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Kentucky - 78
Arkansas - 63

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

ARKANSAS

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

COACH ANDERSON: First I want to congratulate Kentucky and Coach Calipari and his staff on a tournament victory. They won the SEC tournament. They continue to be undefeated.

All our guys came out and fought and scratched and clawed. But at the end I thought their depth and their size were hard to overcome. You got to make shots on a team with that kind of size, that kind of depth. We did in the second half and we just kind of dug a hole.

But we cut it to nine points in the second half and just couldn't get over that hump. So, they shot the ball well, they made shots. If a team's going to beat them, you got to make shots as well and you got to match their energy, especially on the glass.

But I'm real proud of these guys here. Nobody thought these guys would be here. They finished second in our league and here they're fighting for a championship in the SEC tournament.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take your questions for either of the student-athletes.

Q. Bobby, how angry were you, you looked mad.

BOBBY PORTIS: When? After the game?

Q. Just throughout. Looked like you were playing angry maybe?

BOBBY PORTIS: I feel like I always play angry every game. This is something that I try to bring to the game, just play with a chip on my shoulder every game. Just go out there and play as hard as I can. So that's just something I play with every game. It's anger. So that's nothing new.

Q. For both guys, I know it was a pretty similar margin, 15 points today, but this was a much more competitive game. How did you guys feel the game played out and did you feel like this was a lot better effort today?

BOBBY PORTIS: Yes, sir. At the end of the day, our team still lost, so that really doesn't matter, the margin of victory doesn't matter. A win is a win and a loss is a loss. So it's the margin of victory, it has nothing to do with the wins or anything, so they just won today and congrats to them.

ALANDISE HARRIS: I feel the same way. It could have been a lot closer if we would have played our brand of basketball for 40 minutes. But at the end of the day, they won. Congrats to them and we are on to the next.

Q. How tough is it when you're just driving the lane and there's three seven footers in there, and even if they don't block your shot, just the attempt or just the ability for them to do that?

BOBBY PORTIS: I don't think it was tough on me. But it was tough on some of our guys because they can just block your shot or they can just try to tip it a little bit. Willie or Anthony, Karl-Anthony will come up with the ball then. So that's a big key for them and a big positive for their team. They have the size and the depth on their basketball team.

ALANDISE HARRIS: It was pretty tough on me being a smaller guy, way smaller than them. You just got to go in there and finish, got to go up strong, try to get the foul. If they block it, they

block it. If they don't, they don't. You just got to play hard and play through it.

Q. You guys played three pretty tough teams in three days, how do you think this experience will benefit you guys for the NCAA tournament?

BOBBY PORTIS: I think it will help us out a lot just because we got the chance to get the feel of playing three games in three days. In the tournament, it's a day in between.

ALANDISE HARRIS: A day in between. It's a day in between. So we'll get a chance to rest our legs and body and aches and pains and get out there the following day.

Q. For Bobby, this program finally breaking through and getting to the NCAA tournament, what made the difference this year in your mind?

BOBBY PORTIS: Togetherness and commitment. I feel like last year at times our team didn't have togetherness and commitment throughout the whole season, but I feel like this year everyone bought into Coach Mike Anderson's system and just tried to make it flow.

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

Q. How come Michael Qualls didn't start?

COACH ANDERSON: Coach's decision. Had a little housekeeping, so coach's decision.

Q. How did you think he handled it and he looked like he played pretty well off the bench?

COACH ANDERSON: I thought that the lesson was learned. I thought he came out and competed. That's what he's supposed to do. Try to help his team win.

Q. You tied it up at 19 in the first half and then close the first half on a 22-6 run. Really wasn't able to get back any closer than nine. What was the difference after that run they made in the first half?

COACH ANDERSON: We had some guys that came off the bench. Our bench which had been pretty good last night, I didn't think they brought that tenacity, energy on defense. And then, of course, I thought the ball movement slowed down.

Whether that was fatigue or not, but our ball movement, getting the floor open because you can't play power basketball against Kentucky. You got to get the floor open and make those guys cover you and guard you. Whether the ball rolls from side to side, some hard cuts, we were doing that earlier and then we got away from it. I thought the ball got a little stagnant. So as you don't score, then it seems like your defense goes the other way.

Q. You played them guys twice. How hard is it to get prepared for what you're going to face and then can you get a team prepared until they have gone out and played them?

