

March 5, 2011



Missouri State – 60
Creighton – 50

An interview with:

**COACH McDERMOTT
KENNY LAWSON
ANTOINE YOUNG**

THE MODERATOR: Creighton University Bluejays are with us. Coach McDermott, a statement on the game and then questions for the student-athletes.

COACH McDERMOTT: Well, we played like we wanted to play for the first half and early in the second half. If you had told me we were going to outrebound them by one, and they were going to only have three, made three-point shots, I probably would have taken that. But we just weren't very efficient offensively in the second half.

We took a large number of our shot attempts from the three-point line. Granted some of those were late when we were behind, but probably -- too high of a percentage of our shots were from three. We've been one of the better teams in the country in not fouling the entire season. To have a 21-4 free throw difference for us is pretty tough to overcome.

Q. You guys were up in the first half, what do you think happened during your preparation after the second half, after halftime? What do you think happened to where Missouri State had won the game.

ANTOINE YOUNG: We just got stagnant in the offensive end in the second half. Probably took some tough shots inside. Got some more movement going I think. Got it on top of each other towards the end, and just tried to get some more space in.

Q. When Missouri State ratchets up that defense, what's it like out there from a player's standpoint?

KENNY LAWSON: They definitely have the crowd going when they made that run. But we had to keep focus and not turn the ball over. There was you a stretch when we turned the ball over a few too many times and kind of got a little rattled.

ANTOINE YOUNG: I don't think they ratcheted us up. They just took some tough shots. When they took tough shots, they got tipouts and turned it over, got easy buckets on the other end. I don't think it's anything tremendously that they did on the defensive end that took away what we wanted. I think we beat ourselves on that side of the floor.

Q. Kenny, you had a couple threes, good looks, they just didn't go down. How big were those at the time?

KENNY LAWSON: We needed, especially late in the game, we needed some big baskets. But the shots didn't fall. There are going to be nights like that. There's not much you can do about it.

Q. Kenny, you're a senior, and this is your last game. What do you guys feel about going into -- I know you guys probably won't get to the NCAA Tournament. But what about the other games in the other tournaments how do you feel about that?

KENNY LAWSON: I'm pretty sure we're going to have an opportunity to play, which is good for our seniors. Playing in this program is an opportunity that many people don't get. Playing college basketball is an opportunity many people don't get.

So we're blessed to have another opportunity to play. At the same time for the guys that are playing next year, it's an opportunity for them to improve as a team and get more experience. It's definitely a good thing. We're not

going to look down on any chance to play.

Q. Antoine Ricks was saying he thought if he could do a good job against you, they had a good chance to win. Just talk about his efforts against you?

ANTOINE YOUNG: I think he did a pretty good job of trying to keep his body on me so he couldn't turn the screens very good. Obviously, he did a great job on me. I didn't get looks that I wanted. Maybe I rushed a couple of looks, but he did a tremendous job.

Q. Frustration level, you've played Missouri State three times, played in the second half all three times. Just your frustration level of not being able to get them.

KENNY LAWSON: Very frustrating. I don't think it's anything that they did. Credit to the team. They're a great team, but I think it's just a matter of not completing the game and being the tougher team.

We showed that we're just as good a team as they are, but we have to sustain that for 40 minutes.

ANTOINE YOUNG: It's just a tough one to lose just because you know how hard you work in the off-season to prepare for things like this, prepare for big-time stages. And to not play well during it hurts. It's part of the game. Hat's off to them. They played a very good game.

Q. Overall in this tournament, you had a pretty good run. How does it feel to be playing in the Missouri Valley Conference?

KENNY LAWSON: It's a great opportunity. Playing on a stage like this is something most people don't get to do. It's always a fun time coming down here to St. Louis. Overall it was a fun time. But we wish we could have been playing a little bit longer.

ANTOINE YOUNG: Obviously fun. I enjoyed being down here, especially with my teammates and coach, having a good time. Also me playing basketball, which is what you love to do. Events like this are special. Knowing you only get one bid in, and it's just compete, and leave it out there. That's a lot of fun.

Q. Rebounding-wise, you got that rebound down. But offensive rebounds were 13 for Missouri State. Could you talk about the impact of the game and how that affected the outcome.

KENNY LAWSON: Any time you're able to get more shots that's obviously going to benefit your team. Couple of guys did a good job creating more shots for their team, going through offensive wars. There were time that's some of us just didn't box out. It's kind of a toughness thing.

ANTOINE YOUNG: Obviously, killed us. Led to a lot of free throw opportunities. Going to the line a lot. That changes the momentum of the game. The next time you shoot or get to the line, it definitely killed us.

Q. Antoine, Kenny has made it sound like he wants to play again. Your thoughts on getting another opportunity?

ANTOINE YOUNG: Oh, yeah, it's basketball. We all love to play basketball. Any chance you get to out there and be competitive and play. I mean, think about it, this is my last time playing with Kenny and all of the seniors. This year has just been tremendous. Probably the funnest year of my career. I want to go away swinging with the seniors and rest of my team and have a fun rest of the year.

Q. In both games they've come from behind in the second half. Is there something they do particularly well to turn things up or wear down other teams?

COACH McDERMOTT: They probably turned up the defensive pressure a little when they started scoring a little bit more. But the reality of it is they have the same number of field goals in the second half as they had in the first half. The difference was on the free-throw line.

