

**March 9, 2007**



An interview with:

## **OKLAHOMA STATE**

CHARLIE FISS: We are joined now by the Oklahoma State Cowboys. Head coach Sean Sutton and his student athletes, JamesOn Curry, David Monds and Mario Boggan. Coach, we will call on you first for your assessment of tonight's victory over Texas A&M.

COACH SEAN SUTTON: I am really happy for our players and really happy for our fans because this has been a tough, tough stretch of the last three weeks the way that we've played. Just really proud of how hard our players have competed so far through this tournament.

Certainly are not satisfied. We did not come here to win two games. We came here to win four and happy to still be playing tomorrow.

We beat an outstanding team tonight. That team, I have said it before that I have got great admiration for the way they play the game. They are certainly a legitimate team to go to the Final 4. They have all the parts. But tonight, it was a great team effort on our part and just really proud of my players.

**Q. Mario, this is for you. You guys really seem to contain their big players in Joseph Jones and Acie Law. They did not score basically in the second half of that second half. Did you guys make any special adjustments on them or was it just you guys buckled down or a little bit of both?**

MARIO BOGGAN: We just basically played D -- we just played intense D on them. First half we let them get off a little bit and they found some ways to score down low.

We went in half time and Coach told us we need to suck it up and leave it out on the floor. We went back out there and tried our best to lock them up and tried not to let them score.

**Q. JamesOn, are the Cowboys back? Explain how your team can play like you did in Lincoln and have a game like you did tonight? Are you back?**

JAMESON CURRY: I don't know if we are back. We are playing hard. We still got to go. We are trying to accomplish. I think the intensity and the Cowboy defense, I think all that is back. We have to keep to continue to do that all weekend long. It was a short-term goal.

And long-term goal still at hand, continue to play hard.

**Q. Mario, just describe the last offensive play for you guys. What was your mind-set and just describe the play.**

MARIO BOGGAN: Coach, he drew up a good play. He just wanted me to get the ball and go to the hole hard. I mean, that's what I put in my head, go to the basket. Don't settle for no jump shot. Rip through and get to the basket and try to finish.

**Q. If any of you guys could comment, talk about how important it is for you guys not only to get back but to be a team that you really didn't play that well against in the regular season. Now you get -- is this sort of redemption for you?**

JAMESON CURRY: I believe so. As a basketball player growing up, I was taught it is hard to beat a good team three times. I definitely believe we were a good team. I knew it was going to be tough coming in. We needed to compete. Our coach did a great job preparing us for the game.

**Q. David, can you explain how you guys have suddenly turned it on to play as poorly as you did over the weekend and Monday night and then you come here and you have had two excellent games? What's your explanation for the way you have turned it on?**

DAVID MONDS: Like Coach Sutton said, the great thing about basketball, you can always redeem yourself when you have conference

tournaments. I feel like we were a wounded animal. We came out fighting. We got two wins to get to our goal. All you got to do is go out and play hard and leave everything on the floor and you will take care of everything. Simple as that, go out and play hard.

**Q. JamesOn, it's not too often, if ever, that you are on the bench in crunch time. Could you describe watching it as basically a fan at that point, the final 15 seconds, Mario's last shot and then Texas A&M's three shots at the end, can you describe the last 15 for us?**

JAMESON CURRY: I actually went to Cooper in the huddle and we said a little prayer and then me and Obi got on the ground and locked arms. I believed in my teammates. You've got to have trust in your teammates. You drive the ball and see a man open, you can't pass because he's not ready for a shot, you got to believe he is going to hit the shot.

Even though I was on the bench, I still trusted my teammate and I knew we could pull it out. Each one of our players are great players. We play hard and practice hard and good things are bound to happen tonight. You saw the results of that.

**Q. JamesOn, I know -- if you average 40 a game or so in high school, you have to have been in the zone a lot. Tonight you only made four shots, put up eight. Were you feeling in the zone, though? At one point as you scored and you ran down the court and kind of gestured to the crowd?**

JAMESON CURRY: Yeah. You know, just heat of the moment thing. My goal coming in tonight, I know I had to guard Acie Law. Everybody in the nation knows I am a scorer. It is known. But tonight that wasn't really needed. We needed a collective, I guess, collective --

MARIO BOGGAN: Team.

