

March 21, 2010



Duke – 68
California – 53

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you could please give us an opening statement about tonight's game.

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, we obviously played a very good basketball team as advertised, as we expected. They're big, they're physical, they're a veteran team that knows how to play.

I thought that we kind of got off to a tough start with Pat getting his eye split and Jorge getting a quick foul kind of set the tone, but I thought we competed physically. We didn't back down. We were clearly undersized in a lot of situations. Statistically you look and you're kind of wondering where the difference is. They didn't shoot it very well from three. They out rebounded us but not appreciably. We knew it was going to be a problem -- generally when you play a team like that, my experience is the more time you have to try to ready yourself for how they play gives you a better opportunity to do some things.

But we would have had to really, really play well, make all our shots. I thought defensively we did a pretty good job, but again, give credit to Duke. They're a great basketball team. But I feel like we can hold our heads high, that we competed, just couldn't make it happen.

Q. For either one of you, just talk about the difficulty that their size posed for you guys?

JAMAL BOYKIN: Well, we've played against teams with size and competed. They just seemed to know us very well. It seems like the scouting report, they executed it to the tee, so when you have that size and length and you're executing the scouting report very well, it makes it difficult to play against.

Q. Jerome, what was more difficult for you in your struggle to get really good open looks? Was it just Smith playing against you, or was it not being able to get around the big guys up high when they came out?

JEROME RANDLE: They had a pretty good scouting report. They just tried to take the ball out of my hands as much as possible, you know, and just -- I feel like we didn't really execute as a team well. You know, they just crowded me coming off the ball screens. That was really it.

Q. For either of you, has it sunk in that you've just completed your last college game, and what was going through your head in the final moments when you realized that it would be the final game?

JAMAL BOYKIN: It definitely hasn't. To imagine that this is the last time we'll put on a California uniform and play, it hasn't sunk in yet. But the one thing about it, when you put so much work and effort into a program, you're always a part of the program. So while we may no longer be players for California, we'll always be a part of the family.

And on top of that, this isn't the last time we'll play basketball. For the seniors, we will continue to play basketball. We have a lot of time now to reflect on it. It's been a great ride, and we just have to look for the positives in the situation.

Q. Same question for Jerome.



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JEROME RANDLE: Well, I mean, it hasn't hit me yet, but like Jamal said, this is my last college game, so honestly, I'm really proud of this team. The PAC-10 has taken a beating the whole year. For us to come here and really just play hard against Louisville, everyone didn't think that we was going to win that game, we was able to come in and, you know, play really hard against Duke, I'm really proud of my team. It's obviously over right now, but I'm just proud of the way we hustled and played hard.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, thank you very much.

Q. Could you talk about Zoubek's production today? He's obviously become something more than just a body.

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, a lot of what he got was on drop-offs from help. We knew they would try to post Singler. We had match-up problems kind of across the board.

We weren't concerned about Zoubek individually on one-on-one moves, but when you try to get help with Singler posting at 6'8", then they do a great job of dropping off. They have a great awareness of where everybody is. He pushes a lot. I mean, he barges you and he's a great position guy. He anticipates when the ball is going to be shot, and he gets you early underneath the basket. He's very strong.

Most of what he got was drop-offs, just where we were trying to help on a drive or stepping up and that type thing, and then they would drop it down and he finished up. So it's nice to have that luxury. He plays 17 minutes a game and generally is very, very physical in that time, and then they come off with either of the Plumbees, which are pretty dog gone good. He can afford to be physical and get done what he can do, depending on how the game is going to be called, and he was very productive for them today.

Q. Among the match-up problems you were talking about, the ones on Robertson and Christopher in particular, they had a very hard time getting any kind of open looks. Did you anticipate it would be that tough for them, or did Duke's players play better against them than you thought they would?

COACH MONTGOMERY: No, we knew how they were going to play. I mean, they were well-prepared, where they would have gotten their scouting information or what kind of effort they put in, that seems easy to figure. They just face

guarded Pat. They just stayed up on the high side and face guarded him totally. You can do that a little bit easier if you've got size inside to protect the basket, and we had a hard time getting looks for Pat. Obviously he didn't get very many shots.

