

March 3, 2011



Southern Illinois – 57
Illinois State – 54

An Interview with:

**COACH LOWERY
KENDAL BROWN-SURLES
CARLTON FAY**

COACH LOWERY: I thought our guys played hard. We played with consistent effort on both sides of the ball. Four turnovers in the game is a credit to our guys and a credit to us keeping good spacing on the floor. You've got to give Illinois State credit, they played very, very hard. They had seniors where that was their last game.

So knowing what was at stake, our seniors played hard too. I thought John Freeman and Carlton Fay were great defensively down the stretch for us, which gave us a chance to win.

Q. Kendal, I think you had all ten of your points in one flurry there early in the second half. What was going on there?

KENDAL BROWN-SURLES: Really just being smarter with the ball, being more aggressive and looking for my shot. Just emotion really played a big part because we were moving and just getting shots and knocking them down.

Q. Carlton, can you talk about live to go play another day, and how you guys felt this out today?

CARLTON FAY: Yeah, we just had that sense of urgency, and we wanted it to go our way and get corrected.

Q. Carlton and Kendal, can you talk about the contributions the guards made? Carlton and Mamadou had just a few points in the half. But Troy scored some early buckets

and you had that flurry and Justin came in and played big minutes.

KENDAL BROWN-SURLES: Really just, you know, it was at the end of the day, it's the guard's game. If the guard's aren't playing well, you know, it's anybody's ball game. Troy got us going early, we were knocking down shots. I made a few myself. We just all played well together, and played like this was our last game.

CARLTON FAY: Yeah, like he said. We did a great job taking care of the ball. Our guards made great plays and that is the reason we won the game.

Q. You got outshot, you got outrebounded. But as coach mentioned, the turnovers were huge. I think you outscored them 14-2. Was that a big emphasis going in?

CARLTON FAY: Yeah, it's an emphasis every game. Take care of the ball is a big part of the game. But, yeah, there are some things we didn't do right tonight, but the numbers were in our favor tonight.

Q. Carlton, talk about having a rebound with them and how hard you hit the glass today?

CARLTON FAY: Yeah, I wasn't shooting the ball well, so I had to do something else, so I tried to rebound and play defense.

Q. I guess the reward for gutting this one out is now a quick turnaround to play Missouri State tomorrow at noon. Could you just preview that a little bit or talk about what you expect tomorrow?

CARLTON FAY: Go get some rest now, and tomorrow we'll get up, watch film and be ready to play tomorrow.

KENDAL BROWN-SURLES: Basically what Carlton said. Piggyback off him, and come back and play with the same energy we had today. When we play together and we're on key like this, I don't think there is a team we cannot beat.

KENDAL BROWN-SURLES: Obviously, that's your reward to play number one, but it's a neutral court setting, and this is the most important time of the year, it's a new season. Anything can happen. We've come here number one five or six times and only won it one time. So everybody has a chance to be their last game. So there is no advantage when you get to St. Louis.

Q. Can you talk about having Justin back, what it means to the team?

KENDAL BROWN-SURLES: It's a great thing. Justin has been here the longest, as well as Carlton. When he gets going, he's a tough guy to guard, and it just makes everything a lot easier.

Q. Coach, tonight, could you talk about the production, not only did you get good production from your bench, but you got quality minutes as well. Could you talk about that? Was that something that you were interested in tonight as far as this game was concerned?

COACH LOWERY: I think the number one thing is that our guys played well together. When you have a season like we had where your ups and downs and distractions going on you can never really work on things the right time, the right kind of way, and the right kind of pace with the right kind of discipline.

Unfortunately for us, after we lost to Indiana State, we concentrated on doing things the right way. No distractions, everything the right way. Do it over if you don't do it right. It showed today in our screening actions and our space and our movement. Very similar to some of our older teams. We grinded people out, got penetration at the end. We took good shots at the end of the shot clock, and our guys played timely defense.

Q. Can you talk about the guard play. Troy was a big factor offensively in the first half, and you got a lot of the run outs like you were talking about in the old days when the guards were picking off passes and getting in the lanes?

COACH LOWERY: Yeah, we've tried to get back to being more aggressive defensively and less passive. It starts with Kendal and Mykel. When they pressure the ball it gives us opportunities to get in the lane. When we don't do a good job pressuring the ball, we struggle to defend the ball. I just thought today we did a good job of keeping them out of the keys.

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But we struggled with Austin Hill, but made him take 14 shots to get 13 points. Like I said, John Freeman was great on him down the stretch. Making him take tough shots, blocking it from behind, tipping it from behind. You've got to give our guys credit for coming out and playing hard today.

Q. How is Troy Long, and what are the chances that Jack's going to play tomorrow?

COACH LOWERY: I have no idea with Troy right now. We'll see. Jack flew in. He woke up at 4:00 a.m. to get on a 6:00 a.m. flight to get here, and he had a layover somewhere else. So he ended up getting here 11:30, 12:00: I wasn't going to ask him to play after the roller coaster he's been on after the last four days.

Q. Is there any different kind of pressure in playing a Thursday game, or is it just like any other tournament game?

COACH LOWERY: I think with the circumstances it's always pressure. Plus we haven't won a game here since 2007. The pressure I put on myself is immense to win this game. So the pressure was on me that I put on myself. But I think they responded. They showed they wanted to play more, and I said I didn't want to be through coaching these guys had this season, and they responded to that.

Q. Coach, you were able to limit Illinois State to no fast breakpoints tonight, and with the quick turnaround, you kind of controlled the pace tonight in tonight's game. Is that important going into tomorrow afternoon's contest?

COACH LOWERY: Without a doubt. They played us on Senior Night, so for our guys we get a chance to relive Senior Night again in a neutral setting. So if that isn't enough motivation to get our guys ready for tomorrow, doesn't matter about the quick turnaround.

Q. At first did you think Hill's basket was a three-pointer, or did you know right away that his foot was on the line?

COACH LOWERY: I couldn't tell. That's on the other end. There are two lines out there. I knew he was inside the NBA three-point line, that's all I knew.

Q. Talk about why you think you were able to tough this one out tonight?

COACH LOWERY: Well, I mean, when you have seniors, like I said, did you see their seniors after the game? They were crying, they were emotional. Maybe our guys didn't want to feel that way this soon, so I had think that's the number one thing.

Plus, we did a better job of executing what we asked them to do, and we showed our execution. Our timeouts were much better, our execution defensively on our timeouts was much better.

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