

March 19, 2010



California – 77
Louisville – 62

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you would give us an opening statement about the game and we'll get some questions to your guys and then questions for you.

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, I just am really happy for our basketball team. First of all, it was a long way to come, and we had a lot of respect for Louisville. I think our guys were really ready to play. I think we got off to a tremendous start, just bang, bang, bang, shot the ball and probably caught them off guard, which we do occasionally. Dug -- gave them a pretty good hole. To their credit, they came back and got within four. Theo had a huge three from the corner, took it back to seven, and then they broke down a little bit with some mistakes and we capitalized on it.

It was a very satisfying win for us. We don't have a lot of depth and I was worried about fatigue. I tried to rotate as best I could, got Max in there some, and I thought Max did a tremendous job, big. They were hurting us on the glass. I really thought these kids deserved it. They know what it's like to win in the NCAA right now.

Got a tremendous challenge on Sunday, and it's one that we're really looking forward to.

Q. Theo, could you walk us through the three-pointer that pushed it back to seven and basically broke their run?

THEO ROBERTSON: Well, I don't remember exactly what play we had on it or anything like that, but I'm pretty sure it was Pat, I think, or Jorge got some dribble penetration, and the corners, we thought they were susceptible as an open area for us, and Pat or Jorge draw two and saw an opening, so I just let it go. And I was feeling pretty good about my shot at that point, so just glad it went down?

Q. Jerome, could you talk about your team's ability to not only deal with pressure but to attack when you had the advantage in the transition?

JEROME RANDLE: We knew what they was going to come with. They was going to extend the zone a little bit, and instead of us backing off and being on our heels, we just wanted to penetrate the ball and find an open man.

Q. Jerome, did they seem surprised at the way you attacked their press? Typically teams let them close in on them, and the fact that you kept attacking at it and they never really got a rhythm with it, did you sense that they were surprised at the way you wanted to go at them?

JEROME RANDLE: Probably so. They probably had a great game plan against us, and we just wanted to just be smart out there. We found some gaps, was able to kick to the wide open shooters, and luckily we was able to hit some tough shots down the stretch.

You know, but I don't think that they was really prepared for a lot of dribble penetration.

Q. Patrick, do you feel like you guys can deal with the zone defense now?

PATRICK CHRISTOPHER: Definitely. It's always good when we're shooting the ball well. Obviously we struggle with it when the ball isn't

falling as much. But I think we did a great job of penetrating and finding open guys in the first half as well as the second half, so we got it done.

Q. For any of the players, tell us about the fast start and what was behind that in the minutes before the game and right after the game started when you guys kind of took off?

PATRICK CHRISTOPHER: Could you repeat the question? I'm sorry.

Q. You guys started really fast. What was behind that and the thinking behind that? What was it like in the minutes before the game and when the game first started when you guys took off like you did?

PATRICK CHRISTOPHER: Well, coming out we were really pumped up to play and then they had to fix the shot clock and that maybe threw us off a little bit.

But we came out and we were smoking. We were hitting shots, everybody was finding each other, and I don't think we struggled with the press too much, and that was a key for us. We didn't panic much, and we got it done.

JEROME RANDLE: Well, I was a little upset, he and Obama not really putting us in his bracketology. I just wanted to come out strong.

Q. For any of the players, how much satisfaction do you get out of not only just winning this game, but the PAC-10 has taken a beat-down this year nationally, and you guys pull off this win and Washington did the same with Marquette. Talk about some redemption for your conference?

PATRICK CHRISTOPHER: I would say it's a brand new season for us. No matter what happened in the past, we can put that behind us. Everybody has 0-0 or now we're at 1 and 0. So we look forward to move forward with what we're doing.

I always thought the PAC-10 was a good conference competitively night in and night out. Of course it's going to take a beating when not too much seeds in the Top 25. The time to play great basketball is right now. Washington is doing great, we're doing great, as well, so we want to keep things rolling.

JEROME RANDLE: I always thought the PAC-10 was tough, as well. People were talking bad about the conference, but I honestly felt like two other teams could have come here and got a win, as well. We really weren't worried about what

people were saying, we just wanted to come in and focus on what we do best and try to get a win.

Q. Talk about the last six minutes of the game. Instead of getting tired you guys only gave up two points the last six minutes.

THEO ROBERTSON: Well, I think at that point in the game everyone was really focused on winning. The concentration was there, we just knew we had to be smart with the ball and close the game out. We had a lot of really good contributions. Max came in and blocked a couple shots. Those free throws were huge. Really everyone just locked in and made some plays down the stretch.

JEROME RANDLE: Yeah, I feel like our defense down the stretch was really good as a team. They had a great big man in Sampson, and -- Sanborn, whatever, and we doubled him and was able to get out to the shooters. I feel like we really played great team defense down the stretch.

