

**March 7, 2013**



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AN INTERVIEW WITH:

**COACH PAUL LUSK  
ANTHONY DOWNING  
MARCUS MARSHALL**

THE MODERATOR: While Coach Lusk rounds up a couple of his guys, let's talk about a couple notes here. Missouri State's win moves the Bears into tomorrow's 6:05 p.m. quarterfinal game against second seeded Wichita State. MSU is 11-21 this season and now 2-1 versus SIU. 27-21 in the MVC tourney. 5-4 versus SIU. And trails the all-time SIU series 34-39. It was the Bears' ninth win in their last ten games against SIU.

Coach Paul Lusk is now 27-37 in his second year at Missouri State and 29-60 in his third year overall as college head coach. Lusk is now 4-1 against SIU, which, of course, we know is his alma mater.

Marcus Marshall, MVC freshman of the year, had 18 tonight and 19th double figure scoring outing this season. He came into the game needing 21 points to tie the Bears' freshman season scoring record at 346 points set by Blake Ahearn in 2003/04. If my math is correct, that means he needs three tomorrow.

We are welcomed by Coach Lusk and his duo of Anthony Downing and Marcus Marshall. As you are all aware of the protocol, we have our microphones to the left and right of you. As you have questions, please raise your hand. We will locate you.

We'll start with a statement from Coach Lusk about the win and then move into questions for the student-athletes. Coach?

COACH LUSK: Thought our guys played inspired basketball. Any time you're in the postseason and they invite you to come back for

another day, you gladly accept that invitation. So we're excited to move forward.

THE MODERATOR: With that, questions now for the student-athletes.

**Q. For Anthony, can you just talk about the defensive performance tonight with the way the zone was pretty active.**

ANTHONY DOWNING: Yeah. I think the zone was pretty good for us tonight. I think it really bothered them. They tried to get into the high post, but our main focus was to keep it out of the high post and bump off our wing guys from the guards to prevent the shooters from getting the wide-open shots.

I think we played good team defense tonight.

**Q. Marcus, just talk a little bit about being a freshman out there. You got 6 of the first 8 points and finished with 18. Not afraid of the stage?**

MARCUS MARSHALL: Like Coach always say, we're late in years. So they don't consider me a freshman, and I don't really consider myself a freshman. I've been through 31 games already. So it's really nothing new.

I just go out there and play my game. Coach has confidence in me. My teammates have confidence in me and make me feel comfortable. So I just go out there and play my game and try to do whatever I can to help the team win.

**Q. Anthony, what did it mean to you to get a win in this tournament? You're the only senior, what it means to you after not getting one last year?**

ANTHONY DOWNING: It meant a lot. I knew our guys were going to come out and fight hard because we all care about each other in the locker room. We stay together all the time, no matter what. No matter what, we fight through adversity.

It meant a lot. I didn't want my season to end tonight. I'm proud of our guys for coming out

and giving a big effort tonight.

**Q. I was going to ask the players, what was the coach's focus for this game?**

MARCUS MARSHALL: Coach was very focused for this game. He's focused for every game. We came into this game, we played them a few weeks back, and we lost. We made different adjustments for the offense and also for the defense.

I think throwing that zone in threw them off a little bit because they weren't expecting that. Coach came up with a lot of different scenarios, and most of them worked. We came out here and got the win, so it worked.

**Q. Anthony, just you guys played the whole second half. It seemed like the same five guys were out there. Tell me a little bit about that and how tired are you?**

ANTHONY DOWNING: I'm not tired, man.

COACH LUSK: Downing is not tired. He's ready to go.

ANTHONY DOWNING: I'm not tired. I can play basketball all day every day. It was pretty big for us.

I think being in this situation and knowing if we lose we can't fight another day, so I think that really helped all our guys just fighting through it even if they were tired. That really helped us.

We just played hard. We weren't thinking about being tired, and we really wanted to win. I'm glad we came out with a win tonight.

**Q. Question for Anthony. Whenever SIU cut the lead to five and Pickens had the three-point play, did that kind of kick start the momentum for your "D"?**

ANTHONY DOWNING: You could say that. Basketball is a game of runs. We knew coming into the second half they were going to make their run and we were going to make our run. But when they made their run, we had to withstand it and keep our composure and just fight to make our run.

