

March 10, 2013



CREIGHTON – 68
WICHITA STATE – 65

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

**COACH GREGG MARSHALL
MALCOLM ARMSTEAD
RON BAKER
CARL HALL**

THE MODERATOR: Creighton's win today moves the Bluejays to 27-7 overall giving CU its 12th Missouri Valley Conference title, more than any other MVC school, and awards them the bid to the 2013 NCAA Tournament. It's the third time CU has won back-to-back tournament crowns. 1999/2000 plus 2002/'03, and now 2012/'13.

This is CU's 17th NCAA appearance. The Bluejays have never won their first two NCAA games.

The top seed's tourney record improves to 72-23. That's 44-16 in St. Louis. CU is now 43-20 in the MVC tourney overall, 6-1 against Wichita State, and 55-45 all time against Wichita. 2-1 this year.

Coach Greg McDermott is now 79-29 in his third year at CU and 359-224 in his 19th season as a collegiate head coach. 12-5 in the MVC Tournament, 10-8 against Wichita State all time, 7-1 at the tournament.

Wichita State falls to 26-8. WSU's MVC tourney record falls to 27-32.

Coach Gregg Marshall is 135-69 in his sixth season at WSU and 329-152 in his 15th season overall as a collegiate head coach. He is 7-6 in the Missouri Valley Conference Tournament. 6-8 against CU. And 0-2 versus CU in the MVC Tournament.

The last CU/WSU MVC Tournament meeting was in the 2009 quarterfinals, and Creighton hit the Bluejays with a 63-62 victory in that one. The only time CU and WSU have met in the tourney championship was in 1981 with Creighton winning that one 70-64 in Omaha.

A couple of notes on the Bluejays. Gregory Echenique had six blocks, giving him 13 for the tournament, second on the all time tourney list behind CU's Benoit Benjamin, who had 20 in 1984. Doug McDermott, who broke CU's scoring mark Friday against Drake, scored 14 today, and is now eighth in MVC career points, passing WSU's Cleo Littleton.

Gregory Echenique moved into tenth on the MVC career list for blocked shots at 164 with 6 today which ranked second on the MVC tourney single game list. That record is also held by Benoit Benjamin of CU in 1984 against Illinois state.

Attendance note, today's attendance of 16,659 is the second best MVC championship game crowd behind only 22,612 in 2007. The four-day tourney total attendance of 71,029 is also the second best on record behind only 85,074 again from 2007.

The tourney has drawn over 50,000 fans for 11 straight years in St. Louis, including this year.

Couple of Shocker notes. Malcolm Armstead had a career best 28 today, along with four steals, which was one short of his career high. Armstead also had nine rebounds, also tying his career best. Previous best was 21 points at Evansville back on January 13th. Carl Hall was WSU's only other double-figure scorer with 13 today.

CU outrebounded Wichita State 42-41. And for 2010, WSU is 75-14 when outrebounding its opponent, which it did not do today.

We welcome Wichita State to the podium. Head Coach Gregg Marshall along with Malcolm Armstead, Carl Hall, and Ron Baker.

As has been the case throughout the weekend, please note our microphone folks to the left and to the right. Please raise your hand. We'll begin with a statement from Coach Gregg Marshall before questions for the student-athletes and wrapping up with the head coach.

Coach Marshall?

COACH MARSHALL: It's hard when you have all the emotion going into a game like that, a



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tournament like that and a season like that. The emotions of the initial disappointment is paramount, and then you have great feelings of pride to be able to coach a group of young men that's this tough, this resilient, this special feeling as well.

So we got a lot of emotions. And we tip our hat to Creighton making one more play. Come down to a three-point shot to tie the game.

But the positive is -- a couple positives. Number one, we're going to continue playing in the NCAA Tournament, and there's still the opportunity to win in the NCAA Tournament, which is something none of those guys in that locker room have experienced. It's also the feeling I have that ultimately the group in that locker room sticks together, there will be some championships to be won as a group.

When that happens, I have to make sure we honor these seniors in some way.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes. Raise your hand.

Q. Malcolm, just take us through the last sequence, you getting the ball and coming up court and how it kind of unfolded in your view.

MALCOLM ARMSTEAD: I came off the screen and switched it. That's why I didn't get a good look like I should have. Maybe I should have went to the rim and got a quick two for one, but I didn't. Took a tough shot and didn't convert it.

Q. Carl, could you talk about just Echenique and his influence on the game. Great battle in there between you two. How tough is he to kind of navigate around?

CARL HALL: He's just big, and he makes it tough on you trying to score over or going through him. So I was just trying to drive him to the basket instead of trying to go through him sometimes.

He just makes things difficult on the block because of his weight and size.

Q. Guys, big-time atmosphere, big-time matchup, two big-time programs getting after it. Can you just give us a sense for the feeling out there. It just looked like a knock down, drag out, right from the very -- right from the get-go.

THE MODERATOR: Ron, why don't you start with that one, please.

RON BAKER: To me, it felt like we were Muhammad Ali out there boxing the whole time. Went through all the rounds. We were on the ropes there after the last media time-out, and we fought back.

