

March 10, 2011



ARKANSAS: 68
TENNESSEE: 74

An Interview with:

**COACH BRUCE PEARL
TOBIAS HARRIS
MELVIN GOINS
BRIAN WILLIAMS**

THE MODERATOR: We have Tennessee with us, and we'll take an opening statement from Coach Pearl.

COACH PEARL: We're obviously pleased to get the win and to advance. You could see that Arkansas is a very dangerous team. They just got a lot of toughness and a lot of grit with Rotnei Clarke and Britt knocking down some big shots there. They had a barrage of three balls there late, they didn't panic, they didn't feel like the game was over. And I would give them great, great credit for coming back on us.

I thought our first half defense was tremendous. The defense down the other end away from our bench, we couldn't help them, wasn't as good. That's something that we're going to have to fix as a team.

Tobias Harris played like an All-American. He's got great confidence because nobody in this country works harder than he does to prepare. It was

obvious that he was the dominant player on the floor tonight.

Melvin Goins has had it coming out of both ends for the last two days. We think we just got it coming out of one end at this point.

We good about that Mel? Is that a little bit too much to share? Probably a little too much (Laughter).

I'm telling you, man, this is a tough guy. This is a tough, tough guy. He's a tough guy, isn't he, Tobias.

TOBIAS HARRIS: Yeah, he is.

COACH PEARL: He's a tough guy, isn't he, Brian.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Yeah, he is.

COACH PEARL: But just his defense and his ability to make some big plays in there.

And I think finally just to get Brian back tonight, there were some plays that were made offensively, defensively, a little bit, where we have not had Brian, and it helped us out a little bit in there.

So it was a good team effort. It was a good team effort. We got to play better tomorrow to advance, though.

THE MODERATOR: Take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Tobias, talk about your first half. You came out really hot, you had 16; second half you had four. Talk about what happened out there.

TOBIAS HARRIS: I just tried to be aggressive in the first half, take what was there and just make plays for my teammates.

Second half, I thought they keyed in on me a little bit more, and I just tried to make plays and get other guys going and just do what I had to do out there for to us win the game.

Q. Talk about the challenge of playing Florida now tomorrow night.

TOBIAS HARRIS: It's going to be a great game for us. First two games we played them, it's been real close. And we know as a team what we need to do and just think that we just have to play our game, play defense and play as a team on the offensive end.

MELVIN GOINS: I just think we need to contain Walker, keep him out the lane, limit them to one shot opportunities, keep Parsons off the boards. They're a great ball club, one through five. So we're going to have to stay in front of them and defend them and rebound the basketball, and I think we'll be fine.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: They're a great team. Right now, they're the superior in the SEC and a W right now would mean a lot in the SEC and make a statement in the country, as well, beating them.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for coach.

Q. Talk about your excitement right now, or do you have any, that you get a third shot at Florida.

COACH PEARL: I think we're excited about the opportunity because Florida's such a great team. They're so balanced, they're so well coached, they're the best team in our league.

The price is big because they are going to be seeded well in the tournament and they're a rival. Florida's been a very competitive series for us. But the fact that we played them close really only means that they're going to be very ready.

We have spent all week long getting ready for Arkansas. I've done very little for Florida, and I looked at them at the very, very beginning of the week.

So we're excited about it, but at the same time we're going to have to play a lot better. We played about as well as we have played all year long at Florida, and it wasn't quite good enough.

Q. Are you a guy who believes in the old cliché that it's hard to beat a team three times in the same year?

COACH PEARL: When I've been on the side of having had to beat somebody for three straight times, I was a believer in that cliché. Now that I'm on this side, I'm not a believer in that cliché.

Q. Talk about what you saw from your team during the 16-0 run by Arkansas and how resilient your team was to still pull it out at the end.

COACH PEARL: I thought that, first of all, they made some big shots, they made some great plays, and they got elevated. I thought we missed some really good shots. We missed about three or four shots inside and got stripped a couple times. And so it happened fast, but it wasn't like we weren't getting the ball where we needed to get it.

But the fact that we were able to withstand it and get a few stops, Brian made a big basket there off that, off of Tobias's speed down there on that ball screen. Took it to the basket strong and that was a big play for us.

Q. You talked this week about not wanting to rely on the math or the computers for the NCAA. Do you feel like tonight took a little suspense out of Selection Sunday for you guys?

COACH PEARL: Well, I feel like there's certain wins that can help you and

certain losses that could hurt you. They're going say they may, they may list some of our losses as bad losses. I'll be very curious when the graphics come up if they list Oakland as a bad loss or College of Charleston or USC. Not that we didn't feel like we should beat those teams, or win those games, absolutely. We go into games thinking that we should. But those are teams are either in it or got real close to being in it.

And so you obviously want to stay away from that. I know the more we win the better chances we have to be seeded and the better chances we have to advance in this championship.

It's been three years in a row that we played in the weekend and that's something that Tennessee basketball hadn't done a lot of in our history. We have got great history and tradition at Tennessee basketball, not as much in the SEC tournament as we would like.

So we would very much like to be able to play for our fourth straight Final Four weekend in the SEC. But to do that, we got to beat the best team in the league.

Q. Considering the penalties with Jim Tressel and the coach at Ohio State and Connecticut, they were suspension less than yours. Do you think that there's hope that maybe the house isn't going to fall on your program and it's not going to be as bad as people think?

COACH PEARL: We'll find out. We have been very accountable and responsible for what's happened, and we're dealing with it. We're trying to lead through it. The penalties that we have imposed on ourself are very severe and we're managing. We're trying to overcome. But it's part of the process. Just the fact that it has to get discussed

some is a good deterrent. Its just a really good deterrent.

THE MODERATOR: Okay.
Thanks.

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