

**March 12, 2015**



AN INTERVIEW WITH:

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

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

COACH MARTIN: Crazy game. Crazy, crazy game. That's what college basketball is all about. Especially in the month of March when you have two teams that refuse to give in. My hat's off to Ole Miss.

Obviously A.K.'s like a brother to me. A lot of respect for their team, their players, how they play, the quality of team that they have.

But so, so proud of the guys that wear the garnet and black. Just their fight, their resolve, their unwillingness to give in regardless of the situations that the game presented to us. Real, real proud of them.

THE MODERATOR: Take your questions for either of the student-athletes.

**Q. Coming down with 3.3 second left. What was your whole mentality once you pulled up for the shot and then once you fouled and went to the free-throw line?**

TYRONE JOHNSON: My job was to just try to get the ball off. I saw that it was about 1.3 seconds on the shot clock and I saw him coming in hard and I just jumped up and he fouled me. My thing was to knock these two free throws down and ice the game. My teammates and my coaches talked to me all year.

Today wasn't one of my best games, but at the end of the day, that's why I have teammates and coaches to pick me up. And inside a moment like that, coach told me, you know, Make these free throws and pick Duane up. And that was my job. Just ice the free throws and we won the game.

**Q. You had a chance to kind of ice the game with two free throws, you and Laimo both. You guys couldn't get it done. Just was it tired legs? The gravity of the situations? What was going on there?**

MICHAEL CARRERA: Just the ball didn't get in. It's just how the game is. Sometimes the ball goes in and sometimes it don't. So that's how it is.

**Q. For both of you, have any of you guys been involved in a game like that where you're down a point with 3.3 to go and everybody's leaving and then you somehow win?**

TYRONE JOHNSON: In high school, I remember we played (indiscernible) at Montrose and it was the same situation like that. We was down, I believe, one with three seconds left, and I got the ball and drove the length of the court and he fouled me.

It was the same situation. It was just you make two free throws, you win the game. If you make one, obviously overtime. If you miss, we lose the game. My same momentum and same pressure on me, but I was just saying to myself, Just make these two free throws so we can win the game and go home.

Today it was kind of the same situation. From myself, I'm a senior, so if I want to keep playing...

Obviously we live to fight another day tomorrow and my job was to make them free throws and I just delivered and we won the game.

MICHAEL CARRERA: I think it was a lot of games. We got (indiscernible) and we got Oak Hill where we went to, like, three overtimes. So me and Ty have been through all the kind of games and we know what to do. We made sure to calm down and do our job. Everything what coach tells us to do, we were going to do it. So that's how we won the game.

**Q. Both of you, can you go back to that last huddle before the last possession and what did Frank say to you guys? Were the guys down? Was there a feeling of defeat or was there a feeling of optimism?**

TYRONE JOHNSON: There was no feeling of being down. That's why we practice these moments. With three seconds on the clock, five seconds on the clock, and coach draws up the best play to give us a chance to win. He called up a great play where Sindarius, I was going to come over and then, like, Duane was going to come over.

But Ole Miss did a good job with taking those guys away and I was free. And he told me, you know, if you get a good shot, take it.

That's why you got to give credit to Coach Martin, because he put us in these situations every day, like, we practice these situations every day. I was fouled and I made these two free throws, iced the game and we live to fight another day tomorrow.

MICHAEL CARRERA: In the huddle I think we had a lot of hope. There was a lot of hope in the huddle. We just fought. We have been fighting for the past six games. And that's what we do. We are fighters, man, we're warriors.

**Q. When is the last time you played three games in three nights, and what do you think your legs are going to be like tomorrow?**

TYRONE JOHNSON: Oh, you got to go back to AAU days. I remember playing in Peach Jam and we had to play, like, all the way up to the championship. It was about four games in a row.

But we can't look at it like, Oh, we're tired, you know? We got to live to fight another day, and tomorrow is another opportunity for us to come out and play.

We're going to rest, hydrate, take care of our bodies, get good sleep and we'll be ready tomorrow to come out and play.

MICHAEL CARRERA: We practice every day so hard. So, so hard. I think that is one of the things that will keep us in the game and keep us focused to play another game.

For me and Ty, we have been playing those kind of games like that every single day because we had them in high school when we won the National Championship. It was a game after a game. That's what we do. We aren't tired. I can play another half.

COACH MARTIN: I can't coach another one.



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(Laughter.)

**Q. For both of you, you beat Georgia twice this year, you know what they say about beating a team three times. So how do you guys approach the Bulldogs this time?**

TYRONE JOHNSON: We got to approach it like any other game. Like it's a game that we got to play. They got to put five guys on the court and so do we.

Like I said before, we got to rest our bodies, got to go back and get some rest. Whatever Coach Martin have the game plan for us tomorrow, we'll be prepared and ready to play.

It's hard to beat a good team like that three times in a row, but at the end of the day, they got to tie their shoes just like we do and we got to go on the court just like they do.

So we're going to take the game one step at a time, and 40 minutes is 40 minutes tomorrow. Only thing that we can do is fight and just give it our all.

MICHAEL CARRERA: It's another game. Every single game is different. So we just got to take it and go do our best and fight like we have always been fighting. That's how it is.

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

We'll take questions now for coach.