As I said before, Duke forces you to put the ball on the floor, and we were -- the ball was in Jorge's hands and Theo's hands a lot because they were the two guys that could get open and make some penetration. But they simply were not going to let Pat catch the ball, and same thing with Jerome. So we had a difficult time. And that's what's happened all year long; when those two guys are not able to get shots or make points, we struggle a little bit because we don't have five guys that can score numbers.

I thought Jamal rushed his shots a little bit. Jamal had a lot of looks. Obviously this was a huge game for Jamal in his mind in playing against his former school, and he missed some shots that he normally would make. So we weren't able to make up for lack of clean shot opportunities from Jerome and Pat.

Q. Were you at all surprised that Duke shot so poorly from the three-point line but yet was still able to control the game?

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, they pretty much had their way inside, I would say, in terms of finishing. They had a lot of mid-range stuff. We weren't able to do a very good job with Nolan Smith, for example. He was very good one-on-one. That turned out to be a tougher match-up than we thought. I thought we contested threes pretty well. We tried to fire up on the on balls. We got in some foul trouble trying to do that, we didn't get up cleanly. But I thought we did a pretty good job of contesting threes, but it did leave us vulnerable inside and they were able to get some second shot opportunities, and probably more than anything they broke us down on the dribble and were able to get in the paint and made some nice mid range shots. We fouled them a couple times from three-point range that hurt us. I think we had three stops, down nine and weren't able to convert any one of them. I think our major problem was offensively. I don't think it was defensively.

Q. Talk first of all just a little bit about what your overall impression of the Duke team and maybe its potential, and secondly about

your team and what it accomplished this year and specifically the seniors and what they were able to do.

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, I don't know what Duke's record is, it's 30 and 3 or something, so obviously they're not a bad team. ACC is a great league, and to go through the league like they did -- you look at their guys, and how many of them are Top 20 type recruits. They've got three seniors, two juniors. They're kids that have been in a proven system for four years that always emphasizes the same things, so we know what they want to do, they know how they want to do it. They only play seven or eight guys, but those guys are all very, very highly recruited and quality players. So you start with that. They know how to win.

They've got one of the best coaches in the history of the game in Mike. They have a tradition there that they expect to play into April. There's just a lot of things that makes Duke very, very good and difficult to beat. They got a No. 1 seed for a reason.

So when you get an 8 seed, that's what you get. If you can win your first game, which is supposedly an even game, then you're going to get the No. 1 seed, and they set it up that way. We're 3,000 miles away playing a No. 1 seed that's a very good basketball team. We would have had to do everything well. We didn't move the ball as well as we needed to. Part of it then being physical, they bounce you around on your cuts.

As for our team, I guess I would say to you, who would have imagined two years ago that we would have won the PAC-10 conference, played into the second round of the NCAA, won 24 games. We made just a tremendous amount of progress as a group. We had a lot of issues that we had to face this year. We had kids get hurt. We didn't have great depth. But yet I thought that they came together as a group. They learned how to play together. They learned how to win games.

That's all you can ask. I think if we played Duke ten times, they would probably win more than we would. I think we can compete, but you know, you've got a one-game situation to do that.

I'm really proud of these kids. I think that they battled. We beat a good Louisville team, beat them fairly -- I mean, it was a nice margin of victory. It wasn't a fluke, and we came out and competed. We probably just were a little bit overmatched in a lot of ways and there wasn't a whole lot we could go. I thought Markhuri came in

with his size and gave us a little bit of a physical presence in there.

Q. Talking about the seniors and maybe going beyond basketball, what's been the most enjoyable part of coaching them for you over the past two years?

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, watching them grow as people. You know, I mean, the job opened for a reason. There was issues that we had to deal with, and to watch them grow personally, all five of our seniors are on track to graduate. They are taking classes right now that if they do their work and pass, they're going to graduate. And I think that's spectacular.

You know, Cal is not an easy school, and they're in a position to do so. So I think all of them in their own way is going to have an opportunity to play someplace -- not all in the NBA, but someplace. They're quality kids, and you know, it's just fun. It's a different type of group than I've probably ever had, and it's fun to get to know kids like this and watch them develop personally. They have a very strong feeling for one another, and that's good to see.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.

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