

March 8, 2007



An interview with:

OKLAHOMA

CHARLIE FISK: We're joined by the Oklahoma Sooners. Coach Jeff Capel and his student athletes David Godbold and Nate Carter. Congratulations on the victory today. Your assessment of the Sooners' play.

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I'm proud of our guys. It was a good win. We feel very fortunate to be able to move on and to play against an incredibly talented Kansas team. We felt we got off to a good start today. I'm sorry, this morning. And we had a very good first half which ended in a three-pointer by Bobby Maze and a good decision by Tony Crocker.

In the second half we came out and we knew they were going to make a run, which they did. Mike Taylor and Hubalek were in foul trouble most of the first half, and they came back and Taylor got going. They took a lead.

But I was proud of our guys. We came back. We executed. Some guys made some big plays. David hit a big three for us off of a set that we ran and our guys made a great decision off of different options off of that play.

And then we were able to make some free throws down the stretch. We feel fortunate to win and we look forward to moving on.

Q. Nate, how did it feel early in the game, you guys got off to a great start and actually got a big lead. How did it feel to have success at this particular point in the game, something you have been striving to get, the last three, four games haven't been able to. In this game you got up by double digits early and played well early. How did it feel to get off to a great start?

NATE CARTER: We felt great. We came out there as one and we left it all out there on the floor and that's what helped us win the game.

Q. Did you guys get tired at all playing all the minutes?

NATE CARTER: No, can't be tired now.

DAVID GODBOLD: No. You know, we did a lot of running and a lot of conditioning that's kicking in right now. And it is helping us for the last push through. Coach said if we get tired, we're not going to win so we push through and all the guys came out and gave us sparks. It was a pretty good game for us.

Q. With 4 1/2 minutes to go they took the first lead of the game and then you guys were able to keep them scoreless for the next four minutes. They didn't score a free throw until 33 seconds to go in the game. Talk about your mind-set when they took the lead?

NATE CARTER: We knew they were going to make a run. We just had to clamp down on defense. It was just how we were going to respond, and we responded well.

Q. David, with a couple minutes to go, I think it was, you were encouraging the crowd to get involved or possibly more involved. Your thoughts on that?

DAVID GODBOLD: Yeah, I saw the fans were getting behind us. I just wanted to make a little bit more noise.

I felt that we kind of needed that extra push to finish the game off correct, so I tried to get the fans involved. We are going to need that as the tournament goes on because we feed off our fans. The more they are backing us, the better we play.

Q. David, it looked like -- and Nate for that matter, neither one of you guys wanted to wrap up this season which very well could have happened had you lost the game. Talk about your plays, David, down the stretch, not just the three, but when you dove in there and got the steal and called time out and you got the big offensive rebound on the free throw. Talk about not wanting to quit playing. And, Nate, I wish you would respond as well.

DAVID GODBOLD: Just like Coach has been stressing to us, if we don't get the 50/50 balls we won't have a chance to win. Coach told us if there's something on the ground, just go get it. If we knew they beat us to the ball, they would get the win.

So I just had in my mind -- let me go ahead and get my ball for the team. We didn't have Mike Neal out there. I didn't want the season to end when he's not out there playing with me. Any close ball that was close, I was going to go get it for the team.

NATE CARTER: That's right. I mean, we just -- we don't want to go home right now. We just want to keep playing, keep playing hard.

We believe that if we play together, we can beat anybody.

Q. Last time you guys played Hubalek, he had a career night against you guys. Coming in what did Coach Capel tell you to look for? You did a good job in slowing him down.

NATE CARTER: Coach was just saying he will go over his left shoulder. Everything he did was over his left shoulder. We were trying to take away the left shoulder together as a team, not just one person. We did that. So ...

Q. Any general thoughts about playing Kansas again? Do you take a lot of confidence because you played them so well last time? How much confidence will that give you?

DAVID GODBOLD: Even though we played them really well, we didn't get the stops we should have. We know they are coming in with a lot of confidence. They are the No. 1 seed in the tournament. They are coming in with a lot of confidence. They are ready to play. They will watch this tape. They will see how to break us down or whatever.

What we have to do tonight is prepare for them. They have a lot of great players. We have to prepare one by one, one step at a time to hopefully stay close in the game and hopefully we can come out on top.

Q. Jeff, two questions really. First, do you think you sewed up an N.I.T. bid with this victory? And secondly, if you can talk about what happened to Mike Neal and why he didn't play?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I don't know, to answer the first question. That's something in the hands of someone else.

We want to do everything we can to try to continue our season right now. When we get to that point, our conference tournament is over with or if we lose, then we will start thinking about that. But right now I'm not sure.

As far as Michael Neal, Mike was sick. Last night about 1:30 -- there is a stomach virus going around here and Mike caught it. He wasn't able to keep any food down, any liquids down. We put an I.V. in him before the game, tried to get some fluids in him and some food this morning. Because of how early the game was, just wasn't able to go.

