

**March 7, 2014**



Ohio State – 99  
Penn State – 82

An Interview With:

**COACH KEVIN McGUFF  
AMERYST ALSTON  
CAIT CRAFT**

**COACH McGUFF:** Well, you know, obviously a terrific performance by our players today. I'm really, really proud of the effort that they put forth. We beat a very good team in Penn State. You know, I think the key when you come into a game like this is that in a tournament format, that you play extremely hard, obviously because it's win or go home, but also that you're loose and your players are enjoying it and they don't have the weight of the world on them. And we certainly played like that today, and just a great win for our kids.

**Q** For both Cait and Ameryst, the first half is the best probably I've seen you all season, but what was going on in the first half? What allowed you to get into that flow? Was it just being loose?

**CAIT CRAFT:** I think in the beginning, you know, a few people made some shots. When that happens, it becomes contagious for everybody. I think everybody comes out and plays for each other, trusts one other. When you have team nights like that it's easy to come out and play like that.

**Q** Ameryst?

**AMERYST ALSTON:** That was our focus for the game, to come out hard and go hard. Nobody wants to go home. We play every game like it's a championship game, like Cait said. We were hitting as a team. Like she said, it becomes contagious, and that helped a lot.

**Q** At any point this year, you guys practice, just messing around or anything

during a game, have you guys shot as well as you did in that first half from downtown?

**CAIT CRAFT:** I don't think so, honestly. You know, that was honestly ridiculous I think, because it seemed at the beginning like nobody could miss and I don't think that's ever happened, you know, in a stretch of practice or a game obviously this year.

**AMERYST ALSTON:** I mean, it's great when everybody's out there on fire. It definitely helps a lot, you know, and because we were shooting very well, they had to contest the shot, and you know, it makes it easier to drive. So I just think offensively we did a great job.

**Q** Ameryst, I'm guessing you noticed when you shot them out of the zone and that did make it easier for like Raven and you to get into the lane and score that way?

**AMERYST ALSTON:** Yes, I can hit some outside shots. Obviously when I'm on, I'm on. And you know, I'm a driver, and they know that. And a lot of people know that and so they try to play off of me. I really brought it today. My teammates really brought it today. We always go back to our bread and butter, just driving.

**Q** Cait, do you think you shocked them at all? Could you see them talking to each other in the first half as you were building your lead?

**CAIT CRAFT:** Yes, like I told the girls at the end, I think it was under the four-minute timeout, they started bickering a little bit. When you get teams arguing amongst themselves, that's already like another member of your team playing against them.

**Q** Ameryst and Cait both, they made a real hard comeback in the second half and Ashley Adams came off the bench late in the game. Can you speak to the moments that she gave you?

**AMERYST ALSTON:** I mean, I thought that was great. For her to be sitting you know,

and to come out there with great energy and help, you know, move the lead and she did a great job getting some key rebounds and blocking shots. They had a stretch where they got some runs, but it just came down to you know, focus and concentration.

**CAIT CRAFT:** You know, yeah if you have a player, you know, that sits that whole time and comes in and plays like Ashley did, that's one of the most unselfish things you could have as a teammate. But the whole game when she was on the bench, she was encouraging us, yelling at us, being positive. When she came in, like Ameryst said, she did things which we needed her to do, which can be hard if you're sitting for that amount of time. But for her to do that, you know, it's just amazing.

**Q** Ameryst, I mean, they beat you fairly easily two times this season so how much of that was in maybe surprising them, shocking them, and showing them that you were a good team?

**AMERYST ALSTON:** Both times we played them, I thought we did, you know what I'm saying, a great job for the first 20 minutes. You know, they didn't -- I don't think they came out right out the gate just you know, blowing us out or anything like that. And today the focus was play 40 minutes instead of 20 because we're always in the game the first 20 minutes, it's just about finishing and we finish.

We played hard the first 20 minutes and went back in the locker room, and it's 0-0 from there. We went out the second half and we played hard.

