

March 14, 2012



An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: Questions for the UNLV student-athletes.

Q. Mike, when you guys drew Colorado, what was your initial impression, and what do you know about them so far?

MIKE MOSER: We were just happy to get a 6 seed at all, really. We really weren't sure exactly where we were going to land. Just to get a 6 seed was a blessing on account of how we finished the season.

Now that we've looked at Colorado a little bit, we're really excited because we fit their style so much or so well. So I think it will be beneficial for us when we play.

Q. Do you know much about André Roberson? He seems to be a similar player to you.

MIKE MOSER: Yeah, definitely. I watched a lot of film this week. High, major talent for sure. Really crashes the boards. Just a really active player, and he's definitely going to be a load to guard.

Q. Anthony, Carlon Brown of Colorado is on a real hot streak, MVP of the Pac-12 tournament. What do you see on film of him, and how do you plan to match-up?

ANTHONY MARSHALL: He's a very aggressive scorer. We had to play him before when he was at Utah before he transferred. So we

know he's going to be aggressive in transition, and in the half-court set. He's a strong right hand, so we have to sit on his right hand to make him go left to make him pass instead of getting to the lane and making buckets. We've just got to try to make it tough on him.

Q. Do you guys think the New Mexico fans will root for you guys or the underdog?

ANTHONY MARSHALL: I had a couple of them write me on Twitter saying they'd be here and supporting us and stuff like that. So hopefully they do. New Mexico had a game in Las Vegas, our fans would be out there supporting them just to keep it in the Mountain West. So hopefully they do.

MIKE MOSER: I heard the same thing as Anthony. At least I sure hope so. So I guess we'll see tomorrow.

Q. As you noted earlier, you didn't finish the season the way you wanted to. What went wrong in your mind, and what have you done to address it?

MIKE MOSER: I feel like we may have lost our legs down the stretch a little bit. Just got a little distracted from the major goal that's we had ahead as far as seeding and winning a tournament. But I feel like it's kind of a new season, and we've just got to refocus and go out and play.

Q. What's the difference for you coming to a tournament now for the third time compared to your first two trips? Are you more experienced now?

ANTHONY MARSHALL: Yeah, definitely. The first time we came here we really didn't know what to expect. So the first couple of minutes of the game you're feeling your way through and trying to get a rhythm and stuff like that. Last year it didn't go how we wanted to at all.

So this year we have to come out from the tip and play hard for 40 minutes. You can't take

any possessions off, because that one possession could cause you the game. We've got to come out and ready to play from the beginning.

Q. Can you talk about the playing in tournament here at UNLV for the first time and trying to put the last month and some of those struggles behind you?

MIKE MOSER: Definitely. It's going to be exciting tomorrow. This being my first tournament, I don't know what to expect. I've talked to my teammates who have some experience with it. They're just saying go out and play like it's a regular game. It's going to be more intense. I know we're definitely going to get up for the game as a team tomorrow.

Q. You and Roberson are really good rebounders. Did you see a little battle going on there for bragging rights? How do you keep him off the boards?

MIKE MOSER: Yeah, we've just got to play harder than him. When two players are good rebounders like we both are, I think that's what it's going to come down to who plays harder, and whose team can probably help them out the most. That's probably going to be who wins the game.

Q. Talk about Carlon Brown, your experiences playing against him in the past and watching film on Colorado, what you see? Is he a different player than he was at Utah?

ANTHONY MARSHALL: He's still kind of the same player. He does a lot of the similar stuff. But he's a veteran now with a lot of years under his belt. He's playing in his own pace instead of getting sped up and stuff like that. Like I said, he's a strong right-hand driver, so we've really got to sit on his right hand to try to get things going left where he really don't want to get in the lane or he's looking to pass first. We've just got to take on that challenge and be ready for it.

Q. Anthony, CU is pretty good in transition, and they said they'd like to run a little bit. But how do you get it to your tempo, maybe a little faster tempo?

ANTHONY MARSHALL: If they're going to come in and try to push it like the way we do, it's going to allow us to get some rebounds. I'm pretty sure it's going to be a lot of four shots when you're playing at tempo and that speed. That allows us to get out in transition and make things happen. I

feel that's when we're at our best making defensive stops and getting out in transition.

