored over the team you're playing. How do you prepare differently and do you take a different mentality with that?**

ALI FAROKHMANESH: I think just as a group we don't care about what anybody else thinks. We'll all have a chip on our shoulder no matter what going into that game. It's not going to factor in what everybody else thinks because we've got our chip on our shoulder trying to prove other things out there.

**Q. Could you kind of analyze what you saw during that 23-3 run or 12 minutes that they went without scoring?**

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COACH JACOBSON: That would have been midway through the second half, if I'm not mistaken. Defensively we got better. Did a better job on some ball screen things and did a better job at defending the post. And I do feel that our bench played a factor in that, whether they were on the floor during that run. But leading up to that is where they really played a factor. Being productive in the first half offensively and really going after guys defensively.

Our starters at that point in the game should have had some juice in them and our bench was the key to that run.

**Q. Jon Wooden has said, It's one thing to get there and harder to stay there." Was this year harder than last year's run?**

COACH JACOBSON: I don't know if harder is the right word. They're very different. And for me as a head coach the first time I've gone through as a head coach, I've been an assistant and player in this situation. As a head coach, it's different. Not just for me but for our team.

There are cases on the road where the crowd is bigger and they're more into it. They know we have a basketball team that's going to be in the hunt for the big title. There are certainly some differences.

Last year, we just got things rolling. Everything was fine. We just kept winning games and we kept going, and it's still hard to win in this league and hard to do what we did last year. But this year it takes a very determined effort every day at practice and every day you step on the court because of what those expectations are.

I'm proud of our guys for that determination they showed every day to make sure they're ready to play as well as they can because they knew they had to.

**Q. The five guys that were up on the podium are well known to league observers. They've been contributors now for two years. Your bench averaged 21.3 in the tournament. Even Lucas is a two-time sixth man of the year. Maybe these other guys, can you talk about the respect they earned in this tournament and give the perception that you guys are a deeper team than what the perception has been?**

COACH JACOBSON: I would throw Kerwin in there with Luke. Both those guys, they were very good year last year. Kerwin had a good

year this year. So their experience has helped us. Those two guys, I know we can count on them in any and all situations. Late game, if there's a run going either way. I know those two guys because of their experience and quality of player they are, we can count on those two.

I think those three freshmen, maybe I should have been playing those guys a little bit more a month and a half ago. They've done a great job at practice, and obviously this weekend and in particular the last two days. What we saw out of those three freshmen, that was good basketball.

I liked how they defended. They come up with Sonnen with big hoops in the first half, and Anthony with hoops, and Jake extremely important today at the offensive end. They've got a great understanding of what we have to defend and rebound the ball. For the freshmen, they do a good job at the defensive end of the floor.

**Q. Before the game, if somebody would have told you that Adam wouldn't score a point and you'd win by 15 points, what would you have said to them?**

COACH JACOBSON: I certainly wouldn't have thought that we would have won the basketball game let alone by double figures. Although we've had other games where any of these five guys up here have had two points or four points and when they're averaging 11 or 12, and we've had other guys step up and make plays and come through for us offensively.

I just think the depth of our team and the trust they have in each other, they're not worried about themselves getting points. They just want to win basketball games and that showed up again today.

**Q. Was the plan to use that second group to gap the other team's starters coming in or is it just kind of these guys are playing well? How you did that evolve?**

COACH JACOBSON: I'll tell you where it evolved was yesterday. The way those guys played yesterday really helped me and our staff in terms of how we could approach this game, because those three freshmen played so well yesterday.

I felt great after that basketball game because I felt like we were going to be able to play ten guys today. And I felt we were going to do our best to go after them and try to put as much pressure on as we could and keep going to those

guys on the bench. I was hoping at some point during the course of the basketball game that we'd get a little bit of a run to get separation. Because I knew it was going to be a close game. Just hoping there would be a spot in there where we could get a little bit of a run.

**Q. Could you just speak about what the next week is going to be like now that you have a spot in the tournament? Is anything going to change as far as practice goes?**

COACH JACOBSON: No, I think our experience last year will help us. We'll do some of the things we did a year ago, and there are as Kwadzo mentioned there are things we can do different this week than we did a year ago. And we'll have a day or two off to start the week. Then, we'll get back to practice and really work on our stuff, really work on some things at both ends of the floor.

That was important coming in here. We had four days of practice and really worked on some things at the offensive end and it helped us. So, I really enjoy these practices. Thinking back to last year when we were just working on our team. We've got a chance to get better during the next five or six days before Selection Sunday.

