

March 15, 2012



Colorado – 68
UNLV – 64

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: Coach Boyle, an opening statement, please.

COACH BOYLE: First of all, I think we beat a very, very good basketball team and a very good program tonight, so I want to congratulate UNLV on a great year. I guess looking back, NCAA Tournament games shouldn't be easy, but we didn't handle our lead in the second half as well as we'd like to.

But the one thing about our team we've shown is a toughness and a resiliency all year. We talked at halftime about UNLV making a run on us, and they did. But we handled it. We got stops when we had to get stops. We did just enough. If you had told me before the game we'd turn it over 23 times and miss 10 free throws and beat a team as good as UNLV I would have said you're crazy.

But we found a way to do it. It's a testament to these three guys and the rest of those guys in that locker room. I couldn't be more proud of the way these guys played and represented our university tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the Colorado student-athletes.

Q. André, how do you explain the last week and a half?

ANDRÉ ROBERSON: You know, it's been great. I feel like our guys are playing well, playing with a lot of confidence, and we're just going to try to keep it rolling. I just feel like we can take down Baylor coming up.

Q. Specifically, how?

ANDRÉ ROBERSON: We believe in ourselves. We believe in everything Coach Boyle tells us. We execute our game plan. We try to do it our best. Defense and rebounding, that's our motto. Every time we do that, we win games.

Q. Booker and Roberson, Carlton's dunk with 2:30 -- he's done that before this year and kind of sparked you. Can you tell how that sparked you with 2:30 left?

ASKIA BOOKER: I think that's a big confidence booster. When you see your teammate go up there with 2:00 minutes left and throw the ball down like that, I think it gets the crowd into it as well, which builds a little more momentum going into the last 2:00 minutes of the game. I think that helped a lot.

ANDRÉ ROBERSON: It just gave us energy, and we fed off of it. Also the crowd; it was great. They came all the way from Colorado to support us, so it always feels great that we know they have our backs. So it was good.

Q. Booker and Roberson, I'm a little old so I forget these things, but I think the last time Colorado won an NCAA game was 1997. How old were both of you, and do you remember it?

ANDRÉ ROBERSON: I do not remember it. I don't think I was born yet. No -- I know I was born (laughing). I don't know.

COACH BOYLE: How old were you in '96?

ASKIA BOOKER: I was three. I was three.

ANDRÉ ROBERSON: I don't know. It's a great accomplishment. I feel like it's a testament to what we've been doing since day one. Hard work pays off.

ASKIA BOOKER: I'm not too big on history, but I'm just happy that we're here and we won.

Q. Carlton, you were signed up to guard

Chace Stanback, and him and Mike Moser combined for 7 for 27 from the field. You guys knew that was going to be a tough match-up. What was your game plan on a shooter like that?

CARLON BROWN: With Chace, we just knew we had to run him off the three-point line because he's comfortable pulling off the transition and off the jab step. So I tried to do my best job of crowding him. With Moser, André did a great job crowding him and making sure he didn't get offensive rebounds. We were able to get stops and run.

Q. Carlon, your coach talked about your team not practicing particularly well, but you guys came out on fire. What do you attribute that to?

CARLON BROWN: The last couple practices haven't been the ones that pleased Coach Boyle and the coaching staff. But we knew once game time came we were going to be ready. It was hard to turn the switch on and off, but somehow the team does it. Hopefully we can maintain that same switch.

But we should have a great practice tomorrow with a lot of energy, get some shots up and get ready for this game plan on Saturday.

Q. André, you're the only player up there that played against Baylor a year ago in the Big 12. What do you know about them going into this match-up that you guys have with them on Saturday?

ANDRÉ ROBERSON: They're long, athletic and they sit in that 2-3 zone. So I feel like one thing we can do is offensive rebound. It's hard to rebound for them out of the zone. So I feel like our guys can do that. Just mix it up in there for them. They get out running transition, so they're a great team overall. I just feel like we'll take on the challenge.

Q. I'm not going to get you guys worked up and bring up that tenth place prediction in the Pac-12 again.

ASKIA BOOKER: 11th, 11th.

Q. Okay. But I remember, Booker, dropping in on you early in the conference season when you had beaten Utah, and for a young guy, you seemed pretty confident about what this team could do. How surprised are you by where you are right now?

ASKIA BOOKER: Personally for myself?

Q. Yeah.

ASKIA BOOKER: I'm very surprised coming from high school. Not many people believed in me, so I worked my tail off my junior year and my senior year in high school. I thank Tad and the rest of CU for taking me in and taking me under their wing, especially these guys as teammates. They've supported me very well, and I thank them a lot for that. I've come a long way, especially I'm happy I made it to the NCAA Tournament with these guys. I wouldn't rather be here with anybody else. So I came a long way.

CARLON BROWN: Can I say something to that? He's not surprised. He just told you a nice lie because earlier when we were in the room he said, "Man, as long as Colorado got me, we're going to win." So he's very confident in himself. We're glad he's confident. He played a great game today, and glad to have him and experience. They're two great freshmen. Coach Boyle did a great job recruiting them.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Boyle.