COACH ANDERSON: Well, one of the things about me, we prepare for everybody. So when you talk about playing a Kentucky team, obviously you can't let them just annihilate you on the glass. Their length is something that you got to gauge and you got to understand. I thought at times we didn't.

We did a poor job of really going and attacking and maybe kicking it out. We were trying to force some shots over them.

They made shots today. We had some double teams that took place early in the game that were effective. And then as the game went on, I thought the Harrison guys, they played well. I thought both of those kids have really matured. That's a big difference in their team right now because those guys are doing what they do. And I think Willie Cauley-Stein, obviously he's going to continue to do the offense thing, get some garbage, going to run the floor, get some chippies.

I thought during that period he talked about where they made the run, we had some transitional breakdowns. But if you look at what took place in the game, they got to the free-throw line 27 times. They made more free throws than we shot. You're not going to win many games like that. But I thought we was attacking just as much as they were.

Q. Everybody talks about their one-and-done guys and that, but Cauley-Stein is a third year guy. Watching him go through the league here, what's the biggest improvement you've seen in him?

COACH ANDERSON: I think he's a little bit more mature, a little bit more subtle. He don't have to try to go get the game. They got some

other players that you got to pay attention to. You got to pay attention to Towns, and so it gives him the freedom to kind of roam a little bit.

But I really think the Harrison guys are playing really well. And then you got Tyler Ulis, I think that Ulis is a really good player. So when you add that and you add the depth, it gives him the freedom to kind of move around. But I think it's more about maturity than anything else.

The one-and-done, you know, you got some great talent there, but I think you got to have some maturity. Those guys have matured.

Q. You guys really ended the season strong this year. Looking ahead to next weekend, where do you expect to be seeded in the tournament?

COACH ANDERSON: I have no idea. I know we're going to be one of the -- hopefully it's a real good seed. I think that the body of work, the things we have done, this team's gotten better throughout the year, and we're looking forward to playing and participating in the NCAA tournament.

Q. The last two years this conference has gotten in I believe three teams each year. Do you expect more this year and has the level of play improved?

COACH ANDERSON: Oh, the level of play has improved tremendously. We'll see five teams. Hopefully six. We'll see five team names called today. I think that's a testament to all the coaches and the players. And obviously our league is really making a big push for basketball. I think they have done a good job of making sure that people know that the SEC is just not Kentucky. There's some other teams here.

As we go to the next stage, the tournament, then that's when we got to do some more damage. That's how you get your reputation, you go win games in the NCAA tournament. It's one thing to go dancing, I mean to go to the dance. I want to dance.

Q. You've scouted this team twice now this season. If you had to construct the perfect team to beat Kentucky in the tournament and the perfect game plan, a team of all-stars in college level, what would that team look like?

COACH ANDERSON: You know what? I think a team that makes shots. You got to match the physicality, keep them off the boards, keep them off the free-throw line. I think you got to make them make tough shots. Because I think if

you -- we got some big guys in foul trouble. We did a good job. We just couldn't get over the hump. We just didn't have enough I guess ump in the tank, so to speak, with three games and three days.

But they're one of the best teams in the country. But you find a team and that's what you have seen, the games where they have been close, teams shot the ball well. Teams have kind of kept them off the glass, teams have kind of really got physical with them.

So I tell you Cal has done a tremendous job of keeping them on task. That's the biggest thing. Because you can imagine there's a lot of distractions out there. But he's keeping them playing a good brand of basketball.

Q. I think Kentucky went on a 9-1 run after Moses got called for the T. What did you think of the momentum shift and what did you think of that call?

COACH ANDERSON: Boy, it was -- I saw some other stuff took place that wasn't called, but for that one there, I thought it was a little quick. You know, but that's just me. That's just me. I'm biased, because he's my player.

But I thought it really shifted the momentum. I thought it was a great play to get the dunk. And I thought our guys were really in tune, because if you look at over the course of the season, our guys have been in those positions where they have been eight down and you still got plenty of time on the clock.

But did that turn the game? I think we had some turnovers early in the first half. We had some coming out of halftime with turnovers. Sometimes we shot ourselves in the foot. We had opportunities to cease the momentum.

That's the thing that I admire about this team is, they wouldn't go away. They wouldn't go away. If I had that team, the same team last year, they probably would get beat 30 or 40. But these guys would not go away. I look at it as you know what, time ran out on us. Time ran out on us. But our guys, they fought and played against a dynamite team in Kentucky and congrats to them and now we move on to the next tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

COACH ANDERSON: Thank you.

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