

March 11, 2011



Quarterfinal – Game 5
Dayton - 68
Xavier - 67

An Interview With:

DAYTON
COACH BRIAN GREGORY
LUKE FABRIZIUS
CHRIS WRIGHT

MODERATOR: We're joined by Dayton Flyers Head Coach Brian Gregory and Dayton student-athletes Luke Fabrizius and Chris Wright. Dayton played the winner of the Duquesne/St. Joseph's game at 1:10 tomorrow in our first semifinal game. We're going to start with an opening statement by Brian Gregory and we'll take questions for the student-athletes and dismiss them, and then we'll take questions for Coach Brian Gregory. Coach?

COACH GREGORY: Very proud of our guys, obviously. We had talked the last two days about, you know, we had played Xavier for 80 minutes, and for 76 minutes and 12 seconds it was even. But that's why they're in the position that they're in. They were able to make plays down the stretch to win both those games.

But it did give us confidence going into this game. You know, we wanted to make sure that we controlled the glass. I thought we did a good job of that.

And they're good. They can make plays and you've seen those stretches where they get going, how quickly they can score. But our guys kept their composure. And really proud of them. These 40 minutes go down to the last minute.

Other than one or two games since Chris has been -- and Luke have been here -- you know, Chris didn't play as a freshman, but we played eight times. I think it's three -- we're three and five.

And every single one of the games has been like this.

So give our guys credit, gave Xavier credit. They've had a tremendous regular season and they'll do tremendously well in the NCAA tournament, represent our league extremely well.

Q. Luke could you just talk about that last little sequence from banging your head and then hitting the free-throws?

LUKE FABRIZIUS: Yeah. I thought we had the play call to get the ball to Chris, Chris hit JJ and he went up for the shot. The first thing I thought was get to the glass. And the ball happened to come off, got in my hands and got fouled. I went down and didn't even hear the whistle go off. I didn't even think I got fouled. And Juwan looked at me and said, you're shooting free-throws. So had to shake it off and knock them down.

Q. Chris, after they made that huge run and tied the game and took the lead on Holloway's drive, how were you guys able regroup and get it done at the end?

CHRIS WRIGHT: First we just understand that Xavier's a scary team going down the stretch. I mean, with a player like Tu and a guy like McLