

March 11, 2015



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An Interview With:

**COACH PATRICK CHAMBERS
D.J. NEWBILL
SHEP GARNER**

COACH CHAMBERS: Another Big Ten battle, which is -- this league is so amazing. It's always going to come down to one or two possessions, and for us all year that's the way it's been. I think that's our 13th or 14th game in single digits in tight ones. I'm really proud of my team and the leadership of our seniors. When things got tight there, we responded. We attacked the situation, and we made some big plays and got some -- finally some timely rebounds, and Geno Thorpe hit some really big-time free throws for us.

But these two guys to my right really played consistent throughout and carried this team to victory.

Like I said, really proud of this group.

Q. Forty-five of your points came from the Philly guards. Talk about your toughness and what you guys bring?

D.J. NEWBILL: I mean, well, you know, it's really tough when you're not scared of the moment, just going out there trying to give it up for our teammates. Today we had it going. Coach wanted us to stay aggressive, so we did. We never wanted to get rattled even when they went on their runs. Nobody on our team really gets rattled. I think that's a testament to Coach Chambers. He brings his Philly toughness too.

SHEP GARNER: I think just think Philly toughness, it brings the best out of you. Coming out of Philly you've got to be tough at everything you do. You know, we showed that tonight.

Q. D.J., you had a very impressive line all the way across. The four blocked shots, how does that factor into what you were trying to accomplish?

D.J. NEWBILL: I mean, those guys were attacking the basket. I was fortunate to be able to get some clean looks at the ball, just trying to make defensive plays for my team. We got stops. Wasn't really playing, it was just how the game went.

Q. Share your thoughts on playing the University of Iowa next. It's a team that you guys played a very close game with just a couple of weeks ago.

SHEP GARNER: They're a good team. They came and beat us, but we were in the game. I'm happy to see them again.

D.J. NEWBILL: You know, those guys got the job done at our home, so we've just got to come back and play our game for 40 minutes. I think we played about 32 minutes of Penn State basketball. We've got to put together a 40-minute game.

Q. This is for Shep and D.J. both. You're going against a team tomorrow whose coach is a Philly guy, too. How does that translate in this game? Is Iowa tough to play against, and do they reflect the toughness of their coach?

D.J. NEWBILL: Every team in the Big Ten is tough. You see, we just went down to the wire with Nebraska, so Iowa is no different. It's going to come down to a few possessions, who can get the stops, who can make the plays.

SHEP GARNER: You know, I just feel the same way. Try to go out there, play harder than them. That's what's going to win the game, the team that plays harder.

Q. What do you think of the atmosphere here at the United Center? Playing

a first-round game of course it's not full, but does it matter to you guys, the size of the crowd?

SHEP GARNER: It doesn't matter to me, but it's great. I love the Big Ten atmosphere. It's alive and everybody is loud. I just like it, coming from Philly, I like it.

D.J. NEWBILL: It's definitely big to get a chance to play at the United Center. This is the place Michael Jordan made famous. We play for each other, so whether the crowd is loud or quiet or there's a lot of people in the stands or not, we play for each other.

Q. D.J., the All-Big Ten team, you weren't on the First Team. Are you on a mission here to finish your career and show everyone how good you are?

D.J. NEWBILL: As a unit we're on a mission, the whole team. We're disappointed how we finished in Big Ten play, so we've got another opportunity to come out here and prove to ourselves and prove to everybody that we're better than what we showed.

Q. Same question about the Philly toughness and what those kids bring. Forty-five points came from your Philly guards. Talk about their style and what they have.

COACH CHAMBERS: You know what, Shep and D.J., they have a lot of guts and a lot of grit, and I think that's what you need in tournament play. Really important that you don't get deflated when other teams go on runs. You've got to stay even, and you've got to know that you've just got to win the next possession. And if we just take it a possession at a time, they'll find success, and I think that's what they did, and I think that's why you're talking about Philly toughness and Philly guards, and that's what they've done. If you know the history of Philadelphia and the great guards that have come through there, you put those guys right on that list of courage and not fearing failure and putting themselves on the line. And guess what, if they look bad, they look bad, but you know they're going to get back up and play the next possession.

Q. You guys set a Big Ten tournament record for blocks tonight. Just talk about the block party and what you guys accomplished.

COACH CHAMBERS: The block party, huh? That's good. Look, they were driving the ball, we had high hands, we were trying to wall up

and chest, and good things happened. Again, that wasn't the game plan. The game plan was to keep them out of the paint, and obviously keep them off the offensive glass. But I'm proud of my guys for playing as hard as they did as a collective unit and giving us an opportunity because statistically this is amazing. This is just amazing.

But we all contributed in some way.

Q. What do you think of this atmosphere at the United Center, and how do you think it perhaps inspires and motivates your players?

COACH CHAMBERS: Yeah, I said this to Sandy Barbour and Phil Esten earlier: I just love Chicago, I really do. There's something about Chicago that I appreciate. I'm not from Chicago, but when I visit here, I just enjoy the people, enjoy the city. Went for a walk along the lake. I know friends and family are here shopping. There's so many great things to do. And then the walk in where the Chicago Bulls play and a great friend of mine is the assistant coach in Eddie Pinckney, just so much excitement around it.

We're fortunate to come away with the win, but we really are enjoying this experience.

Q. I know you and Coach McCaffery go way back. What has impressed you the most about his team and the way they've played, especially down the stretch here?

COACH CHAMBERS: You take Wisconsin out of this league, I think they're the hottest team in the Big Ten. I think he's done a phenomenal job closing out teams. They never get rattled. We were in a close game. Aaron White makes a huge play. But I've seen that all year. Somebody makes a big play for them, so they find success. Think about last year, they were in a ton of games, but it went the other way for them, but now they've learned from those experiences, and now they're winning those games. And he's a terrific coach. He really gets his players to buy in, plays a ton of guys. He's a great motivator, and I think that's why you see Iowa having a lot of success under his tenure.

Q. You called the last game against Nebraska a rock fight. This game seemed pretty physical, as well. How are you guys going to get ready and come back to play tomorrow early afternoon?

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COACH CHAMBERS: We're going to rest up. We're going to do some cold tubs. We're going to get some treatment. But if you're an 18- to 23-year-old kid, come on, they don't want to practice, they want to play games. I feel confident that they'll be ready to play and they'll play with great energy tomorrow.

Q. How much extra motivation do you have? This Iowa team came into Happy Valley a couple weeks ago and won on your home court. What does that do for the guys?

COACH CHAMBERS: Yeah, they totally understand that we let one slip away there at Penn State. But again, it's typically about us and our mindset and what we're capable of doing as a team. Iowa is big. They've got really good shooters, really good scorers. Aaron White, first team, All-Big Ten, what an incredible accomplishment for him and what he's done there. He's all over the record books. But we've got to go out and play Penn State basketball for 40 minutes, give ourselves a chance.

Q. Just what's it like to have D.J. be able to go out and have that kind of performance on a nightly basis like he did today?

COACH CHAMBERS: You know what, I'm disappointed he didn't make First Team. I think I've shared that quite often over the last 48 hours. But he showed you why he should be. He's very consistent, usually very efficient, and he's a great leader. What did he have, four blocks today? He's probably had four blocks in ten games. But that's just the type of player he is. He was unbelievable in huddles, especially when Nebraska went on their run, calming everybody down, really stepping up his leadership, and saying we've been here before, we can get this done.

You know, his performance today was -- I'm happy for him, but he's got to do it again tomorrow.

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