Missouri – 90
Baylor – 75

An Interview With:

BAYLOR
COACH SCOTT DREW
PERRY JONES III
QUINCY ACY

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with Coach Scott Drew.
Coach, we'll call on you first for your thoughts on this afternoon's game.

COACH DREW: I thought we defended, rebounded, worked the ball better offensively in the first two games. Today we didn't. Credit Missouri. Pressure defense, shot quick threes, didn't go into it.

I think it's a good learning experience for our team, and because of this I think it will prepare us for the NCAA Tournament. And at the end of the day can't dwell about this loss. Gotta shake it off because tomorrow we find out on who we're playing, where we're playing.

The NCAA Tournament is you lose again, we know we're all done. So hopefully we'll learn from some of the things that we should have done better or could have done better.

Q. Coach, what did you -- your team gained a lot of respect this week. Talk about the character of your team not quitting, basically playing a road game in the Big 12 tournament.

COACH DREW: We really had three road games, Kansas, Kansas State and today. But at the end of the day, I thought -- I said it yesterday in the press conference. I thought we grew up, but this was the next stage. And the next stage is handling success and bouncing to the next level. I think we'll learn some things from this game, and hopefully it will prepare us for the NCAA Tournament, especially if we play a team that's guard-oriented like this.

THE MODERATOR: Our student-athletes are Perry Jones III and Quincy Acy. Let's go to questions for them.

Q. Quincy, how frustrating a day was it for you, and is it frustrating playing Missouri? Seems like you guys kept getting close, getting close, and they'd hit a shot or get to the foul line, and it just seemed like you guys couldn't close a gap.

QUINCY ACY: They did a great job of hitting shots. And we had some mental mistakes on defense that cost us. So it's a good learning experience. But we have to learn from it.

Q. You guys have the size advantage. What did they do to keep you from dominating in the paint?

QUINCY ACY: I mean, they just shot.

PERRY JONES III: A lot of penetration.

Q. Perry, how difficult is it to keep up with that 4 guard offense? It just seemed like they were lightning fast, getting down there on breaks.

PERRY JONES III: I mean, they're a tough team to match up to, playing four guards and one big. That's why they're one of the best in the country because it's a hard matchup. They know how to play with each other, and just gotta learn how to defend on the perimeter.

No matter who it is, you've got to be able to defend them if you want to win the championship.

Q. You guys had a couple of the losses to Kansas and Missouri, and then you lost tonight. You had a strong showing against kind of the de facto road teams. Has there been -- has anyone been especially vocal in the practices leading up to the games this week.

March 10, 2012
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An Interview With:

MISSOURI
COACH FRANK HAITH
MARCUS DENMON
PHIL PRESSEY
KIM ENGLISH
MICHAEL DIXON

THE MODERATOR: We’re joined by the Missouri Tigers. Tournament champions. Coach Frank Haith, congratulations on the victory today. I know you have four student-athletes, Phil Pressey, Michael Dixon, Marcus Denmon, and Kim English. Coach, your thoughts on tonight’s victory.

COACH HAITH: Okay. Thank you. Obviously it was a tremendous, tremendous game. Thought our guys played extremely well. On both ends of the court, other than they -- they got 18 offensive rebounds. But I thought our defense was good.

We were outstanding offensively in terms of our execution. It was just a great performance today, but also just a great performance all week for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. For anyone up there, to take our city, our title, our town, talk to me about that, what you guys did here. So many of you, especially Mike and Marcus, in your hometown, and, Kim, an adopted son, just what a proud moment it is in your life to accomplish this in Kansas City.

MICHAEL DIXON: This is Kansas City, Missouri. And for me and Marcus, this is our home city. And we just are so proud and glad that we all just came here together and stayed together and fought with a lot of heart and toughness, and you can’t really measure that with this team.

I just think we did a great job, and we’re going to let this one settle in for a few days.

And credit Baylor, because they fought hard. And they played three tough games as well. And we’re just going to let this settle in and get ready for the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Kim, you had -- when you have a week like this shooting the ball, talk about your mental approach a little bit. Does it start getting on the bus coming in or in practice or do you start feeling it in the games?

KIM ENGLISH: My mental approach this week started when we started preparing for Oklahoma State, the night when they beat Texas Tech. And the mental approach was 100 percent defensively, what we were going to do to stop them, how we were going to stop, and offensively our team is so good and so not deep in numbers but deep in offensive talent, you never know who it's going to be.

And, I mean, if you really concern yourself in getting stops, you're going to get a lot of easy baskets in transition. And our guards did a huge job of really heating people up up top.

I mean, the shots I got were a testament to Coach Haith and his staff finding deficiencies in teams' defense and our guys getting easy baskets in transition.