**Q** Cait, any nervous moments in the second half when they got it down to about ten?

**CAIT CRAFT:** No, I mean for me personally there was no nerves. I think my teammates, as well, we knew if we stayed focus and stayed calm, because teams make runs, it's a game of runs. They were bound to make up some points since we had held them to a lower score than they're used to for most of the game.

**Q** One more for Cait: There was a chasing of Maggie for a lot of the game, maybe the whole game. That was you mostly. How did that work do you think?

**CAIT CRAFT:** I think it worked well. Part of the reason it did work well, I knew if I

got beat I had Ameryst, Raven, Martina, 'Ryce behind me, Lisa came in and did what she needed to do as well as Ashley. They were behind me, so my only guard was to guard her because I had trust in them that they were going to stop the other four, which I think that they did.

**Q** Kevin, you looked sluggish last night; you may disagree with me, but all of a sudden you seemed to hit on all cylinders and your kids built some good roles out there tonight. Talk about all of the kids and how well they did.

**COACH MCGUFF:** Yeah. We obviously came out with a lot of energy and focus. The first thing is when you have such a quick turnaround, our kids did a great job of moving on from the win against Northwestern and just getting really focused in a short amount of time for certainly a different challenge in Penn State. And then like I said earlier when he was talking I wanted them to come out and really, you know, enjoy the moment and seize the day, rather than you know, be caught up in hey, we played Penn State twice and we lost, and as Ameryst spoke to, one of the things I really talked about is we had some really good stretches versus Penn State when we played them earlier.

But to their credit, they played closer to 40 minutes than we did this those games. So our goal today was to get closer to 40 minutes than they did, and I think we certainly did that.

**Q** I think somebody asked the question, have you seen this three-point shooting team that you had in the first half very often this season?

**COACH MCGUFF:** Well, I've said it a lot of times, if we can get everybody kind of playing at their best at the same time, I think we can have something special. I think that's basically what you saw. It doesn't happen all of the time. But it wasn't like there was anybody out there doing something they can't do. We just had everybody kind of doing what they're capable of at the same time.

You know, sometimes Am's on and Cait's off and so forth. But everybody was kind of in a great rhythm and we were in a really good rhythm offensively as a team.

**Q** Why did you decide to insert Ashley when you did and how did that affect

the game?

**COACH McGUFF:** Well, I think it's huge. And you know, Lisa has done a lot of great things. You know, obviously Darryce was in foul trouble. But Lisa's done some fantastic things here late in the season. But also, Ashley has a little more experience being a senior. So I thought, you know, for that moment that she would give us the best chance and you know, she had 11.5 rebounds and three blocks in eight minutes. She was really huge down the stretch in holding them off.

I'm really happy for Ashley and proud of her for coming in there and playing with great focus and great energy.

**Q** You hit 10 of 14 threes in the first half. You really didn't look for it in the second half. Did you basically get back to what you wanted to do in the second half?

**COACH McGUFF:** I think as we shot it so well in general, in the second half, too, they had to speed the game up a little bit and play man and try to force us into some turnovers and so forth. So they were guarding the three-point line pretty well in the second half. But it did allow us to really get to the basket with dribble penetration. I thought we got a lot of great shots. They just weren't three-point shots.

**Q** It's easy to look this way when you're scoring 99 points, when you're talking about mindset, is this the best mindset focus your team has had?

**COACH McGUFF:** Yeah. From the start we didn't look nervous or scared. We were like hey, we're going to show up and put forth our best effort, win, lose or draw. That was the other thing we were talking about, don't bring anything back to Columbus. We're going to leave it all here in Indy. I think our kids did that. When you start off well you quickly gain confidence. I think that allowed the confidence to really build that first half.

**Q** Could you feel that in shoot-around today, that they were going to come out loose and easy?

**COACH McGUFF:** Well, we didn't have shoot-around because they played so early. We didn't have shoot-around. We had breakfast at 8:30.

**Q** At breakfast?

**COACH McGUFF:** I didn't really notice anything at breakfast, but they seemed fine. I could tell before the game they seemed like

hey, we're really ready to play and we're going to compete, and so they did.

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