

**March 7, 2013**



DRAKE – 81  
BRADLEY - 66

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

COACH GENO FORD  
WILL EGOLF  
JAKE EASTMAN

THE MODERATOR: Welcome in Bradley Braves.

Just a couple of quick notes about Bradley. Bradley finishes the season at 16-16, 29-32 overall in the MVC tourney. Coach Geno Ford now 23-41 in his second year at BU, 142-110 in his eighth year overall as a college head coach. He's 0-2 in the MVC tourney and 0-2 versus Drake.

Bradley has now lost three tournament games in a row. We'll start with a statement from Coach Ford before taking questions for the student-athletes. He is joined today by Jake Eastman and Will Egolf. Coach?

COACH FORD: I thought Drake played really well. Didn't get off to a great start. We had a hard time turning them over, which is a formula for disaster for us. We need steals to get easy baskets. We didn't really generate many of those.

When they needed to, it seemed like everybody made a three. They really did a great job making timely threes. They made several of them. We shot the ball well, but they make 12 threes, they're hard to beat.

Did a good job on Simons from out there, but the other guys were able to get some space. Did a good job guarding the post guys. I didn't feel they played really well, and we did not play well. Those two things.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for student-athletes, Jake Eastman and Will Egolf.

**Q. For both you guys, can you just describe the start of the game. It seemed like you guys didn't have your usual energy. I'll let you answer if you felt that was the case. If that was, why would it be in that setting?**

THE MODERATOR: Jake, why don't you start first, please.

JAKE EASTMAN: I thought we started off at the beginning fine. They kind of caught fire there in the middle of the first half. I don't know if it was tired legs or just not focused. I'm not really sure. Definitely, we took a hit in the middle of the first half, and we had to claw our way back the whole game. And we couldn't quite get over the hump.

WILL EGOLF: Like Jake said, it could be a combination of things. We've got guys logging some heavy minutes. Could have been a little worn out.

I feel like we started the game fairly well. Just like Jake said, middle of the first half, we just took a hit, and it was an uphill battle from there.

**Q. For both you guys, when Drake began to make shots and you guys still were not making shots, it seemed, once again, that you had -- like the body language went and there was frustration and frustration with calls and frustration with things that were breaking down. That's been something that's happened. Why does that keep -- has that been a recurring theme in certain games this year?**

THE MODERATOR: Will, why don't you start first.

WILL EGOLF: I couldn't tell you why that's been reoccurring, but that's a thing that not only does the team feed off of that, our own players feed off of that. I think for most of the season we've been great when our shots are falling, and we really dig in on defense when we're making baskets.

Sometimes we have a tendency to kind of get on our heels and go our separate ways when we're not scoring on offense. I don't really know why, but it's definitely just a togetherness thing. There could be several different reasons.

THE MODERATOR: Jake, your thoughts?

JAKE EASTMAN: I would agree with that. Not really sure. Maybe guys just want to win so badly they get frustrated when they can't help the



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team out by making shots.

That's not something you can really do. You've got to get back on the defensive end. Especially if I'm playing against another team and they're kind of going all their separate ways, it's kind of when you dig in and make a run there too. Maybe they saw that in us.

**Q. Will, can you take us through the second half. You guys made a nice comeback there. Obviously, you're making more shots, but it seemed to pick you up in other areas. Can you just describe how the team was playing as you made your comeback.**

WILL EGOLF: We started getting some baskets inside. We started getting some paint penetration, and that was opening some outside shots for us. Guys were stepping in and knocking them down.

We got the crowd into it. We got some life coming our way. They just seemed to hit threes -- like Coach said, they just hit threes when they needed them. They did a good job of putting it into our runs and responding to our energy.

Other than that, it was back and forth a couple times in the second half, and we just couldn't seem to get over that little hump of being -- what was it, like five, got it to a three-point game? Close. We just couldn't get over the hump.

THE MODERATOR: I believe we're good.

**Q. Jake, you were getting some good looks tonight, knocking them in from three-point territory. Was that -- part of that was a product of Walt getting more attention inside and you were getting some looks, or can you kind of take us through that?**

JAKE EASTMAN: I think they were packing the paint. That was probably their game plan. Forced us to hit outside shots, and I got some open looks and kind of got hot there for a little bit. Like Will said, we got close, but then they would just hit a three or get a foul to stop the run. That's about it.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much. You're free to return to your locker room. Other questions for Coach Ford.

**Q. Can you just take us through the first half. Players alluded to some of it when they started to get on their run, and what you saw happening out there.**

COACH FORD: We got stops. I think it took about three minutes for anybody to score. We had about four stops to start the game. It didn't really lead to any offense for us. They started making some threes, which they made a lot of them in that middle section of the first half. They just kept us at bay. They did a good job continuing to hit shots.

