

**March 11, 2015**



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An Interview With:

**COLORADO  
ASKIA BOOKER  
JOSH SCOTT**

THE MODERATOR: We'll have Coach Boyle give an opening assessment.

COACH BOYLE: That was a tough, hard-fought game. And I gotta give Oregon State a lot of credit. They had an unbelievable year. Coach Tinkle did a terrific job with that team all season long.

That's a team that handled us pretty handily in Corvallis a couple of weeks ago. So I was really pleased with our fight and our desire, especially the second half. I thought we got our roll.

I was on these guys at halftime and almost every media timeout about defending. I wasn't happy with our defense in the first half.

In the second half we turned it over 13 times. But you know what, we found a way. And that's what you have to do in tournament basketball. So we played well enough. These two guys really -- Ski got going and hit some big shots, got the momentum on our side, which was big, and Josh hit another double-double and rebounded a ball well and I thought defended well down low.

And I thought we had some good performances off the bench as well. Dustin Thomas came in, gave great minutes and played well.

We had some good guys that came off the bench and it was a good team victory and we live to see another day. That's what it's all about.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. Askia, can you talk about you started off really struggling this game. And looked a little out of it in the first half. But then really hitting that 3-pointer sparked things for this team in that stretch. Could you talk about your start and that run that you guys did for this game?**

ASKIA BOOKER: When I started off, I played like crap in the first half, man. No shots were falling. Took some quick shots. I think I went 0 for 6, but I think went 6 for 6 in the free-throw line.

In the second half, I took advantage of when I got the guy in the air in the second -- or the first time in the second half, I think it was a timeout that was called. And Coach Prioleau and my teammates told me to be aggressive.

And the first open shot that I got, I took advantage of it, and it felt good.

From there on out, if I seen myself open again, I just kept shooting them. They kept falling. I ran with that momentum and then I got the easy one at the rim. Things open up eventually when you get hot.

And I think give the credit to my teammates because I played like crap in the first half, but they kept the game close. They played well. They scored the ball. Josh Scott scored the ball. Xavier Johnson played well. Dustin Thomas. Dominique Collier hit some good shots.

So without my teammates we would not have won this game. I'm just happy that I got hot and we won.

**Q. Josh, can you talk about, you guys have had these injuries and kind of a disappointing year this year. Has this tournament given you guys kind of a new life and feel like you guys might be playing as well as you have this year coming into this tournament and build on tonight?**

JOSH SCOTT: It's a new opportunity for us. Coming in here, we talk about it every day about it being 0-0. I don't think any of us were happy with how the regular season went for our team. And so we kind of saw this as our time.

**Q. Coach and Ski, you've both been part of a team that came into a conference tournament not playing their best ball but was able to turn it around and of course go on a run -- four wins, four days. What does it take to do that and what would it take for this team, in particular, to kind of gain some momentum here in Las Vegas and possibly go on a run?**

COACH BOYLE: I think it takes mental toughness. I think it takes a group of guys in that locker room who kind of refuse to lose and have that kind of mentality. You've got to be able to ride some guys. I mean, tonight we had four guys in double figures.

You have to be able to play an imperfect game, imperfect game and still be able to figure out a way to win. When you look back at that run, you know, a lot of close games. A lot of one-possession games. And you gotta get stops when you need to get stops. And that's what that team did.

Now, I will say this: When we came to Los Angeles and Ski was a freshman, we didn't come there with the idea of winning four games in four days. We didn't come here with the idea of winning four games in four days. We came here with the idea of beating Oregon State.

Now we have to figure out a way between now and 6:00 tomorrow night how we're going to beat Oregon. And we have to come out and do it.

It's going to take a group of guys that have the refuse-to-lose attitude and a chip on their shoulder and playing with a sense of urgency.

If we have that, we've got to live to see another day. And we did today. Now it's about tomorrow. It's not about looking ahead and trying to figure out who is going to win and who is going to lose. It's just taking care of the business at hand. I don't know how Ski feels. But that was a long time ago, seems like, another lifetime ago.

ASKIA BOOKER: Yeah, Coach couldn't have said it any better. I think my freshman year, as soon as we won our first game, we were already on the second one. Our mind was past the first one. We were past Utah. And wanted to come out and win the second one.