**Q. Being down by three points at halftime, what did you tell the guys starting the second half?**

COACH JACOBSON: There were a couple plays I didn't like. Adam Koch reached in and fouled Hatch. He had no business reaching in there. Jordan had a rebound he didn't get. Jordan didn't show on the ball screen on Hannah.

So we talked about three or four specific plays, and then got back to this is what we've got to do. But there were three or four specific plays that I talked about. For us to be good and win games, we have to do things the right way. We had to be fundamentally sound. I didn't like a couple of plays in that first half. After we talked about those we got on to bigger picture stuff.

**Q. You had so many guys contribute down here. Now you have a 12-day layoff, how do you keep that momentum rolling?**

COACH JACOBSON: I think enough things have happened right now. We need to take two of the next three days off. Whether they're two in a row or not. Then you're almost to mid week.

You can have three good practices just working on your team. Then you're a day off, you've got Selection Sunday and you start working on the next opponent.

So ten days seems like a long time, but when you break it down as you did a year ago, and we may shift around a little, but it goes a little faster. What I like the most is the time with our team working on our stuff. We'll get three good days of that for sure.

**Q. I remember after the Purdue game you said we're going to get one of these things, meaning a win in the tournament. How do you feel about the tournament going into it right now, where you guys are at? Is this something you've been pointing towards before the end of the season?**

COACH JACOBSON: I really like how we played here. We had a very good win over Illinois State before we got here. We played very well in the second half of the Drake game. I thought we really played well. We knew we had to win both of those games.

Again, I knew today was going to be a close game. So that momentum helps as we go into practices getting ready for this. That's an important part and we've got momentum and confidence in the things that we're doing.

Certainly this is on their list of goals. They get to decide as a team what their goals are, and there are a couple still on there that we have not gotten. So there is a lot of motivation still.

**Q. Can you talk about Jake Koch and Adam? What similarities do they have? Different styles, one's a senior, one's a freshman, but what makes them similar and a guy like Jake to do what he can today?**

COACH JACOBSON: You know, there's -- Adam drives it better. I think about the basketball stuff first. Adam is much more athletic. He drives it better, he gets to the free-throw line more. Jake, at the same age Jake is shooting the ball better from the three-point line. Adam is now shooting it better from the three-point line.

But in terms of their personalities, Jake's a little bit more outgoing, if you will. Adam has really grown into that. I can tell you this, they have been really good for each other. Adam has had a tremendous impact on Jake's work ethic in terms of getting in the weight room, in terms of getting extra shots up, in terms of doing all the things you have to do to do what an Adam Koch does. Being

consistent over two years, and being in the running for player of the year as a junior, being player of the year as a senior, to do that you have to be consistent in your approach all year long.

And I think Adam's had an impact on what it takes for Jake to be really good. Jake's outgoing, he's fun to be around, his teammates love him, and that's been good for Adam.

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THE MODERATOR: The tournament runners-up are with us. We will ask Head Coach Gregg Marshall to start off with a statement on this game, and go to questions for the three student athletes of Wichita State. Gregg, please?

COACH MARSHALL: Well, it's obvious that we hit a real dry spell there at some point in the second half. I'm trying to get some clarification on exactly how long, then we'll have to figure out why. But they were definitely down the stretch, the better team. We had a good run but weren't able to finish, so congratulations to them.

**Q. You guys were the first team in the tournament to score over 40 points on UNI. Then, in the second half, there is a 12 minute and 14 second stretch where they went on a 23-3 run. For the players, what was going on in that stretch? There were a couple of buckets that went halfway down and came out. What was going on?**

CLEVIN HANNAH: I think we did get a couple of good looks that we missed against a good team, a good defensive team. You've got to take advantage of the good looks that you did against them and knock them down, and we didn't do it.

GARRETT STUTZ: We had good shots, just they didn't fall. I missed a couple of shots during that stretch, a lot of us did. And we fell for jump shots at that point. We didn't continue to be as aggressive as we were earlier in the game.

**Q. Northern Iowa was able to rest guys in their first two games. They had a little easier time in their games. Was fatigue any kind of a factor?**

J.T. DURLEY: No, fatigue really wasn't a factor. I mean just we got outplayed in the second half.

GARRETT STUTZ: I don't think fatigue was a factor either. We played hard all throughout the game and all throughout the tournament, and we just came up a little bit short.

**Q. Going into the halftime with the lead, what do you feel went wrong in the second half besides the scoring drought?**

GARRETT STUTZ: I'm not really sure. I've got a lot of things going through my mind right now. Effort was there, effort, passion and intensity was all there. We just couldn't finish, couldn't put the ball in the basket, and that will hurt you when you're playing a good team.

**Q. Can you just talk about now waiting to find out what's next, the three players, please?**

THE MODERATOR: Clevin, then Garrett and J.T., thank you.

CLEVIN HANNAH: I guess we just wait it out and see where we stand. I know we'll be playing somewhere in some tournament hopefully. But we will just wait it out and get back to see what we can do to get better.

GARRETT STUTZ: Yeah, just recover, get our minds right, and physically get right. Then

just try to continue to improve every day and everything we do to just get better.

J.T. DURLEY: I mean, you know, this was kind of a let down to play anything less than the NCAA Tournament. But, we'll play somewhere, anywhere we can play, we'll play.

**Q. Ahelegbe scored 20 points today, can you talk about the trouble you had in defending him?**

J.T. DURLEY: He's a good player, they get him open on screening and they drive to the hole and make free throws and knock down open shots. He's just a good player.

**Q. Just the experience of getting here to the championship game? How beneficial is that going forward?**

CLEVIN HANNAH: It's real beneficial. We're sort of a young team. We've got almost everybody coming back, so I mean, experience is going to be a big factor, but it's just a tough loss to lose the way we lost.

GARRETT STUTZ: Just remember the feeling and how bad it sucks. And just remember that through the off-season and do anything you can not to be feeling this again.

**Q. What would your message be to the rest of the league about this program and where it's coming? As you leave it right now and the legacy you leave behind, what do you expect out of this program in the next couple of years?**

CLEVIN HANNAH: I expect for this program to be one of the top on coming soon. They've got a great coach that's going to lead them to where they need to be. And they've got great players. I just want to let them know that they can do it whatever they put their minds to and play hard with each other. They can play anywhere with anybody.

**Q. Clevin, Kwadzo was talking to you there at the end and had his arm around you. Was he consoling you or what was he telling you at that point?**

CLEVIN HANNAH: He was telling me congratulations on my career. We had respect for each other, and he's a good player and just keeps doing his thing.

**Q. If you could meet with the selection committee right now, how would you state your case for you guys to get in?**

COACH MARSHALL: I don't know. 25 wins, a couple of top 25 victories, undefeated at home. Very talented team, and I think our team is built for this type of tournament, built for postseason play. We've got size. We've got 7-footers, we've got long, rangy athletes. We're going to defend. Tonight, I don't know what happened. I'll have to go back and watch the film. I have a lot of thoughts in my mind about what happened and why.

I know we turned the ball over. I thought we settled for too many jump shots, but Northern Iowa's a great team. They're well coached, they're seasoned and they're experienced. They'll win games in the NCAA Tournament. They'll win at least one, if not two games, in the NCAA Tournament.

You know, I've got experience as an NCAA Tournament coach, and hopefully I can get them prepared to compete with whoever we play. You know, in this league, it's a pretty good basketball league. We had to play a team with 20 wins in the quarterfinals that was getting top 25 votes for December as a 2 seed. So that goes to show you the depth of the conference.

Illinois State's a quality team. We played early without Clevin Hannah, and it was a great game for 30-something minutes, we were right there with them.

Anyway, you asked the question, I'd love to get an opportunity to coach Clevin Hannah in the NCAA Tournament, but I'll coach in the NCAA Tournament again. I just wish that he got an opportunity, because he's a special little player.

**Q. Coach, at the 16-minute mark, UNI went on a 23-3 run for about 12:00 minutes, could you talk about what happened in that time?**

COACH MARSHALL: I think I just addressed that.

**Q. Going into halftime with the lead, what did you feel your team had to do in the second half to keep the consistency up in the second half?**

COACH MARSHALL: Playing for an NCAA Tournament berth outright, I don't think it was a matter of intensity, we couldn't get the ball to

fall in the last 20 minutes or whatever it was. They made some great shots. Couple times we had the ball in our hands and couldn't come up with it.

The breaks didn't go our way in the last 12 minutes. But we've had a good run. We were intense. And of course except for the last minute or two, I thought they got a little down. It's my job now to get them back up because we'll be playing somewhere against somebody that's going to be a good basketball team, and I'm looking forward to it.

I've said all year that I've loved coaching this group. It's an unbelievable group of young people and they're also talented and long and athletic basketball players.

