

**March 29, 2012**



## **MINNESOTA GOLDEN GOPHERS**

**TUBBY SMITH:** First, want to commend and congratulate the Stanford Cardinal. They had them ready to play. Johnny Dawkins and his staff, want to commend them and congratulate them on winning the Championship. I thought they, again, made some shots and were on, and we weren't. And that's what can happen to you.

Really proud of how our kids have played, especially in the postseason and in the NIT Tournament. It's been a wonderful experience, and it's certainly been exciting to be here in Madison Square Garden and playing in the NIT.

**Q. Coach, is there one thing you can pinpoint in that first ten minutes of the second half that you saw out there?**

**TUBBY SMITH:** Well, you know, we didn't take care -- we didn't do a good job of taking care of the ball. We missed, I thought, some easy baskets, even in the first half. We were 2-for-8 in transition, that's usually where you make hay when you go into the basket and score around the basket.

And then they made some shots, and we had some opportunities, but when you're missing shots like that, you get a little frustrated or you pick up a foul like Rodney did, you kind of lose a little -- not that you're -- you're a little discouraged.

But I thought a lot had to do with Stanford and their intensity. They did a good job of really getting up under us, being physical, and I thought that was the difference.

**Q. What did you learn about your team in this tournament?**

**TUBBY SMITH:** I learned that we have got some pretty good players. We have got a great group of kids that do the right things, on and off the

court. I think that's -- I learned that they can -- that they are as competitive as any group I've ever coached. And I know about their heart, because they have had to overcome a lot of adversity. We played with a short bench, without many guys. You see a lot of guys that are not able to play, and that's always -- that sort of tells me a lot about the cohesiveness; because those guys that didn't play were pulling hard for these guys.

So they really pull for one another, and we are truly a team and that's what I appreciate. We don't have one guy that can just carry us; Rodney played great in this NIT and carried us, and so did André. A lot of guys stepped up, and it's just that we have them all coming back, that's the best thing I learned about our team.

**Q. Was there a snowball effect during the second half when they went on that run, they just kept building and building; they would get a stop and then get a basket?**

**RODNEY WILLIAMS:** Those guys, they just had it going out there tonight. We definitely had some lapses on defense but we were right there in the face and they made some tough shots. Some nights, there's nothing you can do about it, what's going good for those guys.

**Q. As a player, is it frustrating, that there's nothing you can do to stop it?**

**RODNEY WILLIAMS:** Yeah, that's definitely frustrating but there's nothing that you can do but keep fighting. I definitely think that's what we did out there tonight.

**Q. When you are down by that that much, how hard is it as a team to stay focussed as a team on the goal?**

**ANDRE HOLLINS:** That's tough, when things are not going your way; I think that's one of the things that I have to learn better, like to control

the game more; try to impose my will on the game.

Like today, I had zero assists and five turnovers, and that's just unacceptable for a point guard. And it's just -- it's a learning experience. We would be foolish just to go into next season thinking about this one game. We have come along as a team throughout this year, and like Coach said, we have everybody coming back. We persevered and we just stayed strong and I think this tournament has helped us a lot.

**Q. Like you said, you guys have done a lot of really exciting things in this tournament, as well; is it hard, though, that this is your last one, to let it go?**

ANDRE HOLLINS: Yeah, most definitely. It's hard to lose one. It's hard to lose like this. You know, Stanford played well tonight, and it's just a tough one to swallow.

But we have to look at the positive things like we have been doing all year, carry this over to next year. Carry our whole tournament as a whole team, our continuity as a team and our strive through, just take it on to next year.

**Q. Is there anything in particular that they were doing against you or was it just a tough game for you?**

ANDRE HOLLINS: Yeah, I just had a tough game. Mentally I think I wasn't there. Mentally I let little things get to me, and the referees let us play out there. You know, I kind of wasn't mentally tough today.

**Q. Can you just talk about foul trouble? First it was André and then -- (Inaudible) -- both suffering foul trouble at the same time, pretty tough to overcome in?**

RODNEY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think it was definitely tough to overcome. I kind of lost it mentally once that happened.

But, you know, got to give credit to our teammates. They definitely kept fighting out there without André and I out there. It just shows the fight that our guys have, and hopefully we can bring that back next year.

**Q. This NIT run, did it show you in games like this -- (Inaudible)?**

RODNEY WILLIAMS: Yeah, definitely. Games like this, I definitely can't let myself go mentally like I did -- once I seen I was in foul trouble, I should have played a lot smarter.

But everybody makes mistakes, and I just got to get in the gym over the summer, the spring and summer and come back a stronger player physically and mentally.

**Q. Have you talked with the NCAA at all on any other options for Trevor coming back that don't include losing a scholarship?**

TUBBY SMITH: No, I haven't. We'll get to that eventually.

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