

March 9, 2013



CREIGHTON – 64
INDIANA STATE – 43

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

**COACH GREG McDERMOTT
DOUG McDERMOTT
JAHENNS MANIGAT**

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with a statement from Coach McDermott about the proceedings earlier this afternoon and then move to questions for the student-athletes. Coach?

COACH McDERMOTT: We were hooked up to start that game. Defensively, I thought our guys were extremely focused and locked in to what we needed to accomplish. It had been a while since we'd played Indiana State, although the end result was certainly fresh in our mind, because we got our tails kicked when we went to Terre Haute three weeks ago.

So I think our guys understood what we had to do. We wanted to try to get the pace in our favor, which I thought we were able to do. But defensively, we put together 40 pretty good minutes of basketball and kept them out of the paint, made them shoot some jump shots, which was our goal coming in. So, really proud of my team. It's a little tricky when you have an overnight prep, and we didn't go to the gym at all. We did it all in the ball room and on the -- watching film.

These guys were really locked in and really paid attention to detail with our preparation. So we beat a good team today, and we're going to play a good team tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jahenns Manigat and Doug McDermott.

Q. Doug, can you kind of elaborate a little bit on how the last matchup against Indiana State, maybe, affected your guys focus for this matchup?

DOUG McDERMOTT: It played a huge part in it because we weren't satisfied, obviously, leaving Terre Haute. We got our tails kicked, and

we were glad we got a chance to play them again and we came out and threw the first punch and kind of was ours the rest of the game.

I thought we did a good job of being really unselfish out there, and holding them to 43 points is pretty incredible, and I thought our communication was great, and we were cooking.

Q. To both guys, could you talk a little bit about that start, just how almost ruthlessly efficient you were?

THE MODERATOR: Jahenns, start with that.

JAHENNS MANIGAT: We definitely threw the first punch. Once we got them on their heel, we had to make sure they didn't have any life in them. That comes from our preparation. Coach mentioned we didn't have a lot of time to prepare. Our guys were mentally focused. We understood what we needed to do on the floor to get a win. From tipoff, we just kind of showed that.

So obviously very happy for our guys, and all we have to do is the same thing tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Doug, your thoughts?

DOUG McDERMOTT: It all started with Jahenns' three to start off the game, one of the best shooters on the team. It's an open three to get the crowd going, and we kind of just fed off it from there. And that was great to see. I mean, we were just sharing the ball, having fun out there, having each other's back on defense, and it put us into halftime with some momentum.

Q. Doug, last time you played ISU, they held you to eight points. What was the biggest difference offensively for you?

DOUG McDERMOTT: (I) tried to do a better job of moving without the ball and setting more screens, slipping out of screens and just trying to be moving more without the ball and I thought that got me going and my teammates were looking for me, and found me at certain spots.

My three-pointer just felt really good tonight and they did a good job of recognizing it,



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my teammates, and just felt really comfortable out there.

Q. Both players, is that as good as you guys can shoot, as you did the first half or play offensively the way you were hitting everything? Or have you thought better in a half?

THE MODERATOR: Doug, why don't you start this time.

DOUG McDERMOTT: I'm not sure on the numbers, but that definitely felt the best we've ever started off a half. And that's just due to our transition game. We like to run it up and down the floor to get the pace going, and getting it inside and that's opened up shots for our outside shooters. So I can't remember a better start to a game, and we've had good shooting nights, but this one definitely ranks up there.

JAHENNS MANIGAT: I would agree with that. We're just naturally an unselfish team and we like to give up a good shot for a great shot. Especially in the first half, we were able to drive in, kick it out and get our inside-out game going. Once our bigs dominated the paint there to start, our feet were set from the outside and we were able to knock down a few threes.

It was very good to see us go back to our old habits.

Q. Sometimes when you start that way offensively, defense gets lost. But just talk about the defensive effort, especially in that first 20 minutes.

THE MODERATOR: Jahenns, why don't you start.

JAHENNS MANIGAT: Like I said before, everybody was just mentally focused. We needed to be in defensively and which guys we needed to pay more attention to. I think obviously going to Terre Haute and getting our tails whipped there, that was fresh in our mind and we didn't want that to happen again.

Guys were just mentally focused and in tune with what we had to do. It was all five guys on the floor. When one guy made a mistake, other guys covered. When we didn't make mistakes, we were really good.

Like I said, it was nice to see all five of us could communicate as well as we did.

DOUG McDERMOTT: I thought we did a great job of feeding off our offense. We were clicking on all cylinders, and that carried over to the

defensive end of the floor. We had each other's back, talking. We were in the gaps and whenever you got a guy like Gregory affecting shots behind you, I mean, it's -- it makes it a lot easier for us, because we've got so much confidence in what he's able to do for us.

Q. Both guys, one win away. Your thoughts heading into tomorrow?

THE MODERATOR: Doug, why don't you start.

