

March 14, 2015



Arkansas - 60
Georgia - 49

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

GEORGIA

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

COACH FOX: Hard fought game. Quite frankly, an ugly game. It's just very difficult to play, for both teams, to play late last night and to turn around and try and play pretty basketball the next afternoon. That's a lot to ask of these guys.

I thought both teams played really hard. But it was certainly an ugly game.

Give Arkansas credit for making more plays than we did.

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

Q. Cam, along the lines of the other turnaround, just talk about how that did, in your mind affect, the way you guys played today.

CAMERON FORTE: I think we were a little fatigued and a little banged up. We had a couple injuries. But it was nothing new.

We came out and we started a little rough the first half. We shot 28 percent from the field, so that didn't help us at all. But overall, I think that we didn't really execute the way we needed to and that led to us losing tonight.

Q. A career high 10 points tonight. When Kenny was out, did you take on that role of I've got to go out and knock down some jump shots tonight?

TAYLOR ECHOLS: Not necessarily that mentality. I was just trying to find the open shot in

that sense and take it when I was open. But still trying to stay in the flow of the offense and distribute the ball just like we always do. So I was just trying to take the open shot, and I had a few of them fall for me.

Q. Cam, what's the thoughts when you guys head home now in terms of you played two games here and obviously you had a good regular season. What's the mindset as you wait for selection Sunday?

CAMERON FORTE: I think it's out of our hands. It's in the committee's hands. But in my opinion we're a well-prepared team and I think that we have a chance of making the NCAA tournament.

But like I said before, it's out of our hands, but we'll be ready when our number is called.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll excuse you to the locker room and take questions for coach.

Q. What was going on with Kenny? Did you know like this morning that he wouldn't be able to play and what will his availability be next week?

COACH FOX: I knew this morning he would not play. We did a very short walk through this morning and it was obvious that he would not play today. Really, probably a blessing in disguise that it will allow him to heal much more by next week certainly.

Q. How much did the situation affect Kenny's availability? Could he have not played even if this was the SEC championship or first round of the NCAA tournament? And what about Juwan, he didn't play in the second half?

COACH FOX: If this would of been the NCAA tournament, Kenny would have played. I think that if we get in that situation, we'll have to drag him off the court quite frankly. He's a great competitor.

Juwan, he tried to play today and he re-aggravated his injury, so we did not have him available in the second half.

Q. The offensive struggles today, how much was that not having Kenny out there to sort of space the floor and how much of it was just the fatigue from playing the late game last night?

COACH FOX: I thought the fatigue for both teams affected each of us. It's a challenging schedule. We had to do it two years in a row. It's a challenging schedule. I think that affected both teams.

Obviously, not having Kenny, that was part of it, too. But we didn't shoot free throws well, we didn't play very clean basketball.

But I thought both teams were a little bit sluggish. Mike may disagree, but that's my thoughts.

Q. Most experts right now are kind of saying you guys are a lock for the NCAA tournament. Is that your view right now, too, or are you thinking anything can happen right now?

COACH FOX: I'll tell you what I think. I tell you what I think. I think that this team deserves to go. I think that we have earned our way in. We respect that it's not our decision. We respect that the committee will do their due diligence in studying teams. But when you do that, I think that we have earned our right to be there.

But it is not our decision. There's some people that -- did you say experts?

Yeah, I mean that's a self-given title to some. I've seen some ridiculous things. But those things don't matter.

What matters is that committee and they obviously have done a lot of work in trying to find the right teams. But I would defend our team and our right to be there.

Q. It looked like y'all missed a few kind of point-blank ones in the first half. Was that their length or just the new guys being out there?

COACH FOX: We missed some in both halves, really. Their length was part of that, obviously. We missed some shots around the goal that we have been making most of the year. Just thought our rhythm was really off today.

Q. You guys obviously played a pretty rugged non-conference schedule. How close do you think you are to winning games against the best teams that you faced? I know you've been there down to the wire with Kentucky, that kind of thing.

COACH FOX: How close are we to beating Kentucky?

Q. Beating the best teams on the schedule.

COACH FOX: Well, Kentucky's been the best team on our schedule. I guess Gonzaga would be considered second best. We're tied with Kentucky with three minutes to go. So, I guess we're three minutes away.

Q. There's been an average of six more free throws per team than during the regular season in this tournament. Do you think it's the competitiveness of it or do you think there's a lot more fouls being called for some reason in this tournament?

COACH FOX: Did you say six or 16?

Q. Six.

COACH FOX: I can't explain six. I might be able to explain 16. I can't explain six. I don't know. It's maybe the post-season, I mean obviously things change a little bit. I didn't watch all the games so I really can't answer that.

But I think obviously kids at this point of the year, some of them are tired and a step behind and that leads to more fouls. Certainly I thought that was the case today for our team.

Q. Numbers aside, y'all down the stretch were obviously very strong even in the loss to Kentucky. But then you finished like this. Where do you think this team is heading into what you hope is NCAA play?

COACH FOX: What do you mean by finish like this?

Q. It wasn't pretty out there.

COACH FOX: No, it wasn't pretty for either team. Wasn't pretty for either team. But most teams that get invited to that tournament are going to finish with a loss. Every team in this league, 13 of them are going to finish with a loss, except for one that wins tomorrow. There's what, 15 teams in the ACC? 14 will finish their

tournament with a loss.

So, I won't react to that. We have got to get healthy. We have played well down the stretch. We're at our best when we're healthy. That's going to be our first priority is to try and get our team healthy.

Q. Bobby Portis was 1-14. I assume if somebody told you that before the game, you would have felt pretty good. What did you think about Bobby's game and Arkansas, their ability to still win?

COACH FOX: Well, he's the best player in the league. I voted for him for Player of the Year in the conference. We certainly gave him some attention and we tried to do our best to take the best scorer away. I thought today we did that.

Really our defensive numbers, if you look down, they shoot 37 percent. 26 percent from three. So our defensive numbers, we would be pleased with that part of it.

They out rebounded us, which is disappointing. But they guarded us too.

But he's a great, great player. He didn't have a very good day. But he's a great, great player. And he's a hard guy to guard, I tell you that.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.
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