

**March 12, 2015**



Auburn - 66  
Texas A&M - 59

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

## TEXAS A&M

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

COACH KENNEDY: Really disappointed that we didn't play like we're capable of playing. Some turnovers in the beginning of the second half, again for whatever reason our energy level, it wasn't where it needed to be. But it's kind of hard when you don't execute offensively and give teams opportunities to get easy basket, then they got going a little bit.

You got to give Auburn credit. They got going a little bit and their confidence was better than ours.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions just for Kourtney.

**Q. Talked about the start of the second half, did it go through the mind the last game and did that put added pressure on what you were doing and trying to get out of that slump?**

KOURTNEY ROBERSON: When we came out in the second half, we just can't do what we did against Alabama. We knew we had a lead and we just, for some reason, we got out and started turning the ball over.

Then give credit to Auburn, they kept attacking and they kept making us turn the ball over.

**Q. How disappointing is it overall for y'all to close out with three losses when maybe two weeks ago y'all were expecting to be in the NCAA tournament?**

KOURTNEY ROBERSON: It's very hard. But like coach said, we just can't let this get to us. We just got to move on and hopefully we can keep playing down the road. When we practice, we got to go hard.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Kourtney, you can return to the locker room, which is open at this time.

We'll continue on with questions for coach.

**Q. Are you able to put a finger on what happened with all the turnovers, particularly buy Caruso so in the second half?**

COACH KENNEDY: He's a much better player. I don't know if he put a lot of pressure on himself because of Danuel not being able to play. I don't really have an explanation because Alex is one of our best players. He just had a bad game, obviously.

But we wouldn't have been in this position without him and we had to play him and he kept competing. It had to be a record for him, 10 turnovers.

It's hard for me to understand, because we started off both halves -- the first half I wasn't shocked. I knew Auburn would be comfortable from playing last night and we would be a little nervous. But our older guys, for whatever reason, struggled the whole game and primarily the second half.

**Q. Do you feel like the players were panicking a little bit in the middle of the second half, especially once you got behind? It seemed like Jalen was taking some threes which he normally doesn't do. And your guys were taking shots they normally don't and there were some guys that didn't want to shoot.**

COACH KENNEDY: Yeah, no, that's part of missing a very good player in Danuel. Guy's in situations that they're not in all year long, and then all of a sudden, we get behind. The magnitude of the game, we didn't handle the magnitude of the

game. We have had a hard time handling the pressure of games when things went bad for us.

It was our older guys. So, I really don't have an explanation for it.

**Q. Could you sense that there was panic on their part, especially in those first couple minutes of the second half, knowing that it had just happened a week ago?**

COACH KENNEDY: Yeah, and I should have called a timeout. So maybe that would have helped. But we called a bunch of timeouts to calm them down. You have long timeouts. Again, it was uncharacteristic of our team all year long to respond like this, like we have the last two games.

But we haven't lost two games in a row but twice, once earlier in the year and then the last three games we lost in a row here. So obviously there's something that was different with our team, putting too much pressure on themselves. I think that has a lot to do with it because it wasn't from me or our coaching staff. It was guys just not dealing with the pressure or the magnitude of the game the right way.

It's hard to understand because in the first half we were up 10. And we had poise the first five minutes when we didn't get a good start. But we weren't able to sustain it. You turn the ball over for 20 points off of turnovers in a half-court game like it was, that's too many points to give any team.

**Q. On the overall disappointment, you had the two tight losses to Florida and Alabama. You lose Danuel and close out with the three losses. How do you kind of rebound the team for what's probably a NIT bid?**

COACH KENNEDY: You know, they have got to step up and accept the pressure and be able to play in a pressure moment. We have got to get back to figuring out what's best offensively at times to get us in offense.

We struggled getting in offense at times and Auburn played pretty good defense, I thought, for the first 30 minutes of the game, really the beginning of the second half.

But we have got to be able to get into offense. Defensively you hold a team to 23 points the first half, and then they scored 33 of 43 in the second half. That's three games in a row the second half we have given up a bunch of points. But in this situation it was a lot off of turnovers.

**Q. Talk about the pressure of making the NCAAs. Do you think the fact that none of**

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**the guys have been in it for three years, it's one of those things that just builds and builds because you're just not used to that?**

COACH KENNEDY: Yeah, really, the four upper classmen just had problems dealing with the pressure. Danuel House, I mean, he's our go-to guy. He's a big moment guy. He's handled that pressure for us for the most part all throughout the year. We really needed somebody else to step up. I thought Alex and Jordan put a lot of pressure on themselves, and Jalen put too much pressure on themselves. They're much better players than they played the last couple of games.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.  
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