DOUG McDERMOTT: We're excited to be back in the championship and not a lot of teams can say that they, two straight years, made it to the championship game here. But we're not satisfied. We want to win it, and either team, I mean, we lost a game to both of them in the regular season so we have some payback there. But they're both really good teams, and we got to be ready for a big game.

JAHENNS MANIGAT: Yeah, I mean, it's going to be a good game out there, and I think both teams are going to battle it out. Whoever comes out on top, we'll have to have the same kind of mental focus, preparation as we did for today's game. Tonight is going to be crucial. We need to get our legs up, recover a little bit.

Once we figure out who we're playing, be 100 percent in tune as to what we have to do offensively and defensively to win the game.

Q. Doug, obviously, you're waiting until the end of the season to make a decision on what your future's going to hold. How does it feel to be interviewed after the game and hearing the crowd shout one more year for you?

DOUG McDERMOTT: Pretty special, first of all, just to have 6,000 fans here is cool. It's definitely cool to hear that. I'm not worried about that right now. I'm worried about Illinois State or Wichita State. And I'm really excited for tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time and attention. Congratulations. We will see you tomorrow.

Questions for Coach McDermott.

Q. Greg, in your mind, biggest difference defensively tonight from a month ago?

COACH McDERMOTT: Number one, we didn't foul. Number two, we kept them out of the

paint. Those were our goals coming in. Jake Odum racked up a few fouls on us in their place. When they're in the bonus and you have to guard Jake Odum, that's a difficult task. We didn't get in the bonus until two seconds left in the half or four seconds when Jake made the foul there at the end. But those were the two keys.

And I thought our activity was good. I thought our communication was good. We switched aggressively when we wanted to switch. We stayed home when we were supposed to stay home.

Just, it was very well executed, considering we didn't have a walk-through. We just basically did it on film.

Q. I just wanted to ask, how much does it help moving forward to tomorrow's game that no player on your team played over 31 minutes?

COACH McDERMOTT: I wouldn't have expected a game like today. I certainly wasn't anticipating it. I thought it would be a grind it out to the end, but I didn't also anticipate that we'd play as well as we played.

So it was good to get some guys off the floor. You know, we'll let them watch a half a game here and then get them back and get them off their feet. I think that's really critical.

But as I said before, the preparation for a three-day tournament starts a couple weeks ago. You've got to start to think about the amount of time you've got guys running up and down on the practice floor if you want to have a chance to do something special here.

So we've been very careful, especially the last week, of limiting reps. And a lot of what we're doing is more mental than physical. Hopefully, that will leave enough gas in our tank tomorrow to get the job done.

Q. Could you talk about shutting down Jake Odum today.

COACH McDERMOTT: I thought Austin Chatman did a good job of staying underneath him and not going for his shot fakes. Jake is so crafty with the fakes. You have to stay on your feet and keep your feet moving on him.

We, like I said, we kept him out of the paint. When he gets in the paint and he's got room to make decisions and start spraying it all over, you're asking for it. I thought for the most part, we did a good job keeping him out of there.

Q. Coach, you talked a little bit about this already, but obviously, was this the best half of basketball you've played all around this year?

COACH McDERMOTT: Maybe the first half of St. Joe's was very similar. We were functioning at a very high level offensively and we took a good offensive team and really shut them down. But we've had halves we've played really well. Given the stage that we're on today, I would say that was our best half of basketball.

Q. Greg, kind of the same mode of question. When you go through some struggles like you guys have had this past month or so, do you forget how efficient you guys can be offensively when everything's clicking?

COACH McDERMOTT: I certainly haven't forgotten about it. I think a few of my friends in the media for a while, you included, probably forgot about it.

It's the same guys, and we've said it many times. I think you've heard our players say it. Basketball sets a fine line. It's a bounce of the ball here, a bounce of the ball there. A second foul with 15 minutes left in the first half that's not called versus the second foul that is called and sends a guy to the bench.

There's such a fine line in our game and sometimes you need a couple things to go your way to get that ball rolling back in the right direction. And as I said before, this group has never lost confidence in one another, in their coaching staff, and our coaching staff hasn't lost confidence in them.

I think that's a big reason we got back to where we are, where we won four in a row to win the league, and then have come to St. Louis and won a couple.

Q. General thoughts heading into tomorrow, back-to-back opportunity there?

COACH McDERMOTT: It's really cool. This is my, what is it, eighth time at this tournament and it will be the third time in the championship game. So it's a pretty special deal to play on that stage, and it takes a lot of hard work, a lot of dedication, a lot of commitment to put yourself in that position and that's why I'm so proud of our team, that we're able to get back here when we were expected to get back here.

So I'll enjoy the next couple hours, because I won't know who we're going to play, and then the worrying will start as we try to put together a plan for two very good basketball teams. I think it will be a great game out here that's going to start here in a minute and I think it will be a heck of a game tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much. Congratulations and we will see you tomorrow.

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