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Indiana State – 51
Evansville – 50

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

**COACH GREG LANSING
JUSTIN GANT
DEVONTE BROWN
JAKE ODUM**

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome Indiana State to the podium with head coach Greg Lansing along with Jake Odum, Devonte Brown and Justin Gant.

We'll start with a statement from Coach Lansing and then questions for the student-athletes.

Coach, congratulations. Let's start.

COACH LANSING: I'm really, really proud of our guys. It's no secret we limped in here a little bit. We had unfortunate things happen with us. Early in the year, we were a really good team with a tough schedule, playing and beating good teams, whether at home or on the road, and we lost it a little bit.

I think we wore them out a little bit. This has been a team that, from the start of the year, start of the summer with our workouts, just competes and works hard every day. It's a long year. We've been going for about ten months at it. We just needed to find some energy today. It looked like today we got back to defending in the way that we did earlier in the year when we were winning games against really good teams.

We have tremendous respect for Marty Simmons, his staff and that team. Every time we play, it seems like it's just a slug fest. Could have gone either way. We're fortunate enough. Justin had a man rebound at one end, and then he stepped up, and that's not easy to make a free throw after missing one. We made just enough plays. A little tricky there at the end. We'll certainly take it. It was a much needed win and

just tremendous effort, and I commend their team for how hard they fought.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Devonte, can you describe the last play and what you had to do to kind of hold the fort on that. I know you started out on Colt Ryan, but just describe the way you saw the last play of the game.

DEVONTE BROWN: Really what it was, we had a breakdown on the defensive end. Two seconds left. Somebody had to make a play. I just sprinted and got there and just got the block. That's all it really was, was just a breakdown. Our defense really -- you got to help to help yourself.

Once my teammate got beat, I just had to get out there and help him. That's all it was.

THE MODERATOR: Just a reminder, as many times as you have identified yourself, please continue to do so.

Q. Devonte, you ever made a play like that with the game on the line, with so much on the line for your career or in a basketball game?

DEVONTE BROWN: Not in college. Definitely in high school and middle school, but that was really it. That was my first really big-time play, I guess you could say, on the collegiate level.

Q. Jake, can you talk about the lift that the team got today from both Devonte Brown and Jake Kitchell off the bench.

JAKE ODUM: I mean, it was outstanding. Devonte Brown and Kitchell, even Gant, all three of them off the bench played extremely well, played better than our starters did. They're the reason we won the game. They stepped up huge.

Coming in off the bench is a tough thing to do sometimes because you have a shorter leash. You get pulled out for making mistakes. These guys were relentless today. They made big plays after big plays.

Gant with the game-winning free throw,

and Devonte on that last play, just to name a couple. Extremely well done by those guys.

Q. Devonte, talk about the last part of the first half as well. You scored 11 points from the 5:30 minute mark on. It was a game where somebody needed to provide a lift, and just talk about the lift you were able to provide at that stage of the game.

DEVONTE BROWN: Our whole offense, we really weren't patient the first maybe ten minutes of the game. I know, when I got in, if I wasn't patient, I was coming right out. So I had to be patient.

I mean, guys are going to Gant, and guys are going to Odum, so they're leaving open lanes for me and R.J. (Mahurin) and everyone else. I was just really trying to be patient and listen to what the coach is saying and just run the offense.

Q. Jake, when you're going up against a guy like Troy Taylor, can you talk about how difficult he makes life for you.

JAKE ODUM: Troy is one of the best defenders in the league, along with a rebounder for his size. He had ten rebounds tonight. Extremely competitive guy. He's good.

Some people might not think he's the most talented guy, but he makes all the hustle plays and all the toughness plays and really brings toughness to that team. I've got a lot of respect for him. He's a good player, and he had a good career at Evansville.

Q. Justin, what were you thinking with 2.5 seconds left, shooting the two free throws? And after you missed the first one, were you thinking anything different?

JUSTIN GANT: I got to the line, and I just tried to stay calm and just focus on all the days I went in the gym and worked on my jump shot and my free throws and the shooting. Always go and shoot 100 free throws. So I just try to stay calm.

After the first one, I missed it. Tried not to get nervous or upset about it and just focus on the next play and just move on. It ended up working out.

Q. Devonte, last obviously final five conference games, you talk about being patient when you got in, but how great did it feel to be kind of a spark plug and get this team going

back to where you guys were about a month ago? How does it feel to be that spark plug?

DEVONTE BROWN: I said earlier in the season that's really what my role is as a freshman coming in, really trying to be a spark plug.

I mean, I started a couple of games, but I feel like I do my best when I come off the bench this season. That's when I help the team, I guess, the best, as far as getting rebounds and trying to get layups and get easy buckets for the team and get those nice assists for Odum or Gant.

I feel like I just am a spark plug. That's my role.

Q. Jake, Colt Ryan didn't score in the second half of this game. Can you talk about the team regaining its defensive identity a little bit through this game. Maybe that's emblematic of that.

JAKE ODUM: Yeah, to be able to hold Colt Ryan scoreless in the second half is outstanding. He's one of the best players in the league and even in the country.

