

March 12, 2015



AN INTERVIEW WITH:

Ole Miss

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

COACH KENNEDY: Yeah, still in a little bit of shock based on the ending. Two teams that really were playing hard as you would expect at this time of the season. Understanding that if you lose, you go home.

We struggled all night offensively. If you look at our 12 losses, there's a common theme and that's our inability to find any rhythm offensively.

We stayed in the game because defensively we were pretty good and we battled in some effort areas to give us a chance down the stretch. Jarvis made a huge play, and then we were just trying to get them to make a hard shot in the last possession and unfortunately it didn't turn out the way we would have hoped.

THE MODERATOR: All right, questions for either of the student-athletes.

Q. If you could take us through those last 2.9 seconds, what you saw and what you thought happened.

LaDARIUS WHITE: I just wanted to just help my team win in any way, and obviously that didn't happen.

Q. Do you think it was a foul?

LaDARIUS WHITE: Not at all.

Q. Could you talk about that sway from hitting that 3-point shot, and then on the other end, when they hit that three and got fouled as well. Just the emotions in those last final minutes, what was going through your head?

JARVIS SUMMERS: Basically coach just called a play up and he wanted me to come off a

screen and give it to Moody. Two people got on Moody and he just dished it back to me. I stepped up and made the shot.

On the other end, he told us to go man-to-man and just at least let them make a hard play. But I don't know, they just called the foul, so...

Q. When the whistle blew on that foul call, what was going through your head?

LaDARIUS WHITE: Fail. That's it. Failure.

Q. Both of you guys, I mean, do you feel look you guys have done enough to be a tournament team to get in?

JARVIS SUMMERS: Honestly, I really can't say. I really feel like we haven't because we ain't just, you know, played good this year, and I'm going to start from me.

I've been having an up-and-down season and I just really put all this on me because on I'm the senior leader and I just didn't get it done.

LaDARIUS WHITE: I really don't feel like we done enough, but if we do make it, I feel like we bagged our way in. I just want to win a couple games in this tournament, so we definitely could be in the tournament in the NCAA tournament. We fell short.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll excuse the student-athletes. You can return to the locker room.

Continue on with questions for coach.

Q. Same thing, from your advantage point, did it look like a foul to you?

COACH KENNEDY: It really doesn't matter what I think.

Q. Same question, do you think you guys have done enough to make the tournament?

COACH KENNEDY: You know, you're

inundated with talk about the NCAA tournament this time of year. So we have addressed it with our team, because we wanted to try to put some perspective on where we were. I really haven't done a lot of scoreboard watching simply because I wanted to make sure that we were prepared for our part of the equation, which was tonight's game.

I think that the last time that I saw an updated bracket by the guy who is on the worldwide leader, and there's a reason why he's on the worldwide leader. There's a reason that they have coined the phrase that everybody knows, because typically he's pretty good.

I think there were six or seven or eight teams behind us. I have no idea what those teams have done today one way or the other.

We have now taken destiny out of our own hands, and so now we just have to wait and see what the other teams that are in the equation have done.

Q. Coming into this, it had been a struggle offensively. You said yesterday you just got to hopefully we can make shots. I mean, was it just tough looks or just an inability to make them consistently?

COACH KENNEDY: You know what, we're very dependent upon our big three. I think you guys know why, because they're typically our most veteran players. They're the guys that have come through for us. So my job as a coach is to try to make sure we put them in a position where they can be successful.

I obviously didn't do that enough tonight and throughout the course of the season. We just really struggled with our shooting. I mean, you know, we talked about this I believe it was heading into the last week of play. We were a staggering 15- or 16-2 when we hit the 40 percent mark. Now 40 percent would be last in every Power Five league. We would still be last, and yet if we could get to 40 percent, we were 15-2. Tonight we shoot 30 percent from the field.

I mean, it's not for lack of effort. Guys were trying hard. I thought that their effort was good. Just the inability to make a play has cost us and it cost us tonight.

We didn't lead the game, but until the very bitter end, I thought, you know, maybe we were going to have an opportunity to steal one.

Neither team played great. But both teams played really, really hard. We battled to put ourselves in position to win. But when a team that leads the SEC in turnovers...

When we won six in a row in January, February, we were averaging 8.8 turnovers a game. We turned that thing over 21 times tonight. So not only do you shoot 30 percent, then you turn it over 21 times. Your margin for error is very, very small.

I've never been in one like this where it honestly evolved, because I knew at the end Jarvis's three, they were going to really run to Moody. They tried it foul him. I anticipated that. He's the only guy quick enough to avoid a foul.

They tried to grab him right in front of me on the hand off, but he was so quick, he got separation. Then the kid who tried to grab him then stayed with him, so now we have got two on him. Jarvis stepped up and made a huge one, made the foul shot.

I called timeout, they put a few tenths of a second back on the clock. Then our whole premise was just make them catch it going back towards our basket. That's what we did. They ran some wide outs, some floods, and we made them catch it coming back.

You figure three seconds, you're probably going to have to guard a couple of dribbles. Don't let them lean into you. Don't let them flop into a foul. Just run beside and try to make them score over the top. And unfortunately, we didn't get it done.

Q. With the ending being as emotional as it was, what if anything at all do you say to a locker room after something like that, and to Snoop specifically?

COACH KENNEDY: Well, I will tell you exactly what I told them. I told them I was proud of their effort. I have been proud of their effort for the most part through 32 games. I got a good locker room, a good group of kids who have tried real hard for us all year. We're certainly not perfect and we certainly have a small margin for error as it relates to a certain aspects of the game.

No one feels worse than Snoop does. I told him I was proud of their effort and that the reality is this game is a game of inches. We have lived on the good side of that a few times this year. Tonight, unfortunately, we have to live on the bad side.

But that's the price of competition. If you don't want to live in this world, then don't compete because it's the price of competition. The highs are high and the lows are low. We were real

excited when Jarvis made that four-point play. Again, we're not so excited now.

Q. You guys have been pretty good recently in protecting the ball. Did you think there were any nerves or hesitancy with everything that was maybe at stake?

COACH KENNEDY: That's the fine line that I've been doing this now. I've been at Ole Miss nine years. I've been a head coach for 10 years. Man, I coached a bunch of games. I have been in a bunch of battles, and I tell you, each and every day I go through this in my own head, because you certainly want them to understand the magnitude of the moment. You never, ever want a kid to say, Well, I wish you would have told me that.

I don't like surprises, so I assume that the guys on my team don't like surprises. It could be a poor assumption. I don't know. I don't know. Maybe they do. I don't like surprises. So I try to lay out perspective. It's one of my jobs each and every day, so they can understand what we're doing and the magnitude of it.

I think for us, if I had to put my thumb on our biggest weakness all year, it was our awareness wasn't as keen as I would have hoped. For a team that has as many upperclassmen as we do, as many minutes have been logged, I think our awareness failed us at times and as a result, it's got us in this precarious situation.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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