**Q. I know you've addressed the 12-minute drought, it looked to me like this team peaked here. You probably played your best basketball in St. Louis up until that time. Is fatigue a possibility in your mind?**

COACH MARSHALL: We haven't played three games in three days. Demetric getting the fourth foul hurt us because David Kyles is already out for the year. He may be able to come back for some post-season play, but he's not available right now. He's our fourth guard. Demetric was actually the fifth guard, and he was in foul trouble. So we weren't able to distribute the minutes like I would have preferred, but that's happened before.

It's a much better problem than when Hannah and Murry are on the bench with fouls and can't play because of that reason, so at least they were out there. But 37 minutes is a little too many for Clevin. And everyone else played 34 less.

So you're talking three days in a row. I don't know. They have the same situation. They won more convincingly the first two games, so they were able to get more of a rest. But hopeful Leo owe it may have been, it looked like we may have hit a little wall, I don't know.

They've been a resilient group all year. I'm sure they'll bounce back here. But we've got a few weeks or at least a few days before we have to play again.

**Q. You talked about maybe settling for jump shots. Northern Iowa seems good at making teams do that. Just discouraging people from getting to the basket. What is it about their defense that makes them effective?**

COACH MARSHALL: They're well schooled. Ben does a great job. They're tough. They're not super athletic, but they're always in the

right position, and they're very, very, very physical and strong.

So like I said, they're going to give somebody in the NCAA Tournament an L, and some fits on the floor.

**Q. Yesterday you talked about how much Clevin had grown as a person from last season until this season. Talk about how hard it is to see him go out of the MVC Tournament with a loss like this?**

COACH MARSHALL: He helped this program grow. I'll worry about not coaching Clevin Hannah after his last game. That's going to be hard enough. I don't want to have to worry about it until then. Right now, what I want to see is what Clevin has done.

He came in after we had zero minutes returning in the back court. And he was the captain of our ship. We went from 0-6 in the Valley and got really hot and had a great run last year tour of towards the end. Finished with 17 wins and overachieved for a team that was picked ninth. And this year we're picked 5th, and we overachieve again and finish second in a very good basketball conference.

He's the guy. He's our Most Valuable Player, first team all conference player and all tournament. He's the catalyst to the first Shockers team to be in the finals in a long, long time. So I think he's left a great legacy whenever he does finish, and I hope it's not for a while. I hope it's several weeks that he gets to continue to display his unique talents because he's a great young man. And I just really like coaching him.

**Q. I guess Jake Koch had not taken a shot until tonight. When he starts firing away like that, does that throw the scouting report into an uproar?**

COACH MARSHALL: We knew he could shoot. I was not crazy about Blair's defense on those two shots that started the game. But he's looking like he's going to be a very good player. Blair had his hands in his pockets and doesn't know how to contest yet. So, I have to work with him on big league contests. He's got one more year to figure it out.

Hopefully he'll do it one more year a little bit better, because a kid like that, you don't give him a contest, he's going to make it.



**Q. You guys really controlled the boards coming out of halftime. The first nine minutes of the second half, you were never able to pull away. How frustrating was that getting second chances and not being able to capitalize on them.**

COACH MARSHALL: That was the big key for us because we lost the game up at their place by three. They killed us on the offensive glass. We addressed that. We had plenty of opportunity to score. We had 52 shots, they had 46, but we didn't make them.

We had some guys that had poor shooting nights and also had some guys that made some bad decisions. But a lot of the credit, again, goes to their defense. I mean, somebody said that's the first team that scored 40 against them or more than 40, we scored 52, but that's not enough against them. They had 67. A lot of those were gifts at the end with the fouling, but it's hard to score 60 points against them. They're very good defensively for the reasons I mentioned earlier.

We lost our composure to a degree as a young team and the first time in this situation. I would have loved to have knocked all those shots down, executed better, and won the game and went to the NCAA Tournament without a doubt. But it didn't happen. What I've got to do is get this group back up so they can live to fight another day and they've got to understand the strides that they've made.

So you become a little bit of a psychologist at this time in my situation. Ben gets to relax and enjoy the next week or two.

**Q. Just getting to this point, how much of a benefit is that going forward?**

COACH MARSHALL: Well, I think it's better than losing in the first round. Let's see, first year -- let's go back over that -- first year I'm kicked out for spinning around on a knee without saying a word. That is pretty much the low point.

Second year, we have the clock debacle. Everyone runs off the court, including the referees and they're asked to come back. We put more time on the clock, and we lose in the quarterfinals on a great shot from Booker Woodfox after two dribbles and a ham sandwich.

Then this year we were able to win two games and get to the finals, so I think we're making strides. I'll take it. It's a big improvement.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Best of luck in the postseason.