

# *2010 GMC Sierra Conference USA Men's Basketball Championship*



## **Press Conference Quotes – Tulsa vs. Rice Wednesday, March 10, 2010**

**Tulsa Head Coach Doug Wojcik**

*Opening Statement:*

"What a tale of two halves. Give Rice a lot of credit. I think they played really well. They played hard. They out-played us in the first half. They got the loose balls, ran their stuff. We dug ourselves a huge deficit, but [I was] really impressed with our guys in the second half and I thought we were very determined. We showed a lot of toughness. We made shots and came back, made free throws better than we had in the first half and just showed a lot of heart to come back and win the game. [I was] really pleased with our second half."

*Was the slow start due to Tulsa being tight or Rice making plays in the first half?*

"I don't know. I know [starting slow] has been kind of our M.O. all year or at least since early February. We've dug ourselves some big deficits. I think we gave Rice confidence as the half went along and they obviously built their lead as the [first] half wore on. We just didn't start well and it consequently lasted about twenty minutes."

*What was said in halftime speech:*

"Oh, I said some nice pleasantries in the locker room, and hugged everybody. We all got together and said how much we love each other. [Laughs, looks to players] Right, guys? [Everybody laughs] We just talked about the things we weren't doing."

*On matchup against Marshall:*

"I think Donnie [Jones] has done a nice job with the team. He's got good pieces. They had a good game at our place and a great game at their place. [Both games] came down to basically the last minute of the game. They made plays down the stretch to beat us, but the one thing there is they shot 31 free throws to our 13, so hopefully we can improve upon that tomorrow a little bit. [Damier] Pitts is nice little point guard. He's shooting the ball really, really well from behind ball screens. Chris Lutz can make open shots. He's the guy who kind of breaks games open because he gets a three in transition. He hit a three off an offensive rebound against us at their place when we had a one-point lead and he put them up two. And then, of course, you've got the two big guys. I've always felt Tyler Wilkerson is one of the best players in the league. He can play outside; he can play inside. What helps him this year is Hassan Whiteside. I mean, he's got a partner down there who can block shots and plays hard. I'm really impressed by Hassan Whiteside. I was watching the tape of them today a little bit and he was on the sideline cheering for his team. He shows a lot of passion. They've got really good pieces. They've got a little more depth than we have, but it's forty minutes and we'll see what we come up with."

## **#1 Ben Uzoh, Tulsa**

*On the second half comeback:*

"We came out with a lot of energy. We were challenged going into the locker room. We weren't doing very well with our play in the first half. We wanted to come out with a lot of intensity and a lot of effort because they definitely out-played us [in the first half]. Our whole mindset was to chip away, don't go for any homeruns, but be aggressive on both ends."

*On matchup against Marshall in next game:*

"It's going to definitely be a grind. They do a good job of executing their offense and their inside-outside game. They got great pieces. They do a good job defensively with [Hassan Whiteside] down low who alters shots and makes them tough to score on inside."

## **#15 Justin Hurtt, Tulsa**

*On his second-half performance:*

"We had our backs to the wall. We really had to come out and play well and I took it upon myself and felt like I really needed to play well myself for us to come back. That's the feeling I had coming into the second half."

## **Rice Head Coach Ben Braun**

*Opening Statement:*

"I was proud of our effort. I was proud of our mindset. I was proud of our effort to compete. Our team competed and I was appreciated the effort. Give credit to Tulsa. In the second half, they came out and made shots and got to the foul line. They did the things they needed to do to impact the game."

*At the 7-minute mark of the second half you couldn't generate any offense down the stretch, that's been a theme this year:*

I think you revert back to what your habits are, and winning is a habit, losing is a habit. To get over the hump you have to create really good habits. Habits have to be great at this level, certainly playing Tulsa in Tulsa you have to be better than 36 minutes, it has to be 40. This is what it's going to take. You can't get away with saying we had a good half. We played for 30 minutes against Tulsa. They're that good. That happened the first game against Tulsa. We did a good job tonight of not giving up transition, but we allowed Tulsa to get to the foul line and get some seconds inside, and obviously that hurt us. There comes a point where you just have to believe, and you believe by getting the job done on a consistent basis. You've been there before, you know the feeling and you just revert back to that. You have to have something to draw on and once we get over the hump in one of these games, I think it's something that will stick. You kind of like winning, you like paying the price and taking a charge or making a big play or say we're not turning it over. We're not giving them any easy shots, and for awhile we were giving them one shot and done. To hold Tulsa to 28-percent in the first half, to a team that is a pretty good percentage basketball team, that's outstanding. That's one of the better halves we've played, and one of the tougher halves we've played. We have to find ways to sustain that

*When Jerome and Ben played like they did in the last 10 minutes, Tulsa is a different team aren't they?*

"They knocked down some big shots. We did a really good job on Ben Uzoh from getting to the rim. He didn't get to the rim today. The other kid (Hurtt) did. But we did a pretty good job of keeping him out of the lane. He didn't score a ton, but he scored some big baskets. He seems to make big plays for his team. We're aware Justin Hurtt can shoot the ball. He made some big plays as well, and Medder hit a shot or two that hurt us. They hit some shots, against the zone. They overloaded and knocked the wing to corner pass for a shot. They hurt us on that a couple times. We really didn't adjust the way we could. We seemed to do a pretty good job on Jerome Jordan, but he still finds ways. He gets a lot of attention but he finds ways to score.

**#11 Suleiman Braimoh, Rice**

*Talk about the difference in the second half:*

"Coming out we had an edge. We came out with a lot of intensity. In the second half, I don't know what happened, but we sort of lost our edge and tried to get it back. For a stretch there I thought we had it, it something we let slip and couldn't close it out."