We had some plays that -- I mean, we've seen us make before. Walt hasn't missed a dunk in two years, and he had a run out and probably got caught between dunking and laying it in. That play just kind of summarized the game.

We were a step off, and the tough part is our guys care. They've been committed. I mean, we've had the sixth biggest turnaround in the country to this point with wins. We've done a lot of good things. Unfortunately, we seemed to play tight today. I mean, if I had to use a word, that would be the only one.

I just felt like we were tight, like when they made a big shot, it didn't feel like it was worth three, it felt like it was worth six because we couldn't get beyond the disappointment from the bad play at the other end.

Give them credit. They played well. They played at a high level. We had several guys play well. I thought Jake was great. For us to win, really we need Walt and Dyrucus to have really good games. They weren't at their very best. It wasn't that they weren't trying or didn't want to. I don't know, maybe they wanted it too much.

But, you know, the points off the bench is killer. 37-9 is a whitewash. It's something we've dealt with throughout the season, but it's not been that glaring in games we've won. You're not going to get outscored 37-9 and win. I think when they started making shots we did a bad job of getting beyond the play and getting on to the next one.

Offensively, we made that huge run in the second half, and we got all the way back to two or three or whatever it was, but we just could not get the stop. They score. We come down and don't score. We just -- big possessions. They made a ton of plays. And I'll just go back to the turnovers. We have five steals, we lose, period. Especially against a team that's been turnover prone.

But I didn't think our ball pressure was any good. We could not -- guys were just dead. They were a step slow. "They" being us, like we were a step slow defensively. And the guys that you know can shoot, Hines and Ricks, but they've not shot it

like that all year. For those guys to combine for eight threes, that's a problem.

Give them credit. They stepped up and made plays.

**Q. Coach, you alluded to the bench scoring disparity, but you held their main scorers pretty well in check. You'd have thought maybe you had to like your chances going in if you knew that was going to happen.**

COACH FORD: Yeah, you know, when we played them the second time, they beat us because the two big guys had really good games. They hurt us at the basket, and we got in foul trouble. That's how we were able to come back and win.

In this game, that wasn't the case. We did a good job on Clarke. We did a good job on VanDeest. Part of that was we were helping down. We helped down a little bit more. That got the ball out of the post. When they were able to catch it from the perimeter, they just kept knocking them in.

So we tried to shorten our help and stay a little tighter to the perimeter, but we just could never -- it never felt like we really guarded them in a stretch. Early second half, yes, but other than that, it was just seemed like a three-point barrage. I know they only made 12, but it certainly seemed like it was more than that. They just made a pile of them.

**Q. Every media time-out, it seemed like, after you guys headed to three points, it seemed like it expanded. Kind of what were you saying to the players in the huddle?**

COACH FORD: We were defensively just kind of losing our minds. It would be hard to put my finger on why or what we were doing, but we guarded actions incorrectly, that stuff we haven't done much of. We've been pretty disciplined defensively throughout the year.

And the reason we've gotten steals throughout the season is we've stayed solid and we've pressured the ball. We've not gambled. And we kept taking -- we were going up the middle of screening actions, which we don't do, and the one possession where Simons hit the three at the top of the key, we just blew an assignment and ran up the wrong side of it.

And we did it several times. We did it several times. So it was our best guys doing it. They didn't -- they're trying to win, and we just kept talking about being solid, and we just, defensively,

we're not able to be solid enough to get those stops when we had to have them.

And when we did get stops, I think we flowed a little better offensively, but we didn't do a good job of igniting ourselves defense to offense. They shot 50%. We're not going to win doing that. We need stops to lead us to baskets the other way. That's not what happened. Bad defense created good offense for them. And they went down and were able to score.

I'm not taking anything away from them. They played really, really well. Drake deserved it. They played better than us tonight. But we weren't as solid on the defensive end as what we would expect our guys to be.

**Q. Do you feel you got a shot at another postseason tournament at this point?**

COACH FORD: Yeah, we're certainly hopeful. We have 16 wins. We play in a league that's ranked top ten conference in the country. We played a good schedule. I would be disappointed if we didn't get some type of opportunity. I know that our players would be disappointed if that was the last game we played together.

Almost every team in the country -- I guess every team but four is going to lose their last game for the most part, but the reality is we don't want that to be our lingering memory because we did not play -- people have seen our team play all year. Defensively, that's not us, what we did today.

It would be nice to get a chance to go tip it up and get some of our younger guys some postseason experience, something we haven't had in a long while. As we continue to progress and attempt to get better and move ourselves up as a program, we ended up the year -- we finished tied for seventh, which was a positive, and for us to make a postseason and be the sixth biggest turnaround in the country would be a few more positives our players are deserving of.

I'm confident -- or hopeful, I should say, that we'll get into something, and I'm confident we'll play a lot better when we get that opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks so much.

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