Q. UNLV is obviously one of those programs that you say the name and everybody knows what you're talking about. What does it mean to play in a program at a school that's got history, tradition, titles?

ANTHONY MARSHALL: For me being a local, it means a ton, growing up and watching the things they did. Well, they did it before I was able to understand, but watching film and stuff like that, it really made me want to come back and help bring those glory days back to Las Vegas. I feel we're doing something pretty special right now. We're just going to try to keep it rolling. Instead of trying to do the things they did, we want to create our own era and have our legacy left behind.

Q. The whole idea of making a name for yourself in Vegas where there is so much stuff to do. How hard is that?

ANTHONY MARSHALL: For us, I don't think it's that hard because we really don't have a professional team out there. So the community of Las Vegas, we are a professional team. So they come out and support us all the time. We just try to stay together and get as many wins as we can, and the community comes out to support us.

Q. Mike, Albuquerque is about the exact same elevation as Boulder. Looking at your schedule you guys lost here and at CSU and Wyoming. Is altitude a factor?

MIKE MOSER: I don't think so. I feel like we played at elevation a lot this year. We've struggled in it and done well in it. I wouldn't say that's going to be the deciding factor of this game at all.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Rice.

Q. What do you think about the match-up with Colorado? They like to run as well, and maybe having them play into your style a little bit?

COACH RICE: Well, we're excited about that part, but it's their style as well. I think the first thing as we watch them and as we've watched Coach Boyle's teams play over the year, the first word that comes to mind is tough.

It starts with their coaching staff. You have

to be tough to win four games in four days, and they certainly were that. And they won those games in different ways. They won those games with great defensive efforts. They won those games with offensive output. So it's an impressive deal. We're excited about the opportunity we're playing, but we know we've got our hands full with a very good basketball team.

Q. You remember Carlon Brown. Does he look any different than he did a couple years ago? He's on a real hot streak as you've seen on tape. What were the challenges on slowing him down?

COACH RICE: Well, I think the first thing is I remember him from his time at Utah and how explosive he was. He's got the experience of having won a conference tournament. And leading his team to the NCAA Tournament, he's done the same thing. He's playing the way we as coaches would hope that our seniors would play. He's playing well. He's a leader. Every time they need a big basket or a big stop, he's the guy that's either making that play or encouraging the other guys to do it. He's certainly a guy that's making his team better. He's the same player, he's just better. He's doing everything better. Certainly the confidence that he's gained from the red shirt year, from being in a terrific system. He's playing at a very high level right now.

Q. This team had a bad experience last year in the NCAA Tournament. How much of a motivating factor do you think that truly is for these guys, considering it's basically the entire team that returns?

COACH RICE: Don't always get second chances in our game. For our guys, most of whom were part of the NCAA experience last year, they worked extremely hard all year long. We have a variety of regular season goals. Some of which we achieved, others that we didn't. But all of those were leading to the fact that we wanted to get back to the NCAA Tournament, and now we're here.

We understand the challenge of playing against Colorado, but we also understand the unbelievable opportunity that we have to play in the NCAA Tournament. It's become the end all in our game. There are a lot of other goals throughout the course of the year, but what we're all playing for is to get to the NAAs.

When your name comes up on Selection Sunday, it's a big deal. We're very excited to be here, and I know our guys will use their experience

from last year to motivate them to stay together, to play hard, to do all the things that have helped us be successful this year.

This is another game, but it's more than that. It's the NCAA Tournament. I think our guys understand the magnitude of that and understand the difficulty of playing against a very good team.

Q. Besides the X's and O's of trying to get ready for Colorado, how much do you discuss with your players that Colorado's looking like one of these teams that is catching momentum and might start to feel like anything's possible?

COACH RICE: Well, certainly we've talked about the confidence factor that Colorado played four very good games in four days. So they're coming in on a roll. So we understand the confidence that they're playing with.

