

March 10, 2011



Texas A&M – 86
Missouri – 71

An Interview With:

**MISSOURI
COACH MIKE ANDERSON
LAURENCE BOWERS
MARCUS DENMON**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Missouri coach Mike Anderson and student-athletes Laurence Bowers and Marcus Denmon. Coach, opening comments.

COACH ANDERSON: Well, I want to congratulate A&M. I thought they were a much fresher team tonight. I thought we -- just seemed like we were moving in mud tonight. Just couldn't generate that energy that we always talk about. We got off to a slow start and seemed like we were battling uphill. But we know A&M is a good basketball team.

But I thought they were just much fresher and much more crisp in their execution. Of course, our guys have an opportunity to play in the tournament format, and you gotta understand that. You have to play the next day.

But I just thought that we did not have that energy that you gotta have, especially against a good team such as A&M.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Marcus and Laurence, there are physical games and sometimes there are brutal games. Was this one of the latter?

MARCUS DENMON: I mean, I don't think Texas A&M was out there being brutal. I just feel that we should have been more aggressive and we should have been a more physical team out there.

But credit to A&M. They did a good job.

LAURENCE BOWERS: I'm just going to piggyback on what Marcus said. I mean, they are a physical team, but they're not like a brutal team like you said. They just executed.

I thought they had more energy, like Coach said. And they punched us in the mouth, and we couldn't withstand it. So credit goes to them. They played a really good game.

Q. How hard was it, Laurence and Marcus both, with the fouls on both sides of the team? If you started with momentum or a play changed to your favor, how hard was it when it was just immediately called dead a few seconds later?

MARCUS DENMON: They was calling it both ways. I don't really think it was a big difference in the fouls.

But during this time of the year play is really physical, so the refs feel they have to make calls when there's a lot of contact.

Q. Both of you, we were in the locker room and Kim English had said that it felt for the first time tonight like maybe, he said, we quit during the game a little bit tonight. What are your thoughts about that? Did it feel like that to you at all?

LAURENCE BOWERS: I don't feel we quit. We just didn't come out with the energy we usually have. I don't think nobody on the team quits. We were out there giving it our all, but our all wasn't enough. So I don't think we quit.

MARCUS DENMON: I mean, I'm going to never quit. I'm always going to go out fighting until the clock says 00. And I feel as one of the leaders and the captain of this team that the rest of the players should do that as well.

And, I mean, I don't know what Kim meant, but I don't feel that anyone out there quit and everyone was giving it their all until the clock says 00.

Q. Laurence, can you just talk about the lack of physicality on the inside?

LAURENCE BOWERS: Well, I thought David Loubeau, he made his presence known early in the game. And guys like Kourtney Roberson jumped on his back. I mean, I thought that we were trying, honestly. But tonight they had it going and we didn't.

So, I mean, that's in the past. We can't dwell on that. We've just gotta go home and work out and get ready for hopefully NCAA Tournament game and just know that we gotta come out fighting a little bit harder and being more physical.

Q. Laurence, you guys talked about you didn't have that fight, that energy that you needed to win tonight. Why do you think that was? And what do you need to do to make sure that you do have that for the NCAA Tournament next week?

LAURENCE BOWERS: Well, like Coach said, I thought they were a little bit fresher than us. So even if we had the energy, honestly I believe they probably could have been a step ahead, just because they had what they had.

But I thought that guys -- I thought guys were going to come out with energy, including myself. But as the game progressed, it wasn't there. So there's really no excuses for that. We just gotta correct the things that we did wrong and go back home and fix it.

Q. Marcus, is there anything -- you guys forced 18 turnovers tonight but they shot around 56, 57 percent and made a lot of open 3s. Is there anything you guys have to do in recovering after they break through that you guys didn't get done tonight that they were able to get as many easy shots as they did?

MARCUS DENMON: I just feel that the team that came out and played tonight wasn't the team that I know that we are. We usually do whatever it takes to win, and I don't feel that we gave that third and fourth effort. When one guy gets beat, usually we have another guy coming and helping and rotating and getting out to open shooters.

But tonight I think we were a step slow. I don't know why. But I feel that those are things that we need to do just to, the effort things. Those were the plays we didn't get, the loose rebounds, the loose balls and just getting out to open shooters.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.
Questions for Coach.