**Q. When Duane lunged to try to get Summers there and hit him, what were you thinking right there and just what was going through your mind?**

COACH MARTIN: You talking about the foul on the 3-point shot? Yeah, it's unfortunate that it got to that. I called the timeout and I tried to execute a late game situation. Ty was too complimentary, that I have not done a good job of practicing here as of late. We were trying to foul in the half court line. And Duane, I thought he fouled. The official didn't call it.

He's got to be more assertive with the foul, because they are such a dangerous 3-point shooting team with Summers, Moody, and Snoop White, I did not want them to shoot a three. But you know, it is what it is.

I mean, we got lost on the dribble. We tried to foul, didn't foul. Got lost on the dribble hand off and now I'm sitting there and I'm saying, Miss, miss. Then I hear the whistle and the ball

goes in the net. It was disheartening because I thought our kids had played so hard. So, so hard.

I was going to go home and regret the fact that that situation I have not practiced it in probably been about a month or so.

So, I learned a valuable lesson today that we got to cover every single moment of every play in that last minute of the game so our kids are better prepared to manage that situation. And that's a play at the end, that's a play that we practice. That's what Ty was saying.

Laimonas made a great read, Sindarius made a great cut, Mike made a great cut. They both got depth on their cuts, so they got the floor to get flattened out, and then that gives Tyrone space. We told him, 3.3, you got a chance for possibly three dribbles and a shot, and that's exactly what he did.

**Q. You've been around awhile and you know how difficult it is to beat a good team three times in one season. You probably haven't thought about Georgia yet, but that is the matchup and they're fully healthy this time. Just how difficult will it be to try to top them a third time?**

COACH MARTIN: You play a NCAA team three times, you've got to be pretty darn good yourself to be able to have a chance to beat them once, let alone three times. At home, they were under-manned. At their place, they were under-manned. So were we both times.

I think now we both have a full compliment of players. So we're going to line up and we're going to play. They know us. We know them. They're good. I think we're a pretty good basketball team.

We're going to lay it on the line. These kids, I tell you guys to cover our team all the time, that it's fun to be around them. That we're mentally healthy. I hope you see what I'm talking about.

They won't give in to difficult moments. They come in every day, whether it's a good day or bad day, and they're excited about the next opportunity. I know that's a frame of mind that they're going to have and that's the frame of mind I'm going to have.

**Q. You were able to keep Moody to 3-15, Summers at 3-10 from the field. What did you do defensively, and particularly with Sindarius early on Moody to take him out?**

COACH MARTIN: We switched our matchups from the last time we played. Sindarius

is our most disciplined perimeter defender off the ball. And Duane's our better, our best on the ball defender. And so we wanted to try and keep Duane on Summers as much as we could. Summers is a freight train going to his right hand.

We made some adjustments from the first game to this game and you see and that's where these kids have been awesome, because it's not like we got to practice those adjustments. We spoke about them at film last night. Actually we gave them scouting report last night, spoke about on film our adjustments after us coaches met last night and we figured out what we wanted to do.

Then we went to Vanderbilt's practice court, we couldn't practice, we just walked through things. Then we showed them film again at 3:30 in the afternoon to reinforce the adjustments. They went out and handled it like champs.

That's why it's so fun. That's why that foul on Duane at the end was so disheartening because that kid plays so hard. And he hounds their point guard the whole game. And there's a mistake made and it was going to look like he was the goat. That wouldn't have been fair. It wouldn't have been fair for somebody to have played as well to lead us in scoring, hound their point guard, the way he did, and the game ends on that mistake. It would have been unfortunate.

But our team was rock solid, and we tried to trap a little bit, which I'm not a big fan of, but we did. I thought it worked. We turned them over. That was important to us.

**Q. You ever been in a game that finished on possessions with fouls on two 3-point shots, one that resulted in a four-point play, the other three free throws and all made? How would you best sum up the way this game ended?**

COACH MARTIN: That's the beauty of college basketball. It's just, Summers who hadn't made a three all night jumps up and does what seniors do. And our guys didn't pout, didn't whine. Were they a little dejected? Yes, of course. When you're up the whole game and your first deficit is with two seconds to go in the game, you're going to be a little dejected.

But like I said, be able to come back out and execute. You know, I don't know if it was a foul or not. I got no idea. It looked like a foul to me. But give Tyrone credit. That's why you have seniors. No surprise. Senior for them, senior for

us making those plays at the end of the game.

But, no, I've never. I've been in games that came down to a foul, never on back-to-back fouls like that.

**Q. You've seen this team twice now, is Ole Miss a tournament team in your opinion?**

COACH MARTIN: Oh, please. You know, I'm going to give you an example. I'm not going to use school names, because it makes me sick to my stomach. Texas A&M gets beat today, with the, you can argue, a leading scorer in the conference, not playing. And all of a sudden they're no longer an NCAA tournament team. Yet there's a team that everyone says is in from a different conference, and they got beat last game of the season by a lot of points, and in the first round of their conference tournament by a lot of points. Yet it's okay for them, but it's not okay for our guys?

Our league is real, real good. Ole Miss better be in that tournament, and not only be in it, they better be in it with a good seed. I understand if you look at our record, you're probably going to sit there and say, Well, look at our body of work. We're a pretty good basketball team. And it's not like us beating them is any different than what happens in every other conference in America.

They deserve to be in that tournament, just like Texas A&M, just like LSU. And they should be in it, and not only should they be in it, they're teams that will have success in that tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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