

March 8, 2013



Creighton – 65
Drake – 53

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

COACH GREG McDERMOTT
DOUG McDERMOTT
GREGORY ECHENIQUE
WILL ARTINO

THE MODERATOR: Before we get started, we'll remind everyone about the protocol. We'll open with a statement from Coach McDermott, who today is joined by Will Artino, Doug McDermott, and Gregory Echenique. Coach, let's start.

COACH McDERMOTT: I have tremendous respect for Drake and the job that Coach Phelps does there. They put so many shooters on the floor. Watching last night, our challenge was to try to run those shooters off the three-pointer line the best we could. I thought for the most part we were able to do that.

I thought rebounding would really be critical. When we beat them at our place, we outrebounded them by 13. When we lost at Drake, we got outrebounded that night. We outrebounded them by 18 this afternoon, which I thought was critical.

There were great performances by a lot of people on our team, and in particular, these three guys up here with me. Will was great the first half and made some great plays the second half. Doug was consistent offensively throughout the game. And then I thought Gregory really changed the game defensively the second half. There was nothing happening in the paint because of his energy and ability to block some shots and change shots and go get the basketball off the board.

So I'm really proud of our team and looking forward to playing tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Gregory and Doug, could you just talk about the lift you guys got from Will today.

DOUG McDERMOTT: Will was tremendous. He provided really good minutes. He's so easy to play with because he can see over the defense, and he's really good at the high/low pass, and he crashes the boards every time. It's great to have a guy like Will on the team.

GREGORY ECHENIQUE: I agree with Doug. One of the keys of winning a tournament like this is having people off the bench stepping up. And I think Will did an unbelievable job today. In the first half, the offense wasn't really going for me, and he came in and completely gave us a lot of energy, which was great.

I really hope that just -- not just him, but even everybody else on the bench can bring it tomorrow as well.

THE MODERATOR: For the benefit of our transcription folks, that was Doug first and Gregory second.

Q. Doug, this is for you. Becoming the school's all-time leading scorer, how does that feel, and what are your thoughts on that?

DOUG McDERMOTT: It's really cool. Got to give a lot of credit to my teammates and coaches because I wouldn't ever be in this position without them. It's been a blast so far. Can't dwell on it too much because we've got a big game tomorrow and a big rest of the season. It's really cool, though, and a great honor.

Q. Gregory, your second half, could you just kind of talk about -- something wake you up at halftime, or what caused you to come out and play so well in the second half?

GREGORY ECHENIQUE: I don't think so. I think just part of the game. Just got to stay playing hard. I thought I rebounded well the first half. Offensively, I didn't make much of a difference individually, but I was just trying to set screens to my teammates. I just stayed with it.

The second half, Doug talked to me as well, and he got me going, and he tried to find me.

I thought it was key. So did my other teammates. That helped my energy. But I was just trying to stay consistent and not get frustrated at all.

I thought my energy was pretty good, and I was pretty sure eventually things were going to go my way.

Q. Coach, to hold Drake to 53 points, 35 percent shooting --

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions for the student-athletes before we get to Coach McDermott?

Q. Okay. All three of you, same question. Holding a team like this to 53 points, obviously, a good defensive effort for you guys.

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

WILL ARTINO: We were just able to contest our shooters, gaps, rebound well. Obviously, they're an explosive offensive team. They shot really well at their place against us. To be able to hold them to 53 points was a great all-around team effort defensively, I think.

DOUG McDERMOTT: They're tough to guard because they put so many shooters out there. They set ball screens. Ben Simons gets them going offensively.

I thought we did a good job on him, and Gregory obviously the second half changed the game because we have confidence that, even if we do get beat off the dribble, he's going to be there to block the shot. It's huge having a guy like that.

GREGORY ECHENIQUE: I think it's a huge part of the plan that our coaches put together and the focus that we have last night. We don't have much time to prepare. Obviously, we didn't know we were going to play them. I thought our team, like I said, from the coaching staff and the players, did a good job just locking in tomorrow last night and this morning.

We followed the plan, and everybody played -- bought into it, and that's what happens when you do that.

Q. Will, you've been patient and waiting for your chance. Talk about what it means not only today but what you've been able to provide this last month.

WILL ARTINO: I mean, just whenever Coach calls your name off the bench, it's

something that you've got to provide a spark. You've got to pick up where the starter guy has left off. That's what I've really been trying to do, stay more in focus and more in tune to the game. Whenever Coach calls my number, I just try to be ready. Bring energy, rebound, run every time. Whatever he asks me to do.

Q. Guys, just expectations. You got 24 hours to turn around and play again. What do you expect out of this next matchup here?

THE MODERATOR: Gregory, why don't we start at your end and work back this way.

