



UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

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**2011-12 Houston Cougar Basketball Postgame Quotes**  
**Rice Owls (14-11 \* 5-5 C-USA) at Houston Cougars (11-12 \* 3-7 C-USA)**  
**Wednesday February 8, 2012 \* Hofheinz Pavilion \* Houston, Texas**

**HEAD COACH JAMES DICKEY**

**Opening statement**

“The huge key for us was guarding the 3-point line, transition defense, rebounding the basketball and defense. Out of those four areas, they beat us in three. They had seven 3-pointers in the first half. In the second half, it hurt us in transition defense. We did not defend in the second half. We gave up 44 points. We have to get better defending the perimeter and use high hands. We have to get the shooters quicker.”

**On the key plays of the game**

“Rice made some big plays and executed when we got them down early. A key play in the game was TaShawn Thomas’ third foul. We had to get him out of the game quickly. We were reluctant in the second half. Kirk Van Slyke came in and was able to give us some quality minutes.”

**On Rice’s change of defense late in the game**

“They changed to a zone. We got some good looks out of it. Jonathon threw the ball away on the baseline screen. On the first play after the switch, we were able to get a good look. Joe Young had a good look but missed the shot. We had the looks, but we just have to step up and make the shots. We have to get Darian Thibodeaux going where he can make shots for us. We have to shoot the ball better. It is not about shooting; it is about making.”

**On freezing against the zone**

“We knew they were going to play the zone and worked on it. One of the things that happened was Rice’s Tamir Jackson hitting a 3-pointer in Jonathon Simmons’ face. When he came back, Jonathon came back quick and shot it in his face. I would like for us to get the ball to the baseline and get it inside. We got the ball inside but did not execute. We just didn’t make the shots and get the spots when we needed to.”

**On Rice running the double-high screen**

They used it last year, so we knew they were going to use it. Our post guys who are guarding the screeners need to be higher, and we need to fight through quicker.”

**REDSHIRT FRESHMAN GUARD JOSEPH YOUNG**

**On expecting the zone**

“We were expecting it. We studied and practiced against it, but they just played it very well, and we did not step up.”

**On where the breakdowns happened against the zone**

“Our intensity went down, and Rice picked its intensity up.”

**On the feelings after this hard loss**

“We can’t hold our head down. Losing the game is hard but we have to keep our heads up and keep practicing hard to prepare for the next game.”

## **JUNIOR GUARD JONATHON SIMMONS**

### **On Rice changing its defense late in the game**

"The zone bothered us. They only played the zone for the last four minutes of the game so that changed our play. We turned stagnant. We were ready, but we got stagnant since we didn't see it the whole game."

### **On running high screens against the zone**

"With us high screening we were trying to get between the gaps in the zone and penetrate to the goal. We were also trying to look for the post on the top of the key."

### **On the lessons learned from the game**

"We have to play the whole 40 minutes."

## **FRESHMAN FORWARD TASHAWN THOMAS**

### **On playing against Rice forward Omar Oraby**

"He used his height to finish and would challenge the shot. He is 7-2, so he was able to finish right above my hands."

### **On giving up the early lead**

"We were too comfortable with the lead and thought that it was going to stay that way the whole game, but they came back and fought."

### **On the rivalry against Rice**

"It is going to be hectic going there just like it was at Hofheinz tonight. They are just across the city, so both teams will have a lot of supporters."

## **RICE HEAD COACH BEN BRAUN**

### **On waiting for a specific time to spread the zone**

"We couldn't get a dead ball to change our defense. We were concerned about picking up some fouls, concerned about having Omar (Oraby) on the floor; we were trying to cut down on penetration. That was a real solid move; it was something we have been working on. I like the way we rebounded out of it and the way we challenged up; we didn't give anything to the basket. It helped us down the stretch."

### **On the timing**

"We figured they were going to a man-to-man stretch out of a timeout; I don't think they were ready for the zone. A big key to the game for me was that we were down early and our players understood to get back in the game wasn't going to be offensively, but we were going to get back in this game defensively. Very few teams will understand that."

### **On Omar (Oraby's) effort during the stretch**

"We were down at one point and I said we're in pretty good shape; it's going to be a possession-by-possession game. Our guys did a real good job and keyed in on Omar. They directed the ball down low, found him and he posted hard. Those were big baskets; he gave us a little elbow room. He's been one of our best free throw shooters so I liked that our guys showed faith in Omar."

### **On attacking the transition**

"For our team to have the composure and make pretty good decisions in the break was good. Our guys passed the ball well on the break and our defense led to some transition opportunities. The ability to find open guys was huge."

### **On Ahmad Ibrahim being out tonight**

"Ahmad is a great kid. At any time in a coach's career, you have to stand up for discipline. Ahmad in the last game had some inappropriate behavior at the end, and I know he regrets it. He's apologized for it so it's over."

Unfortunately, you can't pick and choose the game. If I could, this would not be the game. He'll be back in uniform on Saturday."

## **RICE JUNIOR GUARD TAMIR JACKSON**

### **On finally getting on the scoreboard with the first 3-pointer**

"It was a big relief to get on the board because you don't want to go down 13-0 and not hit a shot. The coaches and my teammates have confidence in me shooting. I just shot it with confidence and luckily it went in. That gives every team confidence."

### **On what players said during the 0-for-14 stretch from the field to start the game**

"During the TV timeout I said we were alright; we're just missing a lot of shots. It's nothing that they are doing; it's just that we're not making shots."

### **On the morale going into halftime ahead**

"To have a young team and be able to fight back shows character. To have everybody be a part of that is something special."

### **On sensing Houston become stagnant**

"I didn't want to be in the zone but coach made a great decision. Once Joseph (Young) missed that one shot, I knew they would stay around and shoot 3s, so I tried to attack the zone and that helped us out a lot."