

2010 GMC Sierra Conference USA Men's Basketball Championship



Press Conference Quotes – UAB vs. Southern Miss Thursday, March 10, 2010

Southern Miss Head Coach Larry Eustachy

Opening Statement:

"We lost consecutively to Canisius and North Florida in December and we were dealt a real difficult hand in the league – at Marshall, at UAB, at UTEP and Memphis at home – and started out 0-4, so ... I've had some great teams but I don't know that I've ever had a team overcome adversity, particularly being new. This guy [Gary Flowers] is new. He hasn't been at this level. R.L. [Horton] has ... We've got a lot of work to do here still, but it's a good start. It's a good start and we're 80 minutes away from going to the NCAA Tournament and that's how we feel. We feel we can do it. I'm sure Houston does. I'm sure the teams remaining do, but we've come a long way. I think we grew up today in this game. I really think we grew up today in this game. Gary said it during the timeout, basically we've seen this movie before. This team comes back on you. There were a lot of great comments by our players during the timeouts and we didn't have those down on the coast when we played in that tournament. They've come a long way. I'm proud of them. We're certainly not done. We're excited. Twenty wins is a great year but it's not nearly over."

On the backcourt play:

"Well this guy [Flowers] doesn't hurt either but I think it starts with guard play. I've had great front line players with no guards and we were an average team. I think it's the combination of R.L. and Angelo. They've really played well the last five games. R.L. made some huge plays today that could've put them right back in it if he didn't make the plays, so our guards have really stepped up. We're limited there. We're not limited in the other areas. We've got a lot of front line players if guys get in foul trouble or are sick, etc., etc. I told you Gary had the flu the other day. Guys can step up and do it, but we struggle in that [guard] position and those guys have to really come through or it's tough. But they will and we have confidence in them."

On the depth of the league with Houston and Southern Miss knocking out Memphis and UAB:

"I've said this, I promise you that I watch New Mexico play and if we could play New Mexico on a neutral site somewhere, I'm telling you we would play them to the wire and we're the sixth place team in this league. I mean this league has been so distorted the last few years because of what Memphis has done. The teams from second on down never got any credit. Now that Memphis has gone backwards a little bit – and Josh has got them coming back with great players coming in – but it brings light to the other teams because the light was only on Memphis. I've said it forever: it's always been like this. We've always had teams like this since I've been in it. It's the strongest, but last year wasn't far off. So it says a lot about the league. There are teams in our league that can beat a lot of people and they have. This team that we just beat [has]

beaten a lot of people going to the NCAA tournament. We've been very close, as you know, very, very close and we finally got over the hump today."

#15 R.L. Horton, USM

On ending a five-game losing streak to UAB:

"It feels awesome. We always get right there and can't seem to get over that hump. This year the ball has started bouncing our way a little bit. I'm not trying to get too happy, trying not to get too excited, but trying to keep it even paced. Let's just keep playing well."

On back-to back-threes after UAB cut it to 34-26:

"They're a great team. We knew they were going to make a run and I feel like those threes kind of knocked the wind out of them a little bit and gave us a little bit of momentum to finish out the game, too."

On things coming together this season:

"Guys are starting to believe in each other. We're talking to one another, picking each other up when we get down and I hadn't seen that in awhile. It's a beautiful thing. I'm glad to be a part of it."

On stopping Houston's Aubrey Coleman:

"Well, stopping him? I don't know if you can because he's going to do what it takes to put the ball in that basket. I don't care where he's at and any kind of situation. But like Gary said, we've got to stick to our game plan. If he makes a couple that's just like, Wow, you've got to play through it and stop him on the next play and that's pretty much it."

#4 Gary Flowers, USM

On the emotions during the game:

"This is a single-elimination situation so a lot of emotions are running, so you know there's no room for error really. The urgency is on and we need to win and we all know that. When it doesn't go our way, sometimes emotions come out but we just stick together as a team and come out and play hard."

On being this close to a tourney bid:

"Like R.L. just said we're just trying to keep an even mind and trying to play the same style of basketball we played the last two games. We don't want to get too far ahead of ourselves because like coach just said on any given moment a team in this league can do something to you that you don't want to happen. We're just trying to stay level headed and on our game, on the court and play hard."

On Houston:

"We expect every team to come out and play hard. We don't underestimate anybody. We know Houston is a very scrappy team and they get up and down. We just have to execute our game plan like we did when we went to Houston and came home victorious. We have to do the same thing: execute our game plan, stay level headed and get the win."

UAB Head Coach Mike Davis

Opening Statement:

"I thought we were doomed from the start. There was no fight. I do not buy this 'being nervous' or whatever it is you say you have when you play like this like we have played too many times this year. Even though we did not play well during those stretches we never played like this. We were two steps behind. The two times we beat those guys were a come from behind win at home and a hard fought game on the road. We told them, we showed it to them, we explained it to them that this is not going to be a game were you go out and try to feel your way. It's going to be a fight. This is the first game this year that we lost. We just got beat. There wasn't even an opportunity to have them close at the end. I cannot tell you how disappointed I am in our performance. We played them last time over there and we out-toughed them. Tonight I can say they out-toughed us."

On the beginning of the game:

"Like I said, we were doomed from the start. We jogged down the court on defense. We never blocked out. We gave secondary chances from rebounds. We didn't get into our offense the way we were supposed to. We played soft. They played disciplined. Every guy we put in got softer and softer. We would have liked a guy to come off the bench and say, 'I want some minutes. I want to play.' But they were like, 'Please coach, take me out. This is a little bit too hard for me today.' We got outrebounded. We had starters with no rebounds or 1 rebound. I am disappointed. I am frustrated. It is embarrassing for our fans to witness this. We got drilled today. This is the first time we have gotten drilled this year. I told our guys we don't deserve to go to the NCAAs or the NIT playing like this. It frustrates me saying that. If we give this kind of effort in this game, what will happen the next game?"

#24 Elijah Millsap, UAB

On post season possibilities:

"Whatever happens we are going to go with it. Whatever coach wants us to do we are going to stand behind coach no matter what decision he makes."

#1 Aaron Johnson, UAB

Can you put your finger on what went wrong today?

"Everything went wrong for us. They attacked the offensive glass. They got passes off the dribble, they made free throws, they made shots. We missed shots. We didn't execute offensively and we definitely didn't execute defensively. We let Flowers get comfortable. We let Johnson get comfortable. You just can't win like that. You can't win without executing your game plan, especially in a conference tournament where you are playing another team for the third time. They know everything about you. They know player tendencies. That is why you have to execute your game plan. And we didn't do that."