

March 20, 2010



Kentucky – 90
Wake Forest – 60

An interview with:



MODERATOR: Coach, your thoughts on the game.

COACH CALIPARI: It was a good game for us. I mean, Wake Forest has had a great year and had played terrific, and played good tonight. We just were really good.

One thing I was really proud of is how we executed offensively. When it was time to just execute and grind it out and do it, we did it. It's very important when you're in these games and you're in a six, four point game that you can come down five straight times and execute. When you're talking about having so many young players and for them to do it and do it in this kind of environment is big. So I was proud of them.

Again, we have a lot of players -- one of the things we talked about before this thing started was I want you to be your best. I want you to visualize what it means when you're playing your best, and that's what you're striving to do. How can I help you be your best.

They're having fun out there, which is what we want. As long as they keep having fun, playing harder than that other team. Just enjoy playing, we'll be fine. We'll have our chances. Doesn't mean you're automatically marching, but at least you have an opportunity.

MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. You looked like you were back in Mason County. What went off tonight?

DARIUS MILLER: Really I just tried to play aggressive like Coach has been telling me. A lot of times they help off me and a few of the other wings and that provides us to get to the lane. They're helping off because of John, Eric and DeMarcus and them are a big part of the team. So really they focus on us, and I try to help them out.

Q. What was your initial reaction to hearing that Kansas had been upset?

DEMARCUS COUSINS: We weren't allowed to know what was the results of that game. We were told to focus on our own game.

Q. So you guys didn't know?

DEMARCUS COUSINS: No.

COACH CALIPARI: I made them turn the TV off to think about our game. Don't worry about that game. When they went out, I was saying, Wow.

Q. I know you're prepared for anything in games like this. But what went through your mind in the starting lineups? When you went down in the second half and everybody was gathered around you, you popped up smiling. Talk about your approach to those things.

DEMARCUS COUSINS: I mean, I knew he was coming out with articles saying how he was going to try to get in my head. I was reading it. And I was just trying to prepare myself for a battle today. Because I knew his intentions were coming into the game.

When we came out to shake hands and he didn't shake my hand, I knew he was already starting. So I just prepared myself for it.

Q. Now that you do know that Kansas lost, there are going to be a lot of people talking about you guys as the favorite in this tournament. Does that put any extra pressure



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Kentucky - 03.20.10

on you guys at all?

DEMARCUS COUSINS: Nope (laughing).

DARIUS MILLER: I agree with DeMarcus. I don't think that adds any pressure. As long as we come out and play the best we can, that's all we can control.

Q. When Krebs hit the three-pointer, talk about that.

DEMARCUS COUSINS: That was the best play of the game in my eyes.

ERIC BLEDSOE: We just treat Krebs like everybody else. He's a brother to us. So for him to go in and knock down the three, we've just got to enjoy it.

DARIUS MILLER: I agree with both of them. I think everybody jumped up in the air, and everybody was happy for him when he hit the three. That means a lot for everybody on the team.

MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Calipari.

Q. Kansas losing and obviously your big win today. You're obviously the overwhelming favorite now for most people?

COACH CALIPARI: I don't know if we're the overwhelming favorite. Everybody was picking us to lose today being a tough game. They were also saying we'd be the first No. 1 out.

So how do they change those talking heads overnight? With one game? Come on. We're still a bunch of freshmen and sophomores. Our second NCAA Tournament game. They've never played in any other games. The guys that we're playing have never played in it.

So all we're going to worry about is us. We're going to get home, take a day off tomorrow. Practice on Monday and Tuesday, and head on up to Syracuse, and get ready. The people that are going to be in that region, it's going to be ridiculous. You're going to have four teams that are good enough, all four, to go win the national title.

Q. Could you explain when you decided to use DeAndre to slow Ish, and what you thought the effect of it was?

COACH CALIPARI: We were going to have three guys guard him: DeAndre, Eric was going to start on him -- I wanted to see what would happen -- and then John Wall. So we were going to have all three ready to guard him. The biggest thing we were trying to do is form a wall back on

defense, so he wouldn't get lanes on the rim, because he's as fast as anybody. You have to pick him up with your entire team.

But I thought DeAndre was tremendous. But you look at Darius, Darius had nine rebounds today. So DeAndre's back to playing how he was two weeks ago. He's playing fabulous. He's diving on the floor. He's coming up with balls. He's defending. I think Darnell Dodson is playing the best he's played all year. Eric Bledsoe. Did he dunk that ball? I couldn't tell when he went down the middle. I just saw something happen, and I was like what did he do?

So we've got a lot of guys. John's running the team. He was a little bit -- held the ball too much early. But I tell him pass it, so he passes it. He's so coachable. Then DeMarcus -- and I thought even though he didn't score, or Daniel Orton, I think, again, played well. Great defense, mixed it up, did a good job.

Q. Is this maybe as close as you've seen to maybe what you had envisioned for this group to look like in terms of number of guys contributing in offense, defense?

COACH CALIPARI: Let me say this. In an NCAA Tournament game it's hard to play 13 guys. It's really hard to play 10. You're probably going to play eight and may likely play seven in a big-time game. The first two games we've had gaps, so I've gotten everybody in, everybody has scored. I told them after: 30 years from now, every one of you will say you started. You're in the books, you got baskets, you all say you started. It's a great thing.

So as we move forward, if I have a chance to play everybody, I absolutely will. If I don't, I may play seven or eight. That's how it goes. You're trying to win. You're trying to land the plane. You're trying to get it down on the ground. Whatever's happening, all the turbulence, and the other kind of stuff. We're just trying to get to playing on the ground right now.

Q. I'm sure a point of emphasis was rebounding after what they did against Texas. Even though you gave up 19 offensive boards, you outrebounded them, and then they shoot 2 for 15 on three-pointers. Can you talk about your ability inside and outside on that end?

COACH CALIPARI: Well, they shot 33 percent from the floor, and 13 from the three.

Now, they're not known for their three-point shooting. That's not why they win. They win because they defend, they rebound. They run good stuff. They run great, driving isolations, and the little kid gets going, Smith, and gets him in transition. That's why they win.

What we did is guard those twos better than even the threes. So when you talk about us being able to run -- get a few runs going, it's because we really guarded. Offensive rebounding again, they've got some that I wasn't real pleased with, but the score was so wide a margin. I'll look at the tape on the way home here and look at where they got all those.

But if they're getting 20 offensive rebounds against Texas, who is one of the best defensive rebounding teams, Rick Barnes does, that's his deal. They're a good rebounding team, which is why they've won in the ACC.

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