

**March 11, 2015**



South Carolina - 63  
Missouri - 54

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

COACH MARTIN: It's a typical post-season game where neither team refuses to give in. I knew Missouri was playing a lot better here coming down the stretch and I knew they were going to play their hearts out.

Wasn't one of our most fluid games, but we fought, we competed. We didn't rebound at all today. That's something we got to fix. We have all year, so it's not like it's a recurring problem. But we got to fix that today.

But like I told the guys in the locker room, we have been in that same situation many times in conference play and instead of protecting the lead, we figured out a way to give it away and Missouri fought, came back. And every time they kind of closed the gap, somebody would step up and make a play offensively, make a play defensively, to give us life.

THE MODERATOR: Take your questions for the student-athletes, please.

**Q. Michael, you had four fouls and had to sit down kind of quick. When you come back in, you take a key charge and then go get a rebound. Describe your mentality going in there even playing with four fouls to take that charge?**

MICHAEL CARRERA: I was trying to play really smart. I was trying to give my teammates a little bit of life, because they were coming on a run. I've been thinking about taking charges and doing the extra things the whole year. That's what I do.

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**Q. 18 points for you tonight. That's your high in a win this year. Hitting the 3s. Were you feeling good with your shot from the very beginning tonight?**

SINDARIUS THORNWELL: Yeah, just from I've been in the gym working, so just my teammates helped me get through the slump all season. I just knew coming into the tournament, just let everything go and just give it my all every game.

Luckily tonight it was me the one that caught the hot hand. Tomorrow it could be somebody else. So I think I thank my teammates for finding me.

**Q. For both of you guys, Ty didn't have the best night, but when the game got to three points, he drove and got that finger roll for the 3-point play. What were you guys telling him during the game when his shots weren't going?**

MICHAEL CARRERA: I think that he's a senior, he knows what to do. He's the leader of the team. He knows his job and that's what he has been doing that the whole year.

We trust him. He's a great senior and we are playing for him and he knows what to do.

SINDARIUS THORNWELL: We just tried to be there for him, knowing that he had a bad game and we just tried to keep him up, keep him going.

It just shows with him having a slump, that our team is not based around one person. Anybody can have a good night any game. So, we just tried to be there for him and make sure that he is good for the next game.

**Q. For both players, you guys have won five of the last nine. You got to feel pretty good. Do you feel like that this team has a chance to maybe raise some eyebrows and do**

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**some big things here?**

MICHAEL CARRERA: Definitely. That's what we work for, we have been working really, really hard the whole year. We got ups and downs, but I think that it's time to show up and show what we got.

SINDARIUS THORNWELL: Yeah, most definitely, we feel like we can come in and compete and have a chance to win these games coming up. We are just trying to take them one game at a time. We are not looking forward, looking past anybody. We got Ole Miss next and that's what's on our mind right now.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll excuse you, you can return to the locker room. And we'll take questions for coach.

**Q. Same question, Ty wasn't finding his shot early, but he still had the courage to go in there late and get that layup. What were you telling him during the game and did you say, I still trust you to take a big shot?**

COACH MARTIN: I didn't have to tell him anything. He's the one that kept coming in the timeouts. I think it was Mike who answered the question, he said, He's senior, he understands that he doesn't have too many of these left, and he was very positive.

Guys are going to miss shots. That's never bothered me. Like it a lot more when they make shots, but that's never bothered me. He stayed in tune with what our team was trying to run. We had 17 assists on 21 baskets, I think. That goes back to your point guard.

Defensively we were rock solid again. We defended pretty well. Outside of a little stretch in the second half there we defended real well. Ty was responsible, grabbed seven rebounds. Ty was fine. It would have been a lot better if he would have made some of those shots he missed, but it is what it is.

He's grown up a lot. He kept us in the right place mentally during timeouts and he was complimenting his teammates for continuing to pick him up. That's what he kept doing in the timeouts.