GREGORY ECHENIQUE: My only expectation is, once again, as I mentioned before, we can stay as focused as we are, and once again, do the same thing again tonight -- just watch film, come up with a plan, and just be ready to execute it tomorrow.

It doesn't really matter who we will play. Like I said, our coaches will put a plan together, and I expect our team to be locked in and ready to do it again tomorrow.

DOUG McDERMOTT: We'll be ready for either Indiana State or Evansville. They're both really good teams, well coached, and they really grind you out and defend. We've just got to be smart, get off our feet, follow our coach's plans, and be ready to go tomorrow.

WILL ARTINO: It's basically the same turnaround we had from last night to today's game, just that we played today. Like Doug said, they're both great teams. We're going to prepare like we did for any short turnaround.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time and attention. Questions for Coach McDermott.

Q. Coach, you had something like a 15-1 run in a nine-minute stretch where they didn't make a field goal. What were you doing defensively in that time?

COACH McDERMOTT: We executed what we tried to do the whole game, and that's really to try to get them off the three-point line. As Doug alluded to, maybe we get beat off the dribble once in a while by doing that, but we've got Gregory back there to clean that up if that happens. I thought Jahenns Manigat and Avery Dingman did a great job on Ben Simons. He had to work for all nine of his shots and a couple of his makes were really tough looks at the basket.

He's hard to guard because he's always in motion, and he reads screens so well. We thought it was critical that we don't let him get started. He didn't have a great game last night, and I was fearful that he wouldn't have two poor shooting nights in a row. Fortunately, our guys were up to the challenge defensively.

Q. Coach, does this team ever seem to amaze you?

COACH McDERMOTT: They're a different group, without question. We had different guys step up throughout the year. Ethan Wragge played six minutes this afternoon. He's sixth man of the year and would start on most every team throughout the league. Because of some of the matchups and the way Will and Gregory were playing, and Doug was playing, it didn't make as much sense. Ethan is celebrating like everybody else. He understands and trusts us and he knows that we trust him. That's what makes this team special. The next guy has got to be ready.

Will is a shining example of not losing faith and continuing to work hard and believing in what your coaches say, that you have to be ready when your number is called, and your number will be called eventually.

Fortunately for us, today Will was outstanding.

Q. Coach, obviously, a big historic day for Doug. Just your thoughts on what he's been able to do throughout his career.

COACH McDERMOTT: It hasn't probably hit me yet. Obviously, it's an unbelievable accomplishment to do it in three years, and especially for me, being as familiar as I am with the history of Creighton, having arrived at Wayne State in '94 and seeing really everything that's happened since then and learning about the Bob Harstads and Bob Portmans of the world and learning just how special their careers were, to think that Doug has scored more points than them in three years is really incredible.

A credit to him and certainly a credit to the guys he's played with the last three years. It's something that I think it's special. It's more special because it's happening on a team that's winning a lot of basketball games, and I think that's what's most gratifying, I think, to Doug, and I certainly feel the same way.

Q. Greg, can you talk about Will Artino, and specifically what's gone into this transformation in his development as a player. Anybody specifically, Big Man Camp, what has gone into this transformation of Will?

COACH McDERMOTT: It's coaching, Marty. Come on, you should know that. Will came to us at 185 pounds. You saw him in high school. Before the season, he was up to 230. He's lost a little since then. That's 40-some pounds that Will's gained over really a pretty short period of time.

He's continued to work. He's continued to believe. His teammates have embraced what he brings to the table. I give him a lot of credit because there were two or three conference games that he did not play. Coach's decision he did not play. It's hard to stay focused and motivated when you're in that position where you don't know what to expect. He's just played so well when we put him in there that we had to try to find minutes for him.

He's as productive of a player as we have on our team per minute play. A lot of the work, Will deserves the credit. Certainly our strength coach Dan Bailey and his staff have done a great job with him. Will is a more confident person than who came to us three years ago. He's grown up in a lot of ways. It's a lot of fun to see, and it's pretty exciting to think what he could become here in the next two years.

Q. Mac, Gregory showed a little extra fire in that second half. Can you talk about what you guys get when he plays with that kind of intensity.

COACH McDERMOTT: We are a totally different team on the defensive end of the floor. We don't resemble the team that we are when he isn't playing like that. He is so active. And he just -- he made multiple plays on several possessions. I watched the Wichita State game with Gregory, and it was the same. He would help with the ball screen, help on the dribble drive, block the shot, go out and get the rebound, and it was possession after possession.

I'm really proud of him because sometimes it's hard to get that switch flipped, and when it gets flipped, he's hard to deal with. As he said, Doug found him a couple times early in the second half, and he was able to get a couple baskets. I think that really lit his fire. He was outstanding on the defensive end and on the glass this afternoon.