PATRICK CHRISTOPHER: Agreed.

Q. Theo, could you talk about the strategy to guard Samuels and Buckles and talk about the challenge of guarding bigger players than you are?

THEO ROBERTSON: Well, we had a game plan where we wanted to double Samuels, so it was really a team effort. When Samuels caught the ball, my responsibility was to go down on the high side of him and really force him into kicking the ball back out and not giving him a clean look at the basket and then really the task was trying to get back to a block off. Those guys had a couple inches on me, so that was a tough task.

Earlier I didn't do a good job of that, but the guys really were moving together on the defensive end, so I think overall our team defense was pretty good in that it helped us limit those two.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, thanks a lot.

Q. You just explained about Samuels. Did you do anything in particular against Sosa to limit him, and then it would have been even more out of hand if it hadn't been for No. 4 coming off the bench for them and giving them a little bit of a lift. Were you kind of prepared for that kid at all?

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, we were going to what we call monster Samuels because

we're undersized to start with. And we haven't done this very much all year, but we worked on it all week in the four-man going down. Theo is a very smart player, and actually Max did a great job because of his length. But we had in mind just to double down on Samuels. What we hadn't really counted on his Buckles having quite the game. But actually Rick made some really good adjustments, and we were supposed to fire the on-ball screens, and we didn't do a very good job of squeezing the lane, and they were rolling down and Buckles was getting not only second shot opportunities but was getting rolls just right down the middle with nobody coming in.

So that hurt us. Then we kind of changed our strategy on on-balls and tried to not fire as much and play line-up ball so we could stay at home and then we switched. He hurt us. I mean, 10 for 11, what we really had set out to do we did a pretty good job of, and then they made an adjustment and hurt us.

Q. What did it do for you to keep Sosa at bay?

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, he got himself in foul trouble early. Any time that happens, that really takes you out of your rhythm. He got two and then got a third on a charge. We did a good job at taking a charge, so he kind of took himself out of the game with the foul trouble, which is unfortunate from his standpoint because you can't play with three.

I think as much as anything, that probably hurt him mentally.

Q. Could you talk about your preparation for Sunday's game? I know you haven't had a chance to really look at tape or anything like that, but how will you approach this with your kids? Does the fact that it's Duke and any potential mystique that they have about their program play into your mindset about how you'll approach it with your players?

COACH MONTGOMERY: No. You know, I couldn't have any more respect for Mike Krzyzewski and the Duke program than I do. Mike is a good friend and they've been good for so long. I've played them a couple times, and we've felt in some ways we were comparable before.

It's a great opportunity for us. I mean, everybody watches them, everybody is going to watch that game or be aware of the fact that Duke is playing, so it's a tremendous opportunity for us. I mean, we're an 8 seed, and they're the No. 1

seed, one of the No. 1 seeds, and we're in the south. So we're going to go out and lace them up and get after them.

I think it's just a great opportunity for us as much as anything else.

Q. Were you worried at all when they had to fix the shot clock about throwing off your rhythm, getting off to the fast start, and then also can you talk about the importance of other than Markhuri nobody got into foul trouble at all for you.

COACH MONTGOMERY: Shot clock was the same for both, so it really shouldn't have affected anybody. I know our guys were ready to play. We talked about a year ago kind of coming out, losing our edge, not really doing what we were capable of doing, win or lose, and they were aware of that, and I think they were bound and determined ready to come out and play, and we obviously got off to a great start, so I don't think the clock was an issue one way or another.

I was worried about Jorge. He got an early foul. Jorge gets very aggressive. But he did a great job defensively.

Markhuri needs to -- he got excited, a big guy like him, and he tends to push too much. Maybe people move. I did think early on that Jamal was getting handled as far as being pushed underneath the basket. So I don't know what the alternative was. You have to be able to push back, but I think Markhuri was a little too obvious with it, and Max helped us. But it was very fortunate that we didn't get anybody with foul trouble. That could have thrown a wrench in the works.

Q. Talk a little bit about what went through your mind early in the game when you go up 22-4 and 30-12. Are you believing what you're seeing? What exactly were you thinking at the time when you're watching that?

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, you know you're not going to shoot that way for 40 minutes. It's impossible. We shot the ball extremely well. I think we rocked them back a little bit, and I think it took them a little while to get their aggressiveness back, and when they did, they got us back on our heels a little bit and were able to get back in the game. They didn't have a choice but to get aggressive and extend their pressure and get after it.

I would say as a group over the years

we've had a little bit of a tendency to relax sometimes, and maybe we did that, but I think credit has to go to Louisville with their pressure. But again, I knew we couldn't continue to shoot the ball like that, and it was going to come back to us.

As long as we continued to make good decisions and take good shots and stay fundamentally sound, I thought we could be okay. But it got to four, obviously another miss and a bucket on their part could have gotten things a little dicey.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you.

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