And so that's a decision that we made and hopefully he will be ready tomorrow.

Q. Jeff, you have been playing pretty good defense most of the year. Another great defensive effort today. Talk about the strategy of Hubalek and holding Iowa State to 42% shooting?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: I thought first half we did a very good job defensively. Holding 23 points. They shot 31% in the first half. A big part of that is that we had their guys in some foul trouble, some of their main guys.

In the second half, they were able to get going a little bit. With Hubalek one of the things we wanted to do, when we played them in Ames, we didn't do a good job of guarding them, not just one or two guys. We didn't do a good job. What I mean by that, when their guard set screens, we didn't check cuts. We didn't do any of those things. Our guys did a better job of that.

The other thing we wanted to do in watching tape, and watching film on Hubalek, we felt he was more effective when went over his left shoulder. We wanted to take that away. In saying that, I think two of the three field goals he hit were little left-hand jump hooks. We told our guys we will live with him making those. At their place they were 11-16. If they goes 11-16 shooting left-handed jump hooks, then we don't have a chance anyway.

The other thing with Michael Taylor, we knew he would get some points but we didn't want him to be efficient getting points. He got going in the second half. But to get, what, 10 points -- or 18 points, took 16 shots. That was pretty good for

us. I thought we did a pretty good job on him.

Q. Jeff, I was wanting you to comment on David Godbold's play down the stretch. It seems like when you win these type of games, you need somebody to step up. It seems like you got that out of David Godbold in the last four, five minutes of the game?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: David is one of our most experienced guys as far as playing. He is our most experienced guy as far as playing. He is the guy that has been off and on, three-year starter in this program. He is a guy that has played a lot, played in big games and played well in big games.

I think you saw a guy that's been in this environment before and he played well. He had a huge three for us. Getting on the floor and getting stops, getting 50/50 balls, playing pretty good defense, harassing their guys, getting key rebounds and also David is the guy -- if you watched toward the end of close games, he is the guy that we usually always have taking the ball out because he is a pretty good decision maker. He is a guy who understands what we want to do. He understands when to call a time out and when to look for certain things.

He is a guy that doesn't get panicked a lot. He is very important to our team and has been a good player all year.

Q. Coach, can you talk about what impresses you most about Kansas and also about your second half two weeks ago and the pressure you are able to use and to hurt Kansas in the second half?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: Everything impresses me about them. They are very, very good. They are very talented at each position. They have depth. Great athleticism, very good size. Had some guys that can shoot it. Good defensively because of their athleticism, well-coached. They are very good.

And it is the reason why they are ranked as high and they won our league. So it is going to be a tough challenge for us. I thought we did a very good job against them in the second half. We just haven't figured out how to guard the free throw line yet. Maybe if we can guard the free throw line and they don't get 32 free throws in the second half, maybe we will have a better chance.

Q. Jeff, along those lines, what has Nate Carter's ability to make his free throws meant to your team this season?

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COACH JEFF CAPEL: It means a lot. It is a big weapons for us. I think the thing that's probably even more important is his ability to draw fouls. He is a guy that you can put him on the perimeter. He can drive it and hit a 17-foot shot with consistency. But he is also a guy that is very crafty when he gets the ball down low and is able to draw fouls.

Most of his big games this year where he scored well, you look at it, the one common thing is he usually gets to the free throw line a lot. I think tonight he was there 13 times. It is a big weapon when you can have a guy that's kind of become your go-to guy and can make free throws down the stretch.

Q. Jeff, how important was it to win today? No matter what happens tomorrow, if your season ends -- if you lose today, your season ends. But in front of the home crowd, you are in the losing streak, how important is that?

COACH JEFF CAPEL: It is important. It is important to win every time you step on the floor for me. I don't ever know when it is not important, but it was -- it was important for us because we wanted to continue our season.

We have confidence in our ability. Even though we had lost those games in a row, I think our guys did a good job of really embracing the fact that we're 0-0. This is a neutral floor. This is no one's home court. So we feel like we have as good a shot as anyone. No one else probably believes that. That's okay.

We're excited about the challenge of playing Kansas. We know it will be awfully tough because of how talented they are. But we're excited about it. And we will get some rest and hopefully we will be rested up enough where we can make it competitive tomorrow and have a chance down the stretch.

FastScript by ASAP Sports....

Oklahoma - 03 08 07

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An Interview With:

IOWA STATE

CHARLIE FISK: We're joined by Coach Greg McDermott and his two student athletes, Rahshon Clark and Mike Taylor.

COACH GREG MCDERMOTT: As has been the case many times this year, these guys didn't quit and that's -- that's been a theme with this group all season long.