**Q. After going through those games where you had leads and you lost them, and you lost the game, now you're kind of closing people out. What is different with you guys right now and holding leads and finishing off games?**

COACH MARTIN: Mentally we're in a good place right now. We have started worrying

about all the things that matter and not the things that don't matter.

Guys have stayed very positive through difficult times of difficult games. And we have to learn. We had to learn. I think the success, and I could be wrong, the success we had in non-conference play, we didn't have guys that understand how to manage that. When we lost a couple of league games early, guys started pressing and I didn't do a very good job early in the conference season either in helping them through that.

I expected them to understand how to manage that and I think our staff got better as the league conference season went on and I think because of that, our players got better.

That's why that Arkansas loss, and that's over, but it's disappointing, because we had started to learn how to manage that moment and we didn't that game.

But you know what? We have won two in a row, three of our last four, and you don't do that against league opponents unless guys are in the right place mentally. Our guys are right now.

**Q. With Williams and Wright, both of whom have a propensity for scoring, were they just off tonight or was your defense that good?**

COACH MARTIN: Wright missed some shots. Williams missed some shots. Just like Tyrone missed some shots for us, it happens sometimes. I thought defensively our principles were good. I thought we did a pretty good job of disrupting their offensive flow, which is not allowing guys to catch the ball where they wanted to catch it.

What they hurt us with was ball screens. Our ball screen defense today, I've been mad at our ball screen defense all year on our bigs. Today our guards didn't handle the ball screen defense very well, but we'll clip that up. Show it on film because we're going to get ball screened a lot against Ole Miss.

So we're going to show that on film tonight and tomorrow and talk about it, late in the year. But you know, those guys are good players, they're young. One's a freshman, one's sophomore. And I thought defensively, we just never let Williams catch it in the elbows. When he catches it in the elbow, he's a Major problem. We never really allowed him to catch it there.

We never allowed Wright, outside of early

in the game, to kind of step in to a rhythm three. Everything was off the dribble. That's what we try to make people do. Then our zone, when we went zone, I thought we were alert. We knew where Wright was at all times.

**Q. You played Ole Miss second game in conference. Have you watched them since? Have you been able to see how they changed since that game, and what kind of dangers do they present tomorrow?**

COACH MARTIN: Yeah, I don't watch other teams in the league after we play them, unless we play them again. But there's certain teams in the league, because of my relationship with their coaches, that if I can, I'll peak at their games.

They have played real good. They have grown so much as the season has gone on. I know they lost a tough one at home to close out the season, against Vanderbilt. But Stefan Moody is an explosive, explosive player. I mean, he can put 25 on the board before you blink.

And Andy's got depth. He's got a plethora of 6'9" guys that can all touch the scoreboard. So scoring at the rim gets hard against their zone.

We'll get ready to face a zone again. So we have to be good offensively and we're going to have to make some shots, which is something when we played down there, we didn't do. We didn't make shots.

Defensively I told the guys in the locker room, it's the worst conference defensive game we played all year. They had a lot to do with that because of their athleticism and their shot making abilities.

**Q. Your defensive rebounding tomorrow night in particular, how much better do you have to be if you're going to win that game?**

COACH MARTIN: A lot better. We got no chance if our center plays 25 minutes and grabs one rebound again. Against Ole Miss, we'll be in trouble.

We have to be a team rebounding team. Tyrone did that. Michael got in foul trouble, but Mike, that's one thing we don't have to worry about with him. He's going to get on the glass. Mindaugas gave us some energy, but he didn't rebound on the defensive end the way he needed to.

Sindarius has to be a better rebounder for us. He's got to help us there.

But Ole Miss is a real good offensive rebounding team and it's going to be a big, big part of what takes place here tomorrow. If we rebound with the same enthusiasm we rebounded today, it won't be a fair game.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you.

COACH MARTIN: Thank you, guys.

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