JAMESON CURRY: Yeah, collective effort from everybody else. My role tonight was to go out and play defense and play the hardest defense I could and don't worry about scoring. Now buckets will come for me.

**Q. Guys, they led by as many as nine in the game. In the last few weeks teams have got a big lead and it has only gotten bigger. What was different tonight with that nine-point lead that you wouldn't let the lead get bigger?**

JAMESON CURRY: We fought, NCAA tournament.

MARIO BOGGAN: We fought. We left it all on the court. Usually when they get a lead like that, we might put our head down. We might not make a stop but tonight we made plays on the defensive end. That was the most important.

JAMESON CURRY: And I would add to that, too. Like, earlier, you know, you play a game, you know you got another game. Like, you got a game Friday. We played Monday. But now it is crunch time. Your back against the wall. We lose this game, there is no more games. It is back to Stillwater on the bus.

**Q. Coach, I am going to ask you what I asked Mario. You guys basically stopped Acie Law for the final nine minutes of the second half. You stopped Joseph Jones, did not score a point after the seven-minute mark at the second half. Did you guys just make some adjustments on that or did your guys lock down and say we are not going to let them score?**

COACH SEAN SUTTON: One of the things that we felt like we had to do and we talked about it today at shoot-around, we talked about it at the pregame meal and then again before the game is we did not want Acie Law to beat us.

We wanted to force somebody else on their team that came down to the last three or four minutes. And I thought Marcus and JamesOn both did a great job on him the majority of the game.

I thought Mario and David, both those guys, moved their feet and got around Jones the last seven or eight minutes where he was trying to get deep post-up position. They fought around and tipped the ball away.

But not anything special, just tough, tough, hard-nosed play.

**Q. Sean, there in the second half it looked like you made -- about three times you made a timely, gutsy decision to go to a zone defense. Could you comment on your thinking there?**

COACH SEAN SUTTON: You know, one of the things that's difficult about playing Texas A&M is they've got one of the best one-on-one players in the country. And when they get in that spread, when Law is on the point, the guy guarding them, you are out there almost like on an island by

yourself.

And he has hurt us in the past as well as a lot of teams. Our game plan was when they went in their spread, which they call a wave, was to drop back into a three-two zone.

So I think it happened four or five times in the second half where they called that and we dropped back into a zone and forced somebody else to take a shot.

**Q. Coach, if you can, talk about the defensive job that JamesOn and Marcus did, especially when they got four fouls apiece and also if you can comment on what your mind-set was when JamesOn did foul out.**

COACH SEAN SUTTON: I think they both stepped up to the challenge. Our guys are smart enough to realize that in order for us to win tonight, we had to do a great job on Acie Law.

JamesOn started out on him, and I thought was really active and aggressive, much like he was last night except that he was guarding one of the best point guards in the country. Then Marcus, I thought, when he was on him, his size bothers him at times. We did a good job of not letting him get to his right hand.

Just made it difficult for him to get a lot of clean looks. But he's a tremendous player.

And then in terms of their foul situation, JamesOn got his fourth one, I think was about 15 minutes to go in the second half. I was going to leave him over there as long as the game was in striking range.

But at some point, I made the decision that we came here to win the game. We were going to roll the dice if we got down eight or nine points.

I put him back in for a couple minutes and then took him back out once we got the lead back down to four and then put him back in and then he fouled out.

But at that point, I still thought we had enough good players that could make plays.

**Q. Sean, this question of effort that the guys are saying just play hard and try hard, how did you turn that switch on this week and why couldn't it be switched on earlier before the snide?**

COACH SEAN SUTTON: I think one of the things that happened to this team is when we lost Obi, we lost a big part of our team. And for a long time, we tried to get by and we were able to early against Pittsburgh and some of those teams.