Q. Tad, did you notice the atmosphere for a neutral site game played at 10:00 Eastern time? Have you ever watched a game here or been here?

COACH BOYLE: No, I mean, I brought my high school team when I was a high school coach to team camp here, but never been in The Pit. I've heard a lot about it. I think it lived up to its reputation tonight. We brought fans. UNLV brought fans. Then New Mexico, Albuquerque, the fans for UNM came out.

This is a great basketball community. It's a great basketball venue. I love the intimacy of it and the energy in that arena. I think both teams fed off of it at different times during the game.

This is what it's all about. I've been part of NCAA Tournament first round or second round games where you could hear a pin drop. Some of the -- I'm glad we played in the night session because sometimes with people working it's hard to fill the arenas. But certainly the night session everybody came out, and it was a great college basketball atmosphere. That's what it's supposed to be about. So I'm glad Albuquerque got the bid, and I'm glad that we were sent here.

Q. Coach, did you have a sense after the practices didn't go so well the last two days that they were going to come out with that kind of energy?

COACH BOYLE: I trust this team. I really do. I have. I think we've really found another level since we went to L.A. and did what we did. As a coach you want maximum effort. You want your guys dialed in and sharp certainly the day before a game.

I dismissed Tuesday's practice as maybe a little hangover from L.A., but when we came down here and didn't practice well, it concerned me at the time. But after it was over with, I looked back at what these guys have been through emotionally, mentally and physically over the last week, and I've got to cut them a break.

As a coach, sometimes I've got to temper my expectations of what we're asking them to do, especially in practice. We've got three seniors that are playing that have a lot of maturity and a lot of heart, and that permeates through our whole team. I've got to cut them some slack on that practice.

I just told them afterwards -- we came for our shoot-around here, and we had great energy, so that led me to believe we'd be ready tonight and we were.

Q. You're ahead 53-33 with about 13:00 left. I don't remember exactly when the timeout you took was. It was either 57-53 or 57-55. I suspect that maybe you were just a tad nervous at that point. But what do you tell your team and how do you calm them down?

COACH BOYLE: We have to maintain our aggressiveness without taking bad shots. There is a fine line between holding the ball and losing your aggressiveness and rushing and taking bad shots. We didn't do that very well. We got on our heels, and then they made their run. We had some deer in the head lights look.

I wanted to save some timeouts for down the stretch in case we needed them. I think I used two or three during that period. We have to execute better. Using shot clock is smart at that time, but then when the shot clock's running down, we've got to be smarter and make better plays. We had a lot of empty possessions in that period of time, and I take responsibility for that. For not having our guys dialed in, prepared, and that's what you have to do this time of year.

So we dodged a little bit of a bullet there. Again, part of that was UNLV making shots and getting on a run, but we didn't help ourselves. If

we could just crank out some great possessions, use some clock and execute at the end, we could have broke them. But we didn't break them. We let them back in.

But I credit UNLV for that. We talked at halftime about them making a run. We knew they were going to make a run at some point. We just had to mentally handle it. I think our guys did. It got a little closer than I'd like it to be.

Q. Coach, if you don't mind going big picture for a moment. Your first full recruiting class with Spencer and Askia, their first year on campus, go to the NCAA Tournament and now you win a game. What are expectations where is the bar raised in this program now?

COACH BOYLE: We just want to keep getting better. That's our mantra. Every day we want to get better as coaches, as players. If you do that, it's going to happen. Your program's going to get better. Your coaching is going to get better. Your players are going to get better. We want to recruit well, which we have. We have five guys coming in next year who are all special players.

I don't get into expectations because you're internal expectations are we want to play hard, we want to play smart, and we want to play together. If we do those things and we defend and rebound, things will take care of themselves.

So I don't get caught up into the outside expectations of what are put on us. I just want to get better every day, and I think we've done that since we've been here.

Q. Coach, all season long we've heard how the Mountain West had exceeded the Pac-12 as a premier conference in the west. California does not play well last night. Did you feel like you're sort of carrying the banner for your conference too?

COACH BOYLE: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. We owed it to the rest of the teams in our league. The rest of the institutions in our league to play well tonight. The only way you get rid of that stigma, and it's not going to be there for very long because I know how the teams in our league are recruiting, and I know the young players that are in our league. The Pac-12 is going to be much better next year than it was this year. But it's incumbent upon us as coaches to have better non-conference wins than we had this year. That's the only way we can do it.

This is a great postseason win to kind of get us hopefully on track to do that, and we have another opportunity on Saturday to do that.

Q. Having said that, would you be willing to come down and play the Lobos in The Pit?

COACH BOYLE: It would be a great home-and-home series. It's a great basketball atmosphere. We're creating a great one up at the University of Colorado. So I don't see why that couldn't happen. It's got to be the right situation for Coach Alford and where their program is and ours, but I'm open to a lot of scheduling opportunities.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about Brown's dunk there at 2:30? It seemed like UNLV had gone on a 22-4 run. I know you can't slap them in the face, but it seems like that was kind of the slap in the face that the team needed to wake them up.