We didn't play very good basketball the first half, Oklahoma had a lot to do with that, their ability to get Nate Carter started was the difference between the difference in Ames and the game here today. While they did that, we got in foul trouble and weren't able to keep the game close in the first half because of that. They competed the second half. We got back in the game, actually took the lead and put ourselves in a position to win and in the end Oklahoma just made a few more plays than we did.

Q. Rahshon, can you talk about what it was like this year. A new coach, new system and what it has been like for you this year?

RAHSHON CLARK: It has been a good season for me. You know, I wasn't as much as a scorer as I was last year. It is no big deal about that. But I have been doing things that I really haven't been doing last year as far as me playing good defense or rebounding the ball that much. But the season has been great. I'm surrounded by good players. Mike Taylor, he is a good player. You know, I felt bad for the seniors that we couldn't pull this win off so we could continue our season but they're great. The seniors that are leaving are great. We are going to miss them and I wish them the best for whatever they do.

Q. Mike, I wonder if you can talk about you guys rallied back to take the lead. You had boisterous fans behind you. Would you talk about what happened then afterwards? It

seems like you had the momentum going pretty good at that point.

MIKE TAYLOR: It was a story of our season, this game that we played today. There was a lot of ups and downs in the first half but we put ourself in a position to win. We had a couple of good looks at the basket. It just didn't fall and came down on the defense end and it was a contested shot but the shot went in and I felt like everybody that stepped on the floor tonight gave it their all. We left it all out on the floor for the last 20 minutes in the second half.

Q. How tough is it when you have to come back from a hole that you guys have dug at different times in the ball game? You guys had that first hole that you dug out of, then Oklahoma extends the lead again and you have to come back and take the lead. How tough is it to finish a game when you have to do that multiple times?

MIKE TAYLOR: It is real tough but we never gave up. We never thought that we was out of the game. I was telling the guys that it is not over until the horn sounds, until that last horn sounds. We just gave it -- we just gave it our all and put everything out there on the floor.

I still think that we had a terrific chance to take the lead up four, maybe five points, some great shots. Some wide-open looks at the basket. It just rattled out a couple times and one was short. It was great looks at the basket, so, I mean, if them shots had of failed, then the game probably would have been our way.

Q. Mike, can you look back at this year and what you guys have done and what do you see for the future?

MIKE TAYLOR: This season, I think it was a great season for us, great first year for the Cyclones. At the beginning of the year, before the preseason even started, critics were saying, the media was saying that we was the bottom of the Big 12, finish the bottom of the Big 12, 11th and 12th in the Big 12. And we finished off the conference at the 8th seed.

We had a chance to be 6th, so, I mean -- I felt it was a great season for us in our first year here. Next year we just got to learn from the mistakes and learn from the hard times that we went through this year and just get better. We had a nice freshmen class coming in that we can build on.

That's about it.

Q. Coach, Jiri and Wesley both struggled in the first half. How did they overcome that? And they came out and had a much better second half. What did you do to adjust?

COACH GREG MCDERMOTT: Part of their struggles was their foul trouble and not being able to get into the flow of the game because of the foul trouble. Wes got a couple quick ones and we made the decision to leave him on the bench. I felt if we could keep it within ten we could keep Mike and Wes on the bench. We were able to sneak Mike in there for a couple minutes. Had he a big three and cut it to nine. And then we got him out of there again.

We got Jiri some touches and he didn't finish the plays down low and Oklahoma did some good things to keep it out of his hands with some switching and some helping that they provided when caught the ball.

But we just -- we played much better the second half than we did the first half. We were more inspired. Offensively, we moved the ball a little bit better and we shot it better, obviously.

Q. Greg, I know it is kind of early to ask for some year-end perspective on a season. Do you think this team -- how well do you think this team maximized its ability this year?

COACH GREG MCDERMOTT: The important thing is that we've made strides in really all areas. Our offense has improved. Our defense gave us an opportunity to be in games in the Big 12 because if you look at our offensive numbers, field-goal percentage, three-point field-goal percentage and our assist-to-turnover ratio, it is pitiful. We have probably grown as a team more than anything. We started 6-0 and lost five of our next six.

Any time there is a new coaching staff and we had only four or five returning players and then you bring in five or six new players and there is all these new coaches, when that happens, when you lose five out of six, you find out a lot about guys' character. That's when they are going to turn on

each other, start pointing fingers and come up with every reason under the sun as to what's wrong besides taking a look in the mirror.

To our guys' credit, they did not do that. They stayed on the same page. We kept moving forward. And, you know, there's guys that have plenty of room to grow. As a unit, what we were dealing with, I'm pretty proud of where they finished and most proud they never quit. They didn't quit early in the season, they had that bad stretch. They didn't quit in a game like today when the chips were really against on when we were down 14.

CHARLIE FISK: Thank you, Coach.

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