Q. Can you just talk about the lack of focus, the lack of execution, and why you feel as though the team came out so flat tonight?

COACH ANDERSON: That's a lot of negatives there. We didn't play well. I mean, that's the bottom line. I mean, A&M played well. Let's congratulate them. They had as much to do with it than we did. I thought we were flat. That's the bottom line. When you're trying to create some offense from your defense, even as we sped them up a little bit, I just thought our rotations weren't there.

I mean, we're normally a team that protects the basket whether we take charges or block shots. We want to lead in blocked shots in the league. And it wasn't there today. It just wasn't there today? Why? We played last night. This is an experience for -- it's an inexperienced team when you talk about tournament play.

And so we're learning, like a lot of other teams are learning. You look across the country, it is taking place.

But I don't think it was because our guys didn't want to. I just thought it was just we had some guys that came off the bench and gave us -- I thought Steve Moore came in and he was very active around the basket, rebounding, getting loose balls. I thought Phil gave us a shot of energy out there on the floor.

As bad as we played in the first half, we were only 13 points down. We come out and got an opportunity to trim it, have some opportunities. And it just didn't take place.

But credit A&M. I thought -- it's hard to get a flow when you're shooting 35 free throws, they're shooting 35 free throws. So the game is kind of -- I watch a lot of games, and it seemed like they're letting them play. I didn't think that was the case tonight. I didn't think they let us play, let the players dictate the game.

Q. After the Nebraska game in the tournament last year, you were calm, you were saying we're going to be fine. And I'm guessing that attitude is there again this year because, of course, you know you're going to be playing next week. What is it about these kids that you coach each day that also has you feeling calm about this team?

COACH ANDERSON: I think what Marcus just said: The team that we know didn't really showcase it tonight. I think there were some spots there where we did. And for our team to be very successful, all our guys have really got to step in there and give us what they bring each and every day.

But, with that being said, if the opportunity presents itself, we are offered an opportunity to play in the tournament. And it's a new season. It's a new season. Now you're going to play somebody that is not the family, that's not familiar with us. A&M, they're familiar with us. Everyone in our league is familiar with everyone else. That's why you're seeing teams almost upset other teams.

But I have faith in these guys. And I know they're trying. It's just a matter we didn't make shots tonight. A&M made some shots. We tried to speed the game up, and we just couldn't get over that hump. It was a slow start.

Q. Coach, Aggies obviously stopped what we normally see out of your offense, that running and that transition game. What do you do at that point? What has worked for you guys in half court that wasn't working tonight?

COACH ANDERSON: I thought the cutting and screening, guys curling and cutting through the hole. We played these guys early in the year, and we established an inside game. And tonight it was not -- whether we didn't shape up or we didn't get the ball there on time, we did not have that going for us.

We got to the free-throw line 30 some-odd times. But you also gotta -- you gotta make some shots. And we had an opportunity with some runs where we had some open looks and we didn't knock them down. But they played a good brand of defense as well.

Q. Would that show us the one thing you were doing offensively that seemed to be effective which was trying to drive to the basket, draw those fouls and get that penetration? Is that what you were really trying to do once the running was shut down?

COACH ANDERSON: It's not only running. Basketball is a game you have to have some balance. You're not just going to be able to run and score. Now, I like easy buckets. Any coach will tell you they like easy buckets. You have to settle down and get in there. We go in there sometimes and we came up empty. Bowers

missed a bunch of layups. Ricardo missed some layups. It's not like the guys weren't trying. It just didn't have that energy where you can make that quick move or get that offensive rebound.

Normally -- we played this team last year. I mean earlier in the year. We had 14 offensive rebounds. And Ricardo was the guy that was getting a bunch of them. He had a big game. So they did a good job on him. Middleton. If you told me Middleton scored 19 points, I'd say our chances of beating them are pretty good, but then the senior, B.J. Holmes, he comes out knocking shots down. And Loubeau did a good job. We didn't do a good job defensively finding him and shutting him down.

So, again, our defense wasn't on task tonight. They scored 86 points. I mean, that's a lot of points against our basketball team.

Q. Can you give us your thoughts about what Kim English said, it felt like at times maybe the team had quit tonight? Did you see any of that?

COACH ANDERSON: No, no. You watch the game, they didn't quit. They came up short, but they never quit.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports