

March 3, 2011



An Interview with:

**COACH LANSING
AARON CARTER
JAKE ODUM**

THE MODERATOR: Coach Lansing, will you open up with a statement about your team and being in St. Louis.

COACH LANSING: Just in general, in opening, it's always good to come down here. There is nothing better than March Madness. I love the fact that this tournament kind of kicks off March Madness before the other, most of the other conference tournaments.

I really like my team. Just a tremendous group of hard working guys that handled a rough start, and getting off to a good start in the conference. They handled a little adversity with the illnesses and injuries, and playing some younger guys and some new guys, fought through it, and finished pretty strong. We've been getting better every day, and we're awfully anxious for tomorrow night.

Q. Aaron, the two Evansville games were so extreme in their respect that you guys played well in the first half, and they played well in the second half. Because of that, how much is there that you can take from those two games and apply to tomorrow's game? Do you throw those two games on out a little bit?

AARON CARTER: You don't throw them out. You look at the things you did well in the first half, and look at what we did bad in the second half and learn from that. We have to throw two halves together to win tonight. We're confident, Evansville is a good team, but we're confident we can play with them. We know we were up 17 in the first half on them twice.

But we let it slip away. We have to take what we did in the first half and continue it over to the second half, and we'll be fine.

Q. Along those same lines, what do you think you did do well that got away from you in those two games, looking back on it with a little distance between those two games? What do you think they did well to get back in it?

THE MODERATOR: Jake start and then Aaron.

JAKE ODUM: Basically in the first half against Evansville in both games, we were flying around defensively, swinging the ball, making good cut as cross the lane, and feeding the ball inside and kicking it back out.

AARON CARTER: Yeah, moving around on defense was a big thing. We watched tape last night and you could see we were flying around and helping each other out on defense and stuff. We just kind of quit moving a little bit on offense as well.

So it's a combination like that. Keep playing well. They outworked us. That's how they won. We let them out work us, outrebound us. We didn't stop them in transition, we've just got to put all those things together.

JAKE ODUM: To finish with that, Evansville is a team that grinds you. We didn't compete hard for 40 minutes, and that grinding really took a toll on us in the second half. That is something that the team needs to focus on tomorrow night to win this first game.

Q. What's been the key for this team in conference play that wasn't there in non-conference play?

COACH LANSING: We had a really tough schedule. That's my fault. We bit off more than we could chew, bringing in six new guys, and playing three and four freshmen at times. One of your freshmen being a red shirt freshmen, and Jake being your leader.

We learned from it though. You know, I think the guys, the way we started off the conference season, our scheduling conference started out a little more favorable than what it got when we had lost five in a row. Then with Jake and Dwayne going out with injuries and illnesses. I always felt like our chemistry was key.

When you have a red shirt freshman, and obviously Aaron's a very good leader and he's more by what he does, the way he carries himself and how hard he works. But your vocal leader, being a young guy like Jake, it takes a little while. I thought when we were stubbing our toe there in the middle of the year, it took us a while to blend Jake and Dwayne back into it.

But we have such a good group of unselfish guys that I think they felt, and I know I felt, that it was going to get back.

We kind of met and talked about just getting better every day in practice. The pressure was off after we lost those games in a row. We weren't going to win the conference outright. We just committed to getting better every day until we got to St. Louis, and it took care of itself. We won five straight conference games and played decent at times against a very good Morehead State team. So the guys really committed themselves basically to each other and improving every day.

Q. Aaron, this is your fourth trip here. The team has progressed three or four years from the play into the 6 seed last year to the 3 this year. What do you think as a player that this team has learned over the course of that time? What could you impart to some of the guys that haven't been through the same journey you have to be successful in St. Louis this year?

AARON CARTER: It's just tough. You're going to get everybody's best shot because it's do or die here. You've got to go out there and fight for everything and play as hard as you can for 40 minutes and be the tougher team.

You don't have to win four games in four days to win. But three games in three days is still tough and you've got to be focused and ready to work hard.

Q. It's been a while since you've played Evansville. Because of the distance between now and that game, how have the teams changed and how much can really be compared as far as to tomorrow's game and the two you played previously?

COACH LANSING: I think we're both going to be the same. I guarantee you Evansville is going to do what they do, and we're going to do what we do. We've both improved.

We have so much respect for Marty and what he's done with his team, how good they are, and how tough they are. They swept us this year. No question they deserved to win both those games. We played well, but they were better than us in both of those games.

There is not a better motion coach in the country of true motion than Marty Simmons. So they're going to do that. We know we have to guard their motion, and when we're running our offense, they're going to make it awfully difficult for us.

Both teams have continued to get tougher and continued to improve. I know they like their team, I certainly like our team, so it should be a very good game.

Q. All season we've heard about Jake taking over at point guard and his personality and how he kind of gets guys organized and on the right page. Talk about that from your perspective why was he able as a red shirt freshman able to come in and do all the point guard things so well?

AARON CARTER: He's just tough. He's what we need in the point guard. He's going to do the little things. He's going to D-up, find stills, he's a true point and that's what we needed. He's a tough guy, a great teammate, and he's a big part of why we've been so successful this year.

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