Just like Coach said, we came up one play short. I think we're excited for our future in the next couple weeks.

THE MODERATOR: Carl?

CARL HALL: It was just two tough teams out there fighting. Both teams wanted to win, but only one could win. We were just trying to keep battling and trying to stay in the game, and they were doing the same.

Both teams getting on the floor for loose balls, and somebody's going to come up short at the end. Just happened to be us today.

THE MODERATOR: Malcolm, your thoughts?

MALCOLM ARMSTEAD: These two pretty much summed it up.

Q. Was the floor issue -- I mean, they came out, kept wiping the floor down with towels. Was that an issue today? Did it seem to be a problem?

THE MODERATOR: Malcolm, why don't you start with that one.

MALCOLM ARMSTEAD: Say that again?

Q. The floors being wet. There's towels out there every play, every time-out. Was that an issue for you guys?

MALCOLM ARMSTEAD: Yes. I felt like sometimes we went on a run, and we'd have to stop it to wipe the floors and stuff like that. It slows you down and kind of slows the game down a lot, but sometimes you got to play through it. It's a little bit of adversity, but you can't really give it as an excuse.

Q. Carl, I guess two things. First, did you get a finger on Manigat's layup there at the end? Looked like you were really close. And second, could you talk about doing a better job on Doug McDermott than in Omaha and how that worked out.

CARL HALL: I kind of got a fingertip on it. I kind of got out of position because I was guarding Echenique -- I mean, I was guarding McDermott. He just made it hard for me because you can't help as much. You've got to try to stay with him.

Back to guarding him, though, you just got to try to make things difficult for him and crowd him and try to take away his looks at the basket when he face up. You have to try to get up close on him and put it on the floor. I was just trying to make things difficult for him.

Q. What do you guys take away from this heading into the NCAA Tournament?

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

MALCOLM ARMSTEAD: Take away the positive things. We had a couple good plays down the stretch. We did good things. But also, you got to take away the negative things to get better, so you won't be in the bad end on this situation. So you've got to look at the good and the bad to take away to get better as a team.

THE MODERATOR: Carl, your thoughts?

CARL HALL: We've just got to execute better down the stretch and make free throws. I missed a lot of free throws down the stretch that hurt us in the end.

We just got to stay positive, man. It's a new season coming up in like a week and a half, I think. We're just going to try to go back and get focused and get back to what we do.

THE MODERATOR: Ron, something you'd like to add?

RON BAKER: I feel like we need to keep executing, stay together, break this film down and go from there, and we'll stay positive and together and see where that takes us.

Q. Ron, could you kind of give us a sense regarding Creighton and the screens and the motion and how they get guys open as well as they do. What's that like to defend?

RON BAKER: They communicate pretty well on the offensive end. You've got to have your head on a swivel at all times. I mean, they got shooters everywhere.

Sometimes you get out of position, and you turn around, and bam, the three ball's up. So this is a tough team to guard. I give them a lot of credit for executing on offense.

Q. If all three of you could just kind of talk about NCAA Tournament. You're in great shape for that, and how that helps kind of make this a little bit less of a dark day.

RON BAKER: For me, it's going to be my first experience at the NCAA Tournament. I was

redshirting last year. Just sitting on the bench, it was a remarkable experience, just the way they treat you and stuff like that.

But I'm excited. I'm excited for my teammates, my family, and I'm ready.

THE MODERATOR: Carl, your thoughts?

CARL HALL: Just a fresh start for the team. I hope we have a different outcome this year in the NCAA Tournament. I'm excited about it. I'm excited for my team.

THE MODERATOR: Malcolm?

MALCOLM ARMSTEAD: It's been a lifetime dream for me. I never played in the NCAA Tournament. So that's something I've always dreamed about doing. So just trying to take it one day at a time now to get better and to get the team better.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time and attention. Congratulations on a great effort this afternoon and good luck in the postseason.

Now questions for Coach Marshall, please.

Q. Your last possession, did you consider a time-out, or do you like having a situation where maybe you can catch them on their heels a little bit?

COACH MARSHALL: We had a couple of options called, if they make or miss. In the end we went to the same play that we had against Illinois State at Illinois State with a little pick-and-pop with those guys, and they really defended it well. It was a great play by them.

In retrospect, I could have called time-out and tried to set something up, but I generally like to let the players play. We had a time-out right before that. We gave them every scenario, down one, down two, down three, or down four.

We were down three, and Malcolm had a tremendous game. He had 28 points. I don't know who switched out on him, but someone defended him very well, and we couldn't get it back to Cleo. But Malcolm had had a few stare-down threes in that situation. So I felt good with, I think, a big guy.

What they did is they defended the three-point line, which is a good call by them. Shot didn't go. Had a chance.

Q. The level of competition between the two programs, as a competitor, being in that game, being in that -- on that stage, can you just give me a sense for the energy, the

adrenaline, and everything that goes with it, not to mention a guy down on the other end that moves his Xs and Os pretty well too.