Q. Is there anything specifically that you couldn't do down the stretch that led to their come back?

COACH McDERMOTT: We probably didn't get the inside touches early in the half that we needed to. You know, we had an opportunity after Coach Martin took the timeout when we were up eight. We ran a set play out of a timeout. Doug had a wide open three at the top of the key. Missed it to put us up 11. They go down to the other end, run a little curl for Weems and he hit it's to cut it to five.

I thought that's really where the momentum of the game changed. You point to a couple of possessions that can really turn a game, and I think those two were it.

Q. Mallett had six offensive rebounds by himself. 13 you guys gave up. How big an impact did that have on the game?

COACH McDERMOTT: It was huge. A lot of those weren't necessarily rebounds at the rim that resulted in immediate baskets. A lot of them were tipouts. Now you end up playing defense for 45 or 50 seconds instead of 25 or 30 seconds. That wears into you as well, because they're going to grind it and make you work on the defensive end of the floor. They do a good job getting into your body and getting a hand on the basketball.

We didn't probably stay as attached to the people we needed to when the shot went up. We probably turned and ran to the rim a little bit especially in the guard court.

They're a good offensive rebounding team. Had 15 of them yesterday, and we knew that was going to be a key factor in the game, and it turned out to be.

Q. Missouri State seemed to have your number this season. How would you rate Missouri State in that same regard as this year's team?

COACH McDERMOTT: We've I played them three times, and we've had an 11 point lead, a 15-point lead, and an 8 point lead in the second half, and we lost all three. The way we won yesterday, that doesn't happen without experience. The guys believe in what their coach is asking them to do and believe in one another. I really think that their tournament run late last season in the CIT or CBI, whatever they were playing in, the confidence that gives you and prepares you to work in the off-season is invaluable.

They were a team in the start of the season that believes they could win, and they lost some close games on the road with good teams where they had opportunities to win. But I don't think -- it's not by accident that Wichita and Missouri State ended up one and two. They're the teams with the most experience in the league.

Q. How much impact did playing in the Missouri Valley Conference impact Creighton?

COACH McDERMOTT: It's a great league. This is a great tournament. It was a great environment out there today. It was an outstanding crowd. It's a neat experience for our guys. It's something that they'll always remember. Our fans are unbelievable the way that they follow us here. We're coming from as far as anybody in

the league, yet we're consistently one of the teams that draws the best here.

So we appreciate the fans we have, and I think our new guys in particular got to experience this weekend just how important it is to a lot of people, this program. How many people really care about this program.

Hopefully, if they didn't know that already, they know it now, and that will motivate them in the off-season.

Q. At one point it was 8-2 in fouls. How big an impact did that play in the game as you guys were trying to hang on the lead?

COACH McDERMOTT: It's the difference in the game. You're trying to play from behind and be a little more aggressive defensively, get in some passing lanes and get on the ball a little bit. Now you're putting them on the free-throw line. We've been a team on the season that we haven't quite made more than our opponents have attempted, but we're close.

So that's been something. There's two things we've done this season. We've gotten to the line a lot, and we haven't fouled much. Today we didn't get to the line much and we fouled a lot, and we're not going to win many games when that's the case.

Q. Talk a little about the possibility of playing in some of those postseason tournaments and yours and the team's decision to play in those?

COACH McDERMOTT: I think they're bonus games for your seniors. Any time you have an opportunity to extend the end, you have to take advantage of that and give these guys an opportunity to play extra games and sacrificed a lot and worked for this program. They were given an opportunity to play. At the same time we started two freshmen, a sophomore, a junior. We bring Josh Jones off the bench. It's an opportunity for those guys to get more practice time and play in more games and hopefully compete to win a championship in whichever tournament fits us the best.

Also gives you an opportunity in practice to maybe try some things. We've got some red shirts and a transfer that we can work in a little bit in practice as we prepare for these tournaments and get a look at what the future is in practice. Because you're not spending as much time

preparing for the next opponent. We've got a lot of time between now and whenever that game would be.

We're excited about it. And I hope our fans will embrace it. They embraced it pretty well last year. It's not the tournament we want to play in, we're not satisfied with it, but it can be part of the process in helping us build this program.

Q. You said that you didn't get the ball inside early in the second half as much as you'd like to. Was it something they were doing or decision making on your guys' part?

COACH McDERMOTT: They packed it in there pretty well. That's the reason there were a lot of open three-point shots. Kaleb missed a wide open one, Doug missed a wide open one.

I think Jahenns had a wide open look in front of our bench. When you're sitting in the lane and it's tough, it's tough to turn down those threes in those situations.

When I look at the film, my guess is we missed some opportunities to get it in there, and then we also missed some shots. We've been a pretty good three-point shooting team in conference play. Almost 40%, and we weren't near that today.

Q. Would the CBI be more attractive than the CIT, given that Creighton played in the CIT last year?

COACH McDERMOTT: I haven't done a lot of research. If I'm not mistaken there was only one BCS team. There was only one in the CBI last year, and the CIT is more of a mid-major tournament. I'm not sure it makes a world of difference. It's maybe us trying to find the best possible home game that might be attractive to our fans and an interest to our fans and then go from there.

Again, my thoughts have been on trying to get this team till Sunday and go to a different tournament. So we'll worry about that tomorrow.

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