COACH BOYLE: We talked in those timeouts. Our guys were not handling it well, that was obvious. We talked about playing with poise, playing with composure, and continuing to attack. When we got stops, we wanted to run. That's one of the things that had gotten us that lead to begin with.

When we got that stop and we pitched it ahead to Carlon, that dunk brought our team energy, confidence back. I wish it would have happened a little bit sooner rather than later, but it put us up 5. Our guys started believing again.

But poise and composure down the stretch is what you have to have. We lost it for a minute, but we got it back; and for that I've got to give our guys credit.

Q. Would you talk a little more about Carlon and him overcoming some stuff and playing like he did?

COACH BOYLE: The people that have followed our program this year know that Carlon went through a significant slump. I don't know for seven, eight games, nine games, I forget. But he really struggled shooting the ball. I'm really proud of the way he handled it. It's one of the things as a coach that I didn't necessarily know how to bring him out of it. Carlon didn't know how to bring himself out of it. We just kept talking about taking good shots, being aggressive, and defend and rebound.

We broke out of it in L.A., and it couldn't have been a better time. He's a terrific player.

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You have to have your best players play well at this time of year to have a chance, and Carlon and André really stepped up. Askia Booker was terrific tonight. The lift he gave us in the first half when Spencer was in foul trouble cannot be mistaken.

But our guys all feed off Carlon. We stemmed the tide when he went through that slump. I'm proud of him for breaking out of it because it wasn't easy.

Q. This team's had to believe in the possibility that it could do it, could get in the dance and then win at the end of this game. Does that build on itself or is there any way of telling?

COACH BOYLE: It builds on itself. Especially what we've gone through the last -- I can't tell you. Andy asked the question of André about what the last ten days have been like. I don't think there's an explanation for it. But the one thing I can tell you with 100% certainty is this team believes in itself.

After what we went through in L.A., and we went down there with the idea we're beating Utah for our 20th win of the season, for the first time ever in Colorado history, we did that. We snuck one out against Oregon the next night, and we just got on a roll. We matched up well with Cal, and it's kind of taken on a life of its own. I don't see why it can't continue.

It's going to get harder as we go; we know that. But I believe in this team. They believe in themselves, and as long as you do that this time of year you've got a shot.

Q. What was going on with the inbound plays and the struggles there?

COACH BOYLE: Well, we didn't use, again, poise and composure. The first turnover was a spot throw in, so André couldn't run the baseline. Our guards got to do a better job of getting open. We didn't execute well.

We talked at halftime, hey, press offense is going to be key. At some point they're going to have to bring it on us, and UNLV's not a pressing team. We talked about using the pass fake because they're so long and athletic, they anticipate well. We've got to pass fake. Our press offense wasn't good enough, and we turned it over a few times.

Again, 23 turnovers is too many. We dodged a bullet tonight. But we work on it. You

know, you've got to make plays. Players have to make plays this time of year. For a while there we didn't. We were making losing plays, not winning plays.

But it's not one guy. It's not coming to meet passes and not completing passes. You've got to pass and catch. That was one of the things I was so mad at practice yesterday. We couldn't pass and catch. It's like if you can't pass and catch, you're going to have trouble winning games.

Q. I know you've been focused on the Pac-12 this year, but last year you played in Waco and lost a close game down there. How familiar are you with Baylor? Especially not only the guys like Perry Jones and Quincy Acy that have been there, but guys like Pierre Jackson who is coming in?

COACH BOYLE: I've watched them on TV. Baylor's a quality program. We did play them down there. I know André has been watching film. They're playing a lot more man, as you know, as opposed to their zone. They've still got their zone in their stable.

But I'm familiar with their players and the new kids Jackson and Heslip are great additions to their team. Pierre Jackson's a great point guard. A guy who we're going to have to really pay a lot of attention to. He's kind of the straw in their drink. And that Heslip kid really stretches the defense. He's kind of our Levi Knutson from last year.

So quality players, quality program, and we're going to have to play better than we did tonight to have a chance against Baylor, certainly in the second half.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

Colorado Student-Athlete Locker Room Quotes

Freshman guard Askia Booker

On second round win...

“Feels great! We competed our butts off. We came out here and it got hot the first half. We let them back in the second half but we fought it out and came back to win.”

On the team's performance...

“We all fight . We all believe. That is something coach tells every time a time out comes, Just believe in yourselves and have faith. It comes down to defense being the heart and soul of the team.”

On play of the first half...

“We had a great first half as a team. We came out hitting a lot of shots and we got a lot of shots in the paint which is good for us to start off with us opening up with another shot.”

On upcoming opponent Baylor...

“We don't lose ourselves. We stay playing defense and rebounding. I think that's going to be the key thing for Baylor. They are tall, long and athletic so it's going to come down to defensive rebounding.”