

2010 GMC Sierra Conference USA Men's Basketball Championship



Press Conference Quotes – Memphis vs. Houston Thursday, March 11, 2010

Houston Head Coach Tom Penders

Opening Statement:

"Obviously it is a great win for our program, our kids, and Aubrey Coleman because I think he has been consistently one of the top 4 or 5 players in the country all year. He came through with a big shot at the end. Our kids executed the play perfectly. Fortunately, we had enough time to run a play. Sometimes you get those situations. I am glad we gave up the easy layup early, which we seemed to be doing for the last eight minutes of the game. We didn't wait until there were :04 seconds left. Just being funny there.

Our kids shot 35% and won. That means you are doing a lot of other things really well. We didn't turn the ball over. We made free throws when we needed to and built a lead on grit, getting every loose ball, and rebounding. We really rebounded the ball extremely well today. On the offensive side, 22 rebounds. That's huge because we got a lot of second and third shots, and you need that when you shoot 35%."

On Kelvin Lewis' defensive play:

"Three times he [Kelvin Lewis] has gone head-to-head with Elliot Williams and held him to 10 points or under in each game. I don't even know if he got a vote for defensive player. He has been doing that all year. He is one of the best defensive players that I have ever coached. It is the coach's vote, so I am not blaming the media. He does it time, after time, after time. Last year he held Stefon Jackson to 8 points and Randy Culpepper twice to 6, 7, or something like that. That's what he brings every night."

On Memphis:

"Those kids play their hearts out (Memphis) and they did today again and we have tremendous respect for them. They are a very good basketball team and they are deserving of an NCAA bid. If they are not one of the top 30 teams in the country then it is a damn shame. People shouldn't say, 'Well, Houston beat them twice.' We can beat anybody. There is no question in my mind. We have just had a lot of ups and downs and a lot of injuries, a lot of illnesses, Maurice's mom being in the Hospital having her foot cut off. Everything bad that could happen has happened this year and we played a very difficult schedule. We played the toughest schedule in Conference USA. Sometimes that pays off and sometimes that gets your butt fired. If we all in the league do that we are going to help ourselves. I know Memphis is not quite what they were. They do not have that one lottery pick, but they have about three guys out there that will play at the next level. And we have some other outstanding teams and great coaches in this league. Hopefully, we can get a couple, or three, through to the tournament and prove it in March."

#12 Aubrey Coleman

On making the final shot:

"It was unconscious. I was doing what I had worked on and I knew I was not going to get anything easy. I had to take it to the medium range where I had been working on my game, and it fell for me. God was with me on that because I had a will to win. I couldn't drop the ball on this one because we had played a lot of games down to the wire. In a lot of games I feel like I didn't come through, so, that was the reason we lost. I put it upon myself to make sure even that if I missed the shot; it would have been upon me. That is why I made sure I made it. What kept me going was Kelvin Lewis' 3 pointer. They kind of held me, and the way they were playing defense was kind of getting to me. And I thought, 'The refs are not going to see this, so, well, okay, I got to just take it in strong and just rise up and do what I worked on.' And it dropped for me. I give credit to coach on that one because he drew it up. I kind of knew that Will Coleman would jump because he is a shot blocker. I thought there was going to be two people there and there wasn't. So my eyes got big and I just had to focus in and make the layup."

#0 Kelvin Lewis

On what was going through his mind in the last minutes:

"When they made their run, then they called a timeout. I just want to give glory to God. I was praying the whole time that we wouldn't make the little mistakes at the end. I hit a big shot and we got the ball at the end of the game and Aubrey hit an even bigger shot. I give the glory to God on that."

On guarding Elliot Williams:

"Elliot Williams is a great player. I know that he likes to go hard left, and I tried to make him use his right hand more. I knew it was going to be a battle because I played great defense on him the first time and better defense the second time. I knew he was going to be ready. So, I wanted to come out early and set the tempo on him. I made him take some tough shots. There was one play that probably would have got him going, that dunk, but I thank God they didn't count it, and that kept his mind messed up a little bit. He made some free throws, but I think defensively I did a great job on him to help my team win."

Memphis Head Coach Josh Pastner

Opening Statement:

You've got to give Houston credit. They deserved to win. They played well. They had a great first half, got the lead there. We bounced back and we were able to get the lead but Coleman hit two big shots down the stretch there, the one right at the top of the key. It was good defense but better offense. It was the same thing at the end there. You've got to give Houston credit, coach Penders. This loss hurts for us but proud of the guys. They battled all year long from where we started until now. These guys have left it on the floor possession by possession and night in, night out

On the final sequence:

"We didn't have any timeouts left so that's why I didn't call a timeout. I called a timeout [earlier] and we got a bucket but I called a timeout on the make and set our defense up and then Coleman hit a great shot. And we trapped him, which we wanted to do. We trapped him on the ball and the trap opened up a little bit and he got through the seam there and made it."

On Elliot Williams' dunk:

"It didn't go through the net. The ref said it had to go through the net. They reviewed the tape and said the ball went halfway down."

On if he had seen a play like that before:

"I haven't seen anything like that. [Referee] Tom O'Neill told me that I guess he did the Texas-Iowa State game last night and he said Dexter Pittman, it went through the net - same thing - and it got stuck and didn't go all the way through and they didn't count it either. That's the first time I had seen that, so that was something that was a bad break, no question about that."

On the carry call:

"You know, that's just the way it goes. The way I think about it doesn't matter. We still had our chances. That's the bottom line. It was based on our first half play that we didn't do our job in the first half and they got that nine-point lead and we fought back. I know the last couple of possessions get magnified but the first 20 minutes are just as important as the last two minutes of the game."

On Aubrey Coleman getting the ball at the end:

"We knew it and we talked about it and I thought Willie Kemp had guarded Coleman the entire game and for most of the game did an unbelievable job on him. He made a couple of shots with pretty good defense but better offense, just one of those things. That again didn't hurt us. They had 22 offensive rebounds to our six. That's the big difference. They had 19 more shot attempts. It's hard to win a high-level game like that. We knew Coleman was going to get it and like I said, we talked, that if he came off any screen we were trapping it and making him give it up. We trapped, but the trap unfortunately opened up and he got a clear look to the basket."

#5 Willie Kemp, Memphis

On his play down the stretch:

"We were down and coach wanted to run some ball screens with me and big Will [Coleman]. I told Will to come out there and their big man was backing up so I got to the rack."

On being in unfamiliar situation:

"It's very hard. The last couple of years we've been in the NCAA Tournament. This year losing in the first round, it's kind of hard. Me being a senior, I've got to keep my head up for the younger guys and the guys coming back next year. We still got some games to be play even if we'll be in the NIT, we're still going to fight until the end."

On the last sequence:

"It was hard. I didn't think I double dribbled. I thought they called a foul or a timeout or something like that. I really didn't know. When I saw he called a double dribble [actually a carry] I was shocked."

#10 Will Coleman, Memphis

On second half:

"The first half for me and for the whole team was awful. We had a talk at halftime and it was time to wake up. We came back out after half and we fought as hard as we could but a basketball game is not only 20 minutes; it's 40 minutes and we slept on those first 20 and it came back and bite us in the butt."