And at some point, I thought our guys got a little wore down. And I think the fact they were still looking over there at him knowing at some point we were going to get him back, we certainly missed some opportunities by not playing. But I think once we got him back, I felt like we got our team back in place. We got the same team that started 11-0.

When we have had our entire team together, we are 13-0. Obi is a big part of our team. I think the other thing is pride. This last week, I have done a lot of talking to them about what it means to play at Oklahoma State, how much it means to people, the amount of people in this state that care for these guys.

All they ask is for you to go out and play your butts off and leave it out there on the court. So far the first two nights we have been able to do that.

I thought Mario made a great play late. We set up an isolation play for him against Kavaliauskas. It was a play we used in the past when Tony Allen was here. That's what good players do. Made a great play and we were able to beat a great team tonight.

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An interview with:

## TEXAS A&M

CHARLIE FISS: We're ready for Texas A&M. We have Coach Gillispie and his two student athletes, Acie Law and Joseph Jones.

Coach, your thoughts on tonight's game against OSU?

COACH BILLY GILLISPIE: It was a tough loss for us. They played really hard and I thought both teams played fairly hard and we couldn't execute the way we needed to. We didn't finish plays in the basket.

They were pretty tough in there and they made their free throws and we missed ours. It is just a matter of executing, finishing plays in the paint.

**Q. Acie, Coach Sutton in here a little ago just said the one thing they talked about all day today, they didn't want to let you beat them on that last possession especially. Did it look to you like they would let anybody else but you take that shot?**

ACIE LAW: When we came out of the time out, they said if they would score that we wasn't going to call a time out, we were going to try to push it back and try to get a quick basket. But they did a good job of getting back in transition defense. And not letting me get to the basket. Forced me to kick it out. We weren't able to make a play to win the game.

**Q. Acie, what was the difference in this game versus that 20-point win in Stillwater when you basically manhandled them and had their fans booing them off the court? What was the difference in that game and tonight?**

ACIE LAW: Their intensity level. I mean, credit to them. They came out and played hard. I thought we played hard. But like Coach said, we didn't finish plays, missed too many easy baskets,

and didn't convert our free throws. Little simple things and simple mistakes down the stretch.

Credit to them, they came out and back was against the wall, and they answered the call when they needed to.

**Q. Did their physical play -- I mean, did it seem to bother you guys a little bit? Especially, you know, trying to get the ball inside tonight, it seemed like that was really difficult at times.**

ACIE LAW: They played hard. It was a physical game. We knew that coming in, that they were going to try to just play real physical and make it tough for us as they could. Like I said, we was in position to make a few plays and a few easy baskets and we weren't able to finish them.

I mean, they played hard. As simple as that. We just got to do a better job of finishing plays out there.

**Q. Coach, on the last play Oklahoma State had, why didn't you double-down on Boggan there?**

COACH BILLY GILLISPIE: Did you want us to leave this guy open at the basket? Did you want us to leave this guy open at the basket? He was at the elbow. We normally don't double at that position. I don't think anybody else would either, but maybe they do.

**Q. Billy, can you talk about maybe what they were able to do against Acie that kind of took him out of the game at times, especially down the stretch?**

COACH BILLY GILLISPIE: We got what we needed to, just didn't finish plays.

I thought after we first got -- after we finally got started, I thought we were paceless at the start and we normally have a better pace for our offense. We were not getting the ball reversed at all and we were being very tentative about driving to the basket.

Once we got started, we got the ball where we needed to for the most part, except the last turnover by Kirk when he threw it out, when he

didn't drive instead of trying to force it into Joe.

We got the ball in the paint plenty of times. Sometimes Acie is not going to be able to score every single time but if your other guys perform like they need to, you should be able to be okay and we have really good players. They just didn't finish enough plays in the paint.

**Q. Billy, you guys obviously had great overall record, great run through the league. So do you expect this team to respond really well heading into the NCAA tournament after a loss?**

COACH BILLY GILLISPIE: What do you think? (Smiling).

**Q. I'm asking.**

COACH BILLY GILLISPIE: I think we'll be all right.

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