Biggest thing is that they have good players. They've got guys that do things that have given us trouble this year. Roberson's ability to offensive rebound the ball is something that is a huge concern for our team. Their ability to dribble penetrate the ball. Dinwiddie gets to the line. Carlon Brown is as good a driver as there is in our game. There are a lot of things that have given a lot of teams that they've played trouble all year long, and we're no different.

I think that certainly we understand that they will be ready to play, and we've talked about it all year long. It's a huge game for them, but our mindset needs to be that it's an even bigger game for us. That is the mindset that we try to take into every game.

Q. You just mentioned what a good driver Carlon Brown is, and Chace Stanback's been on a bad knee and not defended well the past month. Who do you match up with Brown? Who do you think will draw that assignment?

COACH RICE: I don't think we have one guy that's going to have that assignment by himself. We have a number of guys that do a good job with dribble penetration. Chace will have him some. Anthony Marshall will have him some. Certainly Justin Hawkins, he's in the game.

The way we play, we have multiple guys who guard different guys in various possessions. So it's a team defensive effort. I don't think there is any one guy that can stop Carlon Brown alone.

We understand how explosive he is and as good as he is in the half court driving the ball, the huge concern for us is his ability to get defensive rebounds and drive it. So defensive transition is a huge key in this game, and I'm sure Colorado feels the same about our ability to exploit match-ups in terms of our offensive transition as well.

Q. You talked about Colorado's confidence level coming off the four wins and everything. Where do you feel your team's confidence level is after not finishing the season quite as strong as you wanted to?

COACH RICE: We've been a very good basketball team all year long. Certainly the last three or four weeks we had not played as well as we had previously, but everything we did was to give ourselves the opportunity to play in the NCAA Tournament.

Turning point for us, the way we looked at it, was Selection Sunday sitting there as a team. We knew we had earned the right to be in the NCAA Tournament with our body of work in terms of what we had done in the non-conference season, how competitive our conference was. The fact we've got four teams in the NCAA Tournament when we have eight teams in our league. So for us, we gained a lot of confidence from that. Our guys are excited to be back in the NCAA Tournament.

We understand that for some of our guys, four guys that are seniors, it will be their last chance, so we take a lot of confidence. We have a lot of team confidence. We practiced well the last few days, and we look forward to the challenge of playing tomorrow.

Q. I'm asking this because obviously you're in a program with a ton of tradition. Colorado doesn't have much. Do you find that just saying UNLV kind of gets you in the running with people that maybe you wouldn't ordinarily get in the running with recruit-wise?

COACH RICE: I can only speak for our program, and certainly we're proud of our tradition at UNLV to have been to four Final Fours, to have won a National Championship, to have the number of high-quality players that have come through our program. So certainly recruiting has gone extremely well.

I've said many times that I was able to take over a program for Lon Kruger, and Coach Kruger did a terrific job for seven years. He built a great foundation. We had 11 guys returning. They all

stayed. I think that speaks volumes about the tradition of our program, and the fact that guys wanted to stay and be part of our vision.

Then I truly believe that our style of play and the early success that we've had has enhanced our recruiting potential. Absolutely we feel like we can get involved with anyone in the country because of the tradition of our program, our style of play and the success we've had. So we're excited about the future of UNLV Runnin' Rebel basketball.

Q. Is playing at The Pit an advantage for you? Who do you think the New Mexico fans will get behind in this game? Their rival or the underdogs, so to speak?

COACH RICE: Well, we don't look at Colorado as an underdog at all. They're a very good basketball team. We certainly hope that the Lobos wear their red and come and support the red team. But bottom line for us is we're excited to be in Albuquerque. This is a great venue. There is a lot of tradition here. All of our guys have played in this building at least once, and most of our guys have played here multiple times.

At the same time, it is at altitude, we're not at altitude, and Colorado has an advantage there because they practice and play at altitude. So you never know about those sorts of things.

But we do like the fact that Albuquerque is relatively close to Las Vegas. We have a great fan base. Our student section at Rebellion has been so supportive all year long.

So we have a number of fans, a lot of fans making the trip to Albuquerque. I'm sure that Colorado's the same. We're excited to be in Albuquerque and to be able to play in the NCAA Tournament.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports



...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com