Q. Marcus and then Kim, in what ways is this team similar to the team that beat Baylor in '09 in Oklahoma City for the title, and in what ways is this team different?

MARCUS DENMON: I'll just start with our similarities. I think that that was an unselfish team. That's kind of where we made a staple of our program this season, us to be selfless and play together as a team, because the outcome usually is a positive outcome.
I'm not really sure on the differences. We have a little bit different approach coming in the games than that team that year. This year we're a team that's doing more preparing for each game and in that game.

So that's about it as far as that.

KIM ENGLISH: Piggyback what Marcus said, the number one and I think the most important similarity is the selfless nature of those teams and the want-to defensively. We really want to guard the same way we wanted to in 2009. The difference is that team just had two pros on the inside with DeMarre Carroll and Leo Lyons, and they really cleaned up the glass. And we really depend on our guards to help out our bigs to rebound.

So if you want to nitpick and find things, those would probably be the only two.

Q. Phil, Michael, and Marcus, what made what Kim did this week make him the most outstanding player in this group?

PHIL PRESSEY: I'm not surprised he got that. He's been working since fall. The last person in the gym along with all of us, just shooting constantly, and, I mean, you guys are surprised that he's making those shots, but I see him make those shots day in, day out. And I'm just proud of him.

MICHAEL DIXON: Well, Kim works as hard as anybody I know. And he wants it as bad as anybody I know. And these four right here you see is the overtime crew. Every practice, every after-conditioning, after everything gym-wise, we stay and shoot and play one-on-one and work on each other's games every day. And that's just a tribute to him and us being in the gym.

And Kim is a tremendous player and he's in a good mindset right now. And he's just very mentally ready and focused. And he does a lot for this team besides scoring a lot of things that people don't see on the stat sheet.

MARCUS DENMON: I mean, Kim's play was unbelievable all weekend. I'm glad. And he was fortunate enough to make shots all three games. And he really carried us. So he's a senior. I've been with him for four years. He's a brother of mine. And to be able to see him go out on top as far as Big 12 play is great. But we still got more to do.

Q. After the game on the podium, you guys were at least briefly chanting "1 seed." Is that about just purely strictly easiest possible path to Final Four, or is that about the respect that goes along with being a 1 seed?

KIM ENGLISH: Nothing about it is easiest path. All 68 of those teams are capable. I remember last year VCU was one of the first four that played on Wednesday and they got all the way to the Final Four. Easiest path not at all. It's the respect factor. We went 30-4 and finished a game out of winning the Big 12 outright. And we eventually came here and took care of business.

Joe Lundari, if you're watching, look out for us.

Q. Kim and Marcus, there's about four minutes left in this game when Ricardo fouled out and not long after Steve got his fourth foul. And I think probably every Mizzou fan in the building looks at Steve and says be careful, and instead he went out there and made a couple of real bold, aggressive defensive plays that were real key. Can you talk a bit about Steve's play defensively there at the end?

KIM ENGLISH: Steve made some huge plays. I told him. The play at the half where he stripped Brady Heslip, his dunk, his block on Gary Franklin, and he got a rebound and fell and still found one of our guards who made a free throw. So he made some huge plays down the stretch.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. Make your case to the nation why you should be a 1 seed.

COACH HAITH: I'm not like the guys. We'll talk about that a little later. But we're happy that we've had a great regular season and to win a Big 12 Championship, that stuff will work itself out. We're not concerned with that. I'm more concerned about being in Omaha and St. Louis. That's where I'd like to be. Whether that's a 1 seed, 2 seed. The less travelled. We'll be happy if they send us out west. It doesn't matter.

Q. A lot of adversity you guys have undergone this year. Are you thinking about that now, what you guys have overcome and kind of the accomplishment?

COACH HAITH: I think any team that achieves success, you play the season out. And there's no question I played the season out, when we finished the ballgame and all the things that
have happened this year and what this team has endured and all the things that people say what this team is not and not what we are, it's just a humble moment for me.

And I'm very honored to have the opportunity I've had here at Mizzou. And it's been a special, special year.

Q. Talk to me about where you're at emotionally right now. I don't know if I've ever seen you be this -- I don't know what the right word for it is right now. It seems like you're almost soaking this in a little bit more than you have other big moments during the season.

COACH HAITH: I don't know. I don't know how I'm supposed to act, I guess. I'm just going to be who I am. And I'm excited about this team. I think we're 30 and 4. Shoot, if you told me we're going to be 30 and 4 at this time of the year, I mean, I would say you're crazy, particularly when we lose Laurence Bowers. It's just been a special moment.

And we're really blessed. God had his hands all over this year.

Q. Seemed like about the last month there's been everything is the last -- the last time you're going here, there, last times you're playing these teams, do you attach any significance to winning the last Big 12 game that Missouri is going to have?

COACH HAITH: Obviously it's special. To win championships, I think, is just special. We talk about -- we got the job. We talk about -- that's one of the things, the team winning championships.

We came here to Kansas City in early November. We won a championship. And now we have an opportunity -- we didn't win the regular season championship. But we won a conference tournament championship.

And I think that whether it be the first or last, maybe down the road we'll think about that, but right now I just think the guys are just excited about winning championships. And that's what we talked about from day one.

And now we get a chance to compete for a national championship. And that's a blessing.

Q. Three games in three days, seems like you guys could play tomorrow. Have you ever coached a team that plays this hard combined with the chemistry that they have?

COACH HAITH: No, this is a special group. This is a special group. And I think someone asked me the other day is this team tired. Do you worry about your team being tired, because we played so many games, you only have seven guys in your rotation.

These guys love to hoop. They love to play. They played the game the right way. A basketball expert -- when you look at our team, we play the game the right way. And we're a fun team to watch play. I think they enjoy the way we play, and they get excited about competing.

Q. Scott Drew was talking about this league does an excellent job of preparing its teams for postseason play, NCAA Tournament. In what ways do you feel like your league schedule and in what ways do you feel like this tournament has prepared this team for whoever you play and wherever you have to go?

COACH HAITH: I think the one thing is that we have really good talent in this league. We have great coaches. We have tremendous fan bases in this league. And when you have achievement like we've had or some of the teams that go into the NCAA Tournament, you compete in this league, you play a true roundrobin, which no other power conference plays, I think you're truly capable of competing at the next level.

And I think that Baylor, man, they're so talented. And we're fortunate to have success we've had against them. But they are a really talented team. I wouldn't be surprise if they're not in New Orleans as well as Kansas or Texas or Kansas State. I think we have -- Iowa State. I think we have really, really good teams in this league.

Q. You talked earlier this week about the comparing the importance of championships. You talked about the ACC championship. Compare the two now, having gone through this from the head man job.

COACH HAITH: The ACC, you don't play a true roundrobin and I think that you play an imbalanced schedule. That's the difference. I think -- in this league you have a true champion. And that's why I believe Texas will get into the NCAA Tournament. You play everybody twice. The atmosphere today was tremendous.

I mean, Mizzou Nation was unbelievable. We drove up today before the game, and, I don't know, a thousand maybe fans were standing outside the gate as we pull in. And I got emotional.

Missouri Quotes - Game 9 3
That was unbelievable.
And I know we're in Kansas City, Missouri, and I gotta believe we're not an afterthought in Kansas City, Missouri.

Q. Marcus isn't really one to talk about whether he's hurt or injured, and Kim sustained that knee to the thigh. Can you just talk about what it took for Marcus to be able to play today, what he did with his ankle yesterday, and also Kim having to rebound from that?

COACH HAITH: Well, we got a great training staff. Pat Beckman was outstanding, and I told him after the game you get to earn your money tonight.

And he kept those guys up doing treatment, both those guys, and he called me early this morning, there was an early treatment this morning. I think they got very little sleep. He told me he thought they'd be ready to play. And play well.

You could tell Kimmie is not 100 percent. Marcus, he's not 100 percent. Both those guys played well.

Q. Phil had a great stat weekend, but he did a lot of things off the stat sheet. Could you discuss some of the things he did that helped this team to win this weekend?

COACH HAITH: Obviously he gets us in offense. We talk about our offensive execution. I think he's the main reason. He's the conductor. He's the orchestrator.

But also he was great defensively. He got his hands on a lot of loose balls. Got steals. Those steals do show up on the stat column. But I think just his leadership, his presence, and how he carried himself and the command he had out there on the court, that gives your teammates confidence.

He's in control. And if there's a -- he's as good a point guard as there is in the country. I can't imagine there being a better point guard than Phil Pressey in the country.

Q. Like myself, you're kind of a young guy, and I know this season ain't done yet. But as you look back, what did you learn through the course of this season, this tournament, 30 and 4, everything you've gone through, that will make you a better coach in the years to come?

COACH HAITH: Well, I think we all as people, as human beings, I think we're all faced with adversity in our lives. And how you handle adversity will determine how successful you're going to be.

I think this team had a never-quit attitude and stayed true to the course. There's no question that I think our staff, our players did that. We stayed true to the course.

And we'll be happy what the end results are. Let's just stay focused on today and not worry about tomorrow, and that's what this program, this team has done.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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and what do you hope to improve on most leading to the tournament?

QUINCY ACY: Just some of the mistakes we had in this game and over the tournament. It's better to have them now than -- it's win or go home. So just looking to learn off of this game.

