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MISSOURI STATE – 61
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS - 53

N INTERVIEW WITH:

**COACH BARRY HINSON
JEFF EARLY
DESMAR JACKSON**

THE MODERATOR: Just a couple notes before SIU gets here. SIU finishes its season 14-17 and 32-29 in the MVC tournament.

Coach Barry Hinson is 14-17 in his first year at SIU and 219-157 in his 12th year overall as a collegiate head coach. Hinson is 11-10 in the MVC tourney, and his 11 wins are all at Missouri State. And we'll welcome Missouri State contingent to the podium.

Another attendance note. Tonight's attendance 7,537, the fourth highest opening session attendance in tourney history.

Welcome head coach Barry Hinson to the podium along with Desmar Jackson and Jeff Early. Coach, we'll start with a statement from you about the outcome of this game, and then we'll move to questions from the student-athletes.

COACH HINSON: Congratulations to Missouri State. Paul and his staff did an incredible job. They controlled the tempo tonight. They did a good job. They forced it upon us. You know what, got to give them a lot of credit. I thought their game plan was really good, and we didn't do the things that put us in a position to win the ball game.

But congratulations to Missouri State.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Des and Jeff, you talk about the turnovers were costly. Why do you think you were just a little bit out of sync tonight with the turnovers?

JEFF EARLY: I don't know. At first we came out with good energy, and we kind of got a little sloppy. We got fed up, you know. Every time we scored a ball, we felt we had to get a quick bucket, and I think that kind of cost us a lot. We started speeding instead of just playing our game and executing our offense. We got sped up, and it was kind of tough for us to play that way. I think that's what cost us -- the turnovers.

THE MODERATOR: If we don't have any other questions --

Q. Jeff, how was it that the freshman Marcus Marshall was able to give you guys so much trouble?

JEFF EARLY: Like I said, he's a freshman with a lot of confidence. Any time a freshman comes out like that and has confidence, knows that his team has confidence in him to take shots, it's always tough. I thought that he and Downing did a great job putting Missouri State on their back and going from there.

We had trouble guarding them on penetration, and they did a good job, drawing a lot of fouls in the beginning. Once we had some guys in foul trouble, it was kind of easy for them to keep driving because we couldn't foul them like that. So a lot of confidence for him. He had a good game. It's tough for us.

Q. Jeff, if you could just talk about what you remember from this season this year.

JEFF EARLY: I remember a lot. I remember all our coaching staff and our teammates and how hard we fought throughout the year. We had a lot of up and downs, and we kept fighting.

We started off the season rough at 1-11, and we could have quit at any time, but we didn't. We kept fighting. It's kind of heart breaking because we felt that we had a great chance to come in the MVC tournament and compete. Anything can happen at the MVC tournament. You've got to come to play your best game. We definitely didn't play our best game today.

I definitely remember my teammates and how hard we fought throughout the year and a lot of memories from the coaching staff and how they came in with confidence and built the program the way they did. I'm just glad I was a part of this team and last year's team.

Hopefully, we'll turn the corner and start doing big things next year.

Q. Desmar, they have a lot of good pieces coming back potentially. You weren't able to win today, but do you feel like you have things to build on for next year?

DESMAR JACKSON: Most definitely. We have a young team. We've got Jalen, who is a great player. Jalen still can get better too.

And we have some guys coming in next year which we feel good about. I'm just looking forward to next year. We had a good run. I'm looking forward to next year and getting better, keep getting better.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time. You may retire to your locker room. Congratulations on your excellent play down the stretch.

Questions for Coach Hinson?

Q. Barry, anything out of the ordinary they were doing with their zone to throw you out of whack? Or how would you describe what happened?

COACH HINSON: I think we're really fragile. I told the staff coming down here, I said, "There's only one thing I'm concerned about with this team, and that is how will we respond when we hit a little bit of adversity that's sustained?"

When we got to 5-6 twice in the second half at the 15-minute mark, we called a time-out, and we're just begging them to play and to do what we want them to do. And they walked out of the huddle, and I looked at my assistants, and I said, "We're done." It was so sad. I said, "We're done, we got no shot." And I just knew it.

Because I recognized that team from earlier in the year, and we had guys arguing and pointing fingers at each other, and it was just gut-wrenching. I knew it, it was sad. Even when we're down only five points, you know your team well enough. There was just nothing we could do about it.

Q. [Inaudible.]

COACH HINSON: No. I'm stunned right now. I don't mind telling you. That's the worst we played in six weeks. Give them a lot of credit, but to me, I think, when you come down the floor and they're not pressing you and you throw it -- we hit an elderly woman up there on the second row, knocked her popcorn out, bless her heart.

I swear, I wanted to make Jalen go pay for it. I don't know. I'm sitting here, guys, I am completely shocked.

The only concern I had coming in here is we're fragile and we could revert back to our old selves, and we did. There's nothing we can do about it.

Sorry, I know all these guys. When you've been in the league as long as I have, I can just call them all by name.

Q. [Inaudible.]

COACH HINSON: That's why he was such a good friend of mine. Always had these softball friends of mine that made me look good.

There's ten coaches that entered this tournament this week, and I promise you that there's not any of them happier than me. I love this city, I love this tournament, and I love this conference, and I'm so fortunate to be back in it and to be a part of it.

I had nine great years at Missouri State, and because of Bill Self, I get a second chance to be back in this conference. I feel very comfortable being back at home.

Q. [Inaudible.]

COACH HINSON: I hope it's better than the way we played tonight. My old SID will tell you I've always been a half glass full. I mean, I like it. I like the outlook. I think the five guys we signed, I think they make us better, and we're going to go sign some more players.

We will have a completely new roster next year. We'll have a pretty big changeover. So we kind of ended one Saluki era here with somewhat of a new start, but I think every coach's second year is the most difficult of his years whenever he takes over a program.

I think next year will be our most difficult, but at the same time, it will be -- it will give us a glimpse of what the future holds, and I'm excited about it.

I think the second year, because the shine wears off, it's like your shoes. You get a good buff

on it and wear them a little bit, and you lose the shine. I think next year with how much of a roster change we'll have, there will be a learning curve and a growing time.

I think it will be -- and our schedule, sadly to say, will not change. We'll only play four home games next year in our nonconference, the least amount of anybody in the valley. Scheduling is a priority. You have to have a two or three or four-year outlook on it. That wasn't a priority in the past. We're going to have to fight it again next year.

We'll have to play a really tough schedule as far as not being able to play at home. But at the same time, we're going to have some new bullets in our gun, and we'll see how we do.

THE MODERATOR: We'll call it a day.

COACH HINSON: Okay. Thank you.

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