Got to give credit to Devonte. He was on him for a large majority of the half. But we had really good team defense. He mentioned earlier about helping the helper. We've done a fairly decent job in the past couple weeks of helping the first guy that needed it but not being there in the second rotation. I think we did a lot better job on that today.

When we helped on Colt, he didn't necessarily have the dump downs that he had last Saturday against us because we kind of rotated and took that away. I think that might have confused him a little bit in the second half.

Overall, it was a big-time defensive game from the guys that guarded Colt Ryan.

THE MODERATOR: One last question for the student-athletes.

Q. Devonte, can you talk a little bit about right there towards the end of the game, clock ticking, Evansville steps to the line, and they're going to shoot two free throws. They ended up missing them, but what were you feeling before that with the clock ticking down?

DEVONTE BROWN: We need them to miss really. We need them to miss, and I know we're going to get a time-out, and Coach is going to draw up a great play to get us the win.

We're going to execute it. So when he

missed the first one, and Lucas got in, I just knew, all right, we're going to win this game. That's really what it was.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much. Congratulations. Good luck tomorrow.

So questions for Coach Lansing.

Q. Greg, just talk about, first of all, the contributions of Jake Kitchell and Devonte Brown to this win.

COACH LANSING: Devonte saved us in the first half. There was no question. We were standing around stuck in mud. You just give Evansville's defense a lot of credit for that. We'd been getting ready for them for two weeks, and I probably out-thought myself a little bit trying to do different things offensively.

Devonte came in there and was really aggressive getting to the paint. When we played them there, we settled for a lot of quick threes. That's probably what they wanted us to do. We were open for a reason. We got to the paint a lot.

And Kitch in the second half was tremendous. Kitch probably deserves more minutes than what he's been getting. As a head coach, those guys, you stay positive with them. He's been a tremendous teammate from the moment he stepped on campus. For him to come in there and left us like that just feels really good for him and Devonte as well.

Q. Coach, you've been talking about looking for toughness from your ball club. You built that ten-point lead with seven, eight minutes to go. You lose the lead. The guys could have lost the way the season ended. But they fought back. How pleasing was it to see the toughness back from your ball club again?

COACH LANSING: It was great. We were playing really well. We got up ten, and we were guilty of clock watching a little bit. Those guys aren't going to quit. We were up two years ago 17 on them twice. They were going to keep coming.

I think we had some breakdowns on the defensive end, but more than anything we wanted that clock to run out. They made some great plays to get back in it.

You commend those guys for how hard they fought. You look at the defensive things, and you're talking about what we did to Colt Ryan. That doesn't ever happen, him not shooting free throws and not scoring in the second half.

So that's been us. When we've been good, we've been awfully difficult to play against, and if we do that, we can really beat anybody. We're going to need every bit of that tomorrow.

Q. Coach, talk about last time you faced Creighton, they had their worst loss of the season. I'm sure that will be a reminder to that team. Talk about Creighton again and what you face.

COACH LANSING: I enjoyed that when it happened. I'm not happy about it right now because I think if I was them, I'd want a piece of us after that. But we got them on a bad night, we really did. We played well, we played as well as we played all year, but that's one of the better teams in the country with one of the top players in the country.

Mac and their staff, we're good friends with those guys. Maybe we'll just get together tonight and prepare together and then see what happens.

I'm just happy for our guys, gutting this one out and getting a chance to play another day against the conference champ. That's what postseason is all about. You've got to beat three good teams to go to the NCAA Tournament. Creighton is next on the schedule. Hopefully, we can play well again tomorrow.

Q. Greg, can you talk about the team finally being able to kind of put the adversity that they've had over the last two weeks aside, both suspension related and loss related. Just talk about that aspect of this as you get to move forward.

COACH LANSING: More than anything, I don't even think it was adversity. These guys really work every day. They really do. I just think we're a little beat down. We're a little tired.

When you're playing in this conference and you're not at full strength, you're going to get your butt beat. There's just no question about it. We have great respect for everybody we play, and we just weren't playing as well as we needed to to win. You have to be a little tougher and a little more competitive, just like we were tonight.

If we'd have done this the last couple weeks of the season, we might have been in the hunt to win this thing. We didn't do it. We weren't ready to do it. I'm going to learn from that. I'm sure the team is going to learn from that. More importantly, they gutted it out. This is a new

season, and they started it in a good way.

Q. Coach, having been through what you were two years ago, you've got a couple of guys from that team, Jake, R.J., does it help?

COACH LANSING: It does. I would like to have a few more. Those two, Jake Odum, I wouldn't trade him for anybody, and R.J. made some big plays for us that year as well, and he made some big plays for us that year as well as this year.

And these other guys, they played in a lot of big games this year so even though we're inexperienced coming into the year, that's not an excuse anymore, even though we don't have any seniors. We'll be ready to go. These guys are excited about it. They got the monkey off their back a little bit from how we've been playing. We'll compete tomorrow.

Whether we can play well enough to beat Creighton, we'll come and fight.

THE MODERATOR: Last question for Coach Lansing. I believe you're done. Congratulations. See you tomorrow.

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