

March 12, 2015



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An Interview With:

**USC
COACH ANDY ENFIELD
KATIN REINHARDT
NIKOLA JOVANOVIĆ**

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and start with Coach Enfield. Coach, could you summarize the game.

COACH ENFIELD: I give UCLA credit. They played a great game today offensively, made a lot of shots. Their guards are big men, made jump shots. And I thought they played a terrific basketball game offensively.

Q. How do you explain UCLA's high 3-point shooting in the first half? Seems like you were focusing more on the interior than the perimeter.

COACH ENFIELD: UCLA have very good basketball players. That's what good players do, they make shots. And they did that. They're excellent players. McDonald's All-Americans.

And I give them credit, because their guards made 3s and their bigs made 3s and a couple of them got very confident because the first one went down and they kept shooting it.

And so that's what good players do. They make shots.

Q. You played UCLA five times since you were hired. None of the games have been that close. Why do you think UCLA's had the team's number so far?

COACH ENFIELD: Tonight they shot 60 percent from the field. We need to play better defense. And they really made perimeter shots

against us. And the interior, the last game, two weeks ago, they really hurt us inside on the offensive glass with Parker and Looney. So I give them credit.

Q. You lost to UCLA today, but how much momentum do you guys think you got from defeating Arizona State yesterday?

COACH ENFIELD: It was a big win for us. We finally closed a game out. We were behind, caught up, were able to take the lead and hold the lead.

When you lose seven games by five points or less and five in the last possession, it was nice to win one. And I think it's important for our players to understand that, the level that they need to play at to win games in the Pac-12.

We've been so close all year long. We understand our weaknesses. We're going to have a big offseason, player development and strength training. Our young players need to put on muscle.

You asked about UCLA. UCLA and Utah and Arizona really gave us trouble this year with their physicality. We need to be able to match that. At least we can't keep doing the same thing against more physical teams. We have to have some kind of comeback.

So we're looking forward to a great offseason. Very proud of our players this year. We've improved dramatically since the beginning of the year. We've improved dramatically since the beginning of the Pac-12 season. We've been competitive in every game, with the exception of the teams I just mentioned, and there's a reason for that.

But our players understand that. And it will be upon us now as a staff and our players as individuals to go out in the offseason and change that.

Q. Coach, you did win some games in



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the last month. But without McLaughlin, he was a firecracker for you. What sort of adjustments did you have to make and how big of a negative was that having him out?

COACH ENFIELD: It's tough when you lose your leading scorer. He was leading us in scoring, assists and steals. And he missed most of the Pac-12 season. Separated shoulder on our first road trip at Utah. Sat out for two weeks. Came back, played good basketball. A little streaky, but he started getting in a rhythm. Was playing really well the last couple of games, then he hurt himself again.

So I think people forget that. We've been competitive without one of our key players and then we lost Strahinja Gavrilovic. He's been out for the last couple of weeks, too. He's one of our -- probably our strongest player off the bench with physicality, and that's one of our weaknesses.

So we've been shorthanded. But that's not an excuse. Our guys competed. I'm very proud of this team. I'm very proud of the improvement we've made, and I'm extremely excited about the future of our players. We feel like we have a young corps. They can get a lot better this offseason. Freshmen become sophomores and they make a big jump and some of our sophomores will make an even bigger jump when they become juniors than they did last summer.

We'll go on a foreign tour in August. We'll get some more experience. And it's on our players. They know enough now going through the Pac-12 and being here as freshmen and some of the sophomores.

So we're excited about the future, and we're excited about what this offseason is going to bring.

Q. Katin, how much of a problem was Hamilton for you tonight with 36 points, and did that come unexpected at all that he had such a great game?

KATIN REINHARDT: I mean, he started feeling it. When he was feeling it, everything just went in. And we tried to do our best job guarding him. And he was in a rhythm tonight. And, I mean, we just couldn't stop it.

Q. Despite this loss, do you think that this season was a step in the right direction overall?

COACH ENFIELD: Well, I base it on our improvement. So, yes. We've been very

competitive. When we started the season out, we were very inconsistent on both ends of the ball and we got better on defense and we became better on offense and got better at both at the same time. And had a lot of competitive games in the Pac-12. And we were able to win some.

And, like I said, if we three or four more wins without the buzzer beaters and triple overtime and a couple of shots that went in -- or shots that didn't go in for us, we would have more wins.

But we don't. But we're not going to let those seven games define who we are, because we feel like we've got a great corps.

So I think we've improved dramatically as individuals and as a team. Tonight we didn't play well. UCLA played great. So those games happen. But I get back to the things. UCLA is a tough matchup for us based on our weaknesses and their strengths, just like Utah and Arizona.

So we need to figure that out. And it's going to be on every one of our players to do something about this offseason. And so, sure, we're excited, and it's definitely a step in the right direction.

KATIN REINHARDT: Just what he said earlier, we feel like we could be a lot -- in the offseason we're going to do a very good job learning, and learning from everything we did this year. And like he said, we're going to have a really good offseason, just be ready to go for next year.

Q. Besides physicality, what's another aspect you think you have to work on as a team going into next year?

COACH ENFIELD: Well, we're bringing in two 6'10" players, Bennie Boatwright and Chimezie Metu. Julian Jacobs hasn't been able to shoot a shot in two and a half weeks, so he's been hurt. You know his stats. I didn't say anything because I don't make excuses, but you saw he gave up shot after shot today and yesterday and last game. He hurt his hand four games ago, and he can't shoot free throws. He can't shoot jump shots.

So that's one thing our weakness is perimeter shooting. So it hurt us tonight because we did make eight 3s, but we're bringing in Bennie Boatwright, who is a big-time shooter at 6'10", and Chimezie is a big-time athlete who is a shot blocker and a rebounder and has some skill in offense.

So we know our weakness as a team, we know our weaknesses as individuals. It's our job

as a staff to identify those and tell our players how they can improve on those, and it's up to the players then to go out and have a desire to do it and get better.

Q. What do you think with this season you learned the most from -- what do you think is the biggest thing you learned from the season?

NIKOLA JOVANOVIC: I mean, definitely we improved as a team. And like both defensively and offensively we're not freshmen and sophomore anymore. Like Coach said, we need to have a great offseason and just keep improving. And I think we'll be fine next year.

KATIN REINHARDT: Same thing. We just -- we got better and better. And the biggest thing we learned is just we gotta be a lot more physical, a lot more stronger, and that's really it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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