Q. Quincy and Perry, did it seem, though, that you never could quite gain momentum to make a run in the second half, every time you seemed on the verge -- I'm thinking of A.J.'s basket that was waved off, a few other things, that you couldn't quite get over the hump against Missouri in the second half until at least late. What was the feeling like for you guys?

QUINCY ACY: I mean, we just had to get stops. I mean, that's pretty much the whole game. We had to get stops and we had to convert easies. That's it.

Q. Quincy and then Perry, it seemed like the first five minutes of the second half kind of set the tone. What did Missouri do during that time span, and what should you have done to have responded to it?

QUINCY ACY: We just have to communicate better on defense. I sound like a broken record right now. We just had to get stops. That's pretty much what it came down to, stops.

I mean, we're going to learn from it. We're going to watch film so we'll be prepared in the tournament.

PERRY JONES III: Like he said, we gotta get stops. I mean, it's just plain and simple. No stops, I mean, you're not going to win a championship that way. And you've got to know how to stop the run and convert easies. That's it.

Q. Quincy, how excited are you to begin the NCAA Tournament?

QUINCY ACY: Very excited. I don't know where we'll be at. I guess we'll find out tomorrow. So I will be excited tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. Questions for Coach.

Q. Two things, what the players got asked about the first five minutes of the second half, that seemed to pretty much set the tone. It also -- Pierre and Quincy kind of struggled today, Quincy Acy. Without those two guys, how difficult was it to get past Missouri?

COACH DREW: I thought there were several times in the games where we had layups or shots that we've hit that we missed, and they had some tough shots that they -- shot clock winding down, contested 3s. I mean, for them to shoot 43 percent in three games in three days, I don't care if they were guarded or not, that's hard to do. So they get a lot of credit for that.

I thought, though, that we missed some opportunities that we haven't missed before. And I don't know if guards just get looser quicker or what the reason. But we came out flat in the first five minutes and the same thing in the second. And seems like we weren't ready, we weren't loose in the beginning, or maybe just credit them for playing so well in the beginning.

Q. You had talked about shaking off this loss and preparing for the NCAA Tournament. Do you start estimating where you might be seeded now and who the matchups might be, or do you just kind of wait and see what happens on Selection Sunday and just kind of react accordingly?

COACH DREW: Actually, I haven't checked out anything or seen anything, because I knew we needed to take care of business, and then that would take care of itself.

Just like everybody else, the fun will be tonight or tomorrow, once we stop thinking about this, to start planning on where we're going and to try to guess where we're going.

I do want to say I think the Big 12 does an incredible job preparing the teams for the NCAA and postseason. Because they run the tournament just like the NCAA Tournament.

So, I mean, for teams to move on to the NCAA Tournament, they're not in that shock and awe of how the rules are for a postseason, and for our team, especially with three newcomers and one guy that's never been in postseason starting, this hopefully will prepare us for that. And then we can enjoy a celebration like that.

Q. You said that this game hopefully would prepare you guys for the NCAAs, but you probably aren't going to face a team like Missouri with four guards that can play like they can and pass the ball and that sort of thing. Are they just -- you know, a real unique team and a team that it's just really tough to play just because of all those factors?
COACH DREW: I think the biggest thing we haven't talked about is their experience. Five seniors. They've been through situations like this. They've been through -- and with us, I guess the biggest thing is handling success of playing well two days in a row, being able to be focused and ready for that third day.

And I think that's -- in some of these instances, that's what -- because you win in the NCAA Tournament, as we all know, you have a lot of people congratulating you, telling you how good you're doing and all that. And you gotta push that aside and move on to the next game.

And that's why I think, again, our losses this year made us a better team and put us in a better situation to be ready for postseason.

In the meantime, we've done it 27-7. Three losses to Missouri, two to Kansas, and K-State's a very well coached team and a very good team and Iowa State at Iowa State. And they finished third in conference.

So we haven't lost to teams we shouldn't lose to.

Q. What did Missouri do to take away your size advantage on the inside?

COACH DREW: Well, I think they baited us into some quick 3s, let's put it that way. And we took the bait. So we needed to work the ball, get it down more and try and get more shots in the paint. That's what we had talked about.

But it didn't happen. So hopefully that's something we can learn from, so if we play a team smaller like this again we can -- we've been so patient on the offensive end. This game, for some reason, we weren't as patient.

And, let's face it, when you're down 10 points, you try to get it back quicker. If you're up 10, you tend to slow it down more and that had something to do with it.

Q. Was there something that you saw in the matchup? Was it foul trouble that Deuce played this much and talk about his contribution today?

COACH DREW: I think Deuce was tremendous today. He was fresh. And the second thing is defensively, I mean, Phil Pressey is really good. I mean, he's really good. And he does so much for that team.

So we just tried to put a fresher body on him and Deuce is doing a good job on him, and he has length. But Phil really sets up so much for that team.