**Q. Anthony, it seems like you guys got every 50-50 ball tonight. How important was that to steal the possession?**

ANTHONY DOWNING: It's real important. When we usually get every 50-50 ball, we usually come out with a win. That's the emphasis going into every game is to be first to the 50-50 balls

because it will help us out a lot in the end because those extra possessions help out a lot.

**Q. Marcus, you had foul trouble in the first half, and Tomie came in. He hadn't played a lot. He came in and gave you a pretty big spark. Can you talk about how important that was?**

MARCUS MARSHALL: That was very important. Actually, a few people came in and gave us a spark off the bench. Coach always says, when you get in there, take advantage of your minutes. That's exactly what they did tonight. I got in early foul trouble. Tomie came in and picked up my slack, and he did very well. We're proud of him for that.

**Q. Anthony and Marcus, if you guys could both comment on playing Wichita, the matchup that you have, and you guys have lost twice against them. Tell me about that game for tomorrow.**

ANTHONY DOWNING: It's going to be a good one. They're real good. They're one of the best teams in the league and one of the best teams in the country. They're going to try to take advantage and throw it inside on us, but we've got to just man up and help out our bigs. Our guards have to help out our bigs when it goes down there, and we just have to stay on the boards to give us a chance to win.

Don't turn the ball over, and, again, be first to the 50-50 ball.

MARCUS MARSHALL: It's going to be a fight tomorrow. We're going to go out punching. We're looking to get the "W." So we'll see what happens.

**Q. What about your focus going into this and also not subbing a lot in the second half?**

COACH LUSK: My focus is always pretty much the same. There were no real motivational speeches. I was concerned about living another day for Downing and Pickens. Pickens is obviously running on fumes.

Dorrian Williams, getting into your question about playing five guys in the second half, Dorrian Williams going down with a meniscus tear has hurt us. Tomie has hurt his patella tendon, and he's a ball handler for us. I think what allowed us to do that in the second half was because we played so

much zone. It's still taxing on you but not as taxing as the man-to-man.

So that's the five that we rolled with, and I think it was effective. Obviously, we'll have to get these guys off their feet tonight.

I also thought in the first half, when Marcus went -- Marcus got in foul trouble, Nate was in foul trouble, Pick was in foul trouble. And when Marcus got in foul trouble, we moved A.D. over to the point. He was really good late in the first half of getting to the basket, making some plays, jump stopping. To get that 10-point cushion at halftime was crucial, and I thought he was very good during that stretch.

**Moderator:** Fellas, you are relieved of your responsibility. Retire to your locker room and prepare for tomorrow. More questions for Coach Lusk, raise your hand.

**Q. I guess, if you could talk about the zone a little bit, maybe some wrinkles maybe you put into it tonight you haven't had before.**

COACH LUSK: No. We've been working on the zone, and we'll play it occasionally, and it's been pretty good for us. Do we use it as much as we've used it tonight, no. But we do use it situationally, and I thought it was effective tonight.

Tried zone on Wichita last time, and they beat us by 10,000. So it's just it works against particular people. I thought Southern's zone was very effective against us in the second half.

**Q. So you won't be using it (the zone) tomorrow?**

COACH LUSK: I don't know. It just depends. We'll have to use every trick in our bag to play Wichita State. They're a very good team. They're very physical.

Southern was a good matchup for us because we're both undersized, we're fairly mobile. But Wichita is so big and strong and physical. They've got great experience. So I think the main thing is just getting our guys off their feet and letting them enjoy this for a little bit but then diving into Wichita once we get back to the hotel.

**Q. Followup on Pickens. How is he after playing so many minutes?**

COACH LUSK: He's the same. He's just really worn out, struggling, but his line tonight gave us 7 points and 3 rebounds.

What affects Pick the most is the situation in the first half where he gets in foul trouble and you have to let him sit just to get his motor started back up. I thought he did some very good things for us in the second half. Tomorrow will definitely be very challenging for him. The last time we were in a back-to-back setting, we were in Puerto Vallarta.

It's hard for him. He'll give us what he's got, and then the next man will have to step up.

THE MODERATOR: I believe we're done. Coach, congratulations. Good luck tomorrow.

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