COACH MARSHALL: Yeah, I think that they're a really good team. They really execute well offensively. They've got big guys in there that pounded us early on the offensive glass. Artino and Echenique in the first six minutes had seven offensive rebounds. We did a much better job in the latter part of the game.

They're a quality team, and they played very good basketball. We let Wragge in the first half and Manigat in the second half get too good of looks. You can't let them have those wide-open looks, and we did that.

Great, great atmosphere, big-time stage, national television. I figured it would be a great game, but we had to play well at the end to make it a one-possession game. That's the thing that I enjoy coaching this group so much is they are beyond a reasonable doubt one of the toughest groups that I've ever dealt with, and I've been coaching since 1985. I don't even know how long ago that is, but it's a long time.

No matter what they faced all year, they just continue to fight. They continue to find a way to win. That's their greatest attribute is their perseverance, and they just decide that, well, we're down 10. There's five minutes to go. Okay, here we go. This is going to be our run. They're just positive, and we don't shoot it great until the very end, but then we make some shots, and there you go.

Now it's a one-point game. We just need a stop. And they make a great play. But I really enjoy -- because they don't die. They just will not go away. In any game or during the season, there's many times, when you lose three starters, you can easily do that.

At the same time, I'm just disappointed they haven't cut nets down yet. This senior group didn't get to cut down nets. I do believe that the group that's in that locker room will do so many times. I don't know how many, but I think it will be multiple times in the next two, three years.

And we get to lick our wounds and go back and try to get better. That's the mood. As much disappointment that we have and as much congratulatory messages we send to Creighton -- Greg and I both said, let's go win multiple games in this tournament. That's very possible with this group. We just have to make some shots.

Getting Ron back now and adding him to our fold. Malcolm was outstanding today. He and Carl and all of them. They just fought so hard. Both teams did. It was a great, great basketball game.

Q. Gregg, I would think as a coach that was a fun game to coach, and it looked like both coaches were trying to find different combinations all day long. You look a little bit under the weather today. How do you feel about that?

COACH MARSHALL: I don't know if "fun" is the right word for coaching a basketball game like that. You may think it's fun, and people may -- that don't coach -- and I'm not saying it's not an enjoyable experience and I'm happy to do it, but there's so much -- so many decisions. It's hard. It's hard to do.

You love it, but it's a labor of love because it's hard. It's emotionally taxing, the ups and downs. It's physically demanding. I mean, it's -- Dr. Bardo promised me I can take tomorrow off, and I'm going to try to sleep in. I need it. My staff needs it. I'm tired. I have a cold, and I'm tired. Just a slight cold, but I need a day off.

So we get it. We get to rest. And hopefully, the guys can heal their nicks and bruises, and we can start getting better on Wednesday.

Q. Coach, as you look at the NCAA Tournament, the way -- now that you've got your depth back, you've got some injuries healed up, do you feel this is a team that's ready to play out-of-conference opponents that aren't ready for you?

COACH MARSHALL: Actually, we don't have all of our depth back because one of our starters is still out, Evan Wessel. He will redshirt, medically redshirt. He played the first eight games, and he's a magnificent three-point shooter. I like to remind people of that, and people forget.

They didn't know Baker, and Baker made a pretty good impression, I think. He's going to be a good player for the next couple of years.

Yeah, I do think so. I think Creighton, because of their offensive ability, and McDermott and Wragge and Echenique -- they've got some great players -- and Coach McDermott. They won a game last year. I think they're better this year. Our team, simply because of our toughness and

things that I talked about earlier, and I think the way we defend -- I mean, we didn't shoot it great tonight, but that's kind of our M.O. If we shoot it in the 40s, we usually win. Tonight we were 34 percent.

And it was a war. I mean, it was -- both ways. If you didn't go in there with some malice, you weren't going to be able to put it in the basket.

Not too many teams -- because of the grind in the Valley, you learn to play like that. I think that will help both of us in the postseason. I hope so.

Q. That toughness and that attitude that you're talking about, Malcolm kind of show a lot of that tonight. You were kind of struggling on offense, and he really stepped up there in the first half. His performance tonight was pretty important.

COACH MARSHALL: He was dynamite. I mean, 28 points, three assists, one turnover, four steals. Shooting percentage was very good. He carried us in a lot of ways offensively. And I thought he was tremendous in the semifinal game. I'm certain that he's got to be All-Tournament.

But here's a guy that exemplifies what I'm talking about. I mean, he's out there playing 32, 35 minutes, and stayed positive the entire time. Didn't matter what the spread was, how many points we were down, whether we were up, tried to direct our team. And he paid his way to come to school at Wichita State last year because he wanted to win and he wanted to go to the NCAA Tournament. How can you not be happy and proud of him?

Disappointed that he didn't get to cut the nets down today. Disappointed that he's not MVP, if he's not, which I don't think they'll give it to someone who's runner-up. But that's the kind of kid that we're coaching in that locker room. It's a pretty special group. I've cut down nets in conference tournament championships. I've won games in the NCAA Tournament. These seniors are the ones that I want to have the chance to experience that.

So didn't get this one. Didn't get the regular season. Now we can see if we can advance in the NCAA Tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much. Good luck continued in the postseason.

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