So as of right now, it's my job and Josh Scott's job to make sure that we don't get drunk off our own wine. Today we didn't really do anything. We just won one game and on to the next.

We can't go out and celebrate because we're in Vegas. It's not the time for that. We're here for business. Like Coach said, now it's time for Oregon to get prepared and come out tomorrow and compete.

**Q. Askia, when you get the defense to bite on some of those pump fakes, is there a certain point you feel like you kind of have them where you want them?**

ASKIA BOOKER: No doubt about it. There's somewhere they don't bite. But usually those are pretty much the guards that are sometimes better defenders. Like Gary Payton. The second -- he's a pretty good defender, man. I give him credit. He bit for the first one in the first half. You get guys like that in foul trouble, it really helps the team.

Gomis, I figured he was going to jump regardless because he's a big man.

So you get guys out there, feed each other, take advantage of it. And that's something that I've picked up throughout my four years of playing.

And sometimes you just have to take advantage of it.

**Q. The next thing, Tad kind of talked about the refuse-to-lose attitude. Was there a moment in that second half where you thought I'm not going to let my career end tonight on this court?**

ASKIA BOOKER: Yeah. Like I said, the first time I got the guy in the air in the second half, from that time I was called, Xavier told me, Ski, just play. Dustin Thomas told me, Ski, just play. Coach Prioleau told me, Ski, just compete.

At that point in time it was all confidence. I usually get some momentum at the free-throw line because I get to see the ball go in. And from there on out, hit the first 3 off the dribble and the rest was history.

COACH BOYLE: I thought the first 3 he hit away from our bench kind of got, you could see his body language, like, okay, here we go. When he gets hot, he's pretty good, as you guys know.

**Q. Ski, what was it in the first half that**

**was throwing you off? Was it their zone? Was it you just not feeling in a rhythm or a combination?**

ASKIA BOOKER: It's all myself. It's in my head. I'm not going to say anything about anybody's defense. But it's just all in my head. In the first half, I wasn't ready to play. Plain and simple. There's no beating around the bush. That's why it's a 40-minute game and you have two halves and, thank God, like I said, I give the credit to my teammates because they kept the game close, man. And they gave me an opportunity to get hot. And gave us some momentum, and that's when we ran away with the game pretty much.

**Q. Josh, down in Corvallis and also in the first half here for Oregon State, their offense looked a lot better than it has in most games this year. What was it about your defense that you guys weren't able to really stop them, turn it around in the second half?**

JOSH SCOTT: We weren't guarding the ball well. We let Schaftenaar hit some big shots. We knew he was a shooter. We weren't getting to him. They had more offensive rebounds than they probably should have. I think that all added up to them having 40 points in the first half.

**Q. Coach or Ski or Josh, like you said, no time to celebrate. You got the Ducks coming up in less than 24 hours. What's the key tomorrow and how much different, how much better did that team get throughout the course of the season?**

COACH BOYLE: Well, the one thing Oregon does, they really score the ball. They can score from a lot of different positions. They have a lot of interchangeable parts. They're playing really without a true big man other than the freshman they've got, who is a good shot blocker.

And so Joe Young obviously Player of the Year, he's a terrific scorer. They shoot the ball from 3 well. So we're really going to have to guard tomorrow. We're going to have to guard the ball. We'll have to guard the 3-point line. And then the thing about Oregon is that they kind of keep you off balance a little bit defensively, play a little matchup zone and they junk it up. They will double up Josh every time he touches it and probably Wes, too. We'll have to handle double teams and make them pay.

You can always say basketball is a simple game. When there's two guys on one guy,

somebody's open, we've just got to move the ball and find that guy. Can't play with an agenda, just gotta play basketball.

But it really comes down to slowing them up defensively, which is easier said than done.

So it's going to be a great challenge. But we've got to take advantage of the mismatches that we have, and it should be a heck of a game and I've got a lot of respect for their program and their players.

But I have a lot of respect for ours, too.

**Q. Ski, you said that you weren't necessarily ready to play today. What's it going to take for that to change tomorrow? Do you think you'll need a full 40-minute effort to beat this team?**

ASKIA BOOKER: I'll be ready.

COACH BOYLE: Our whole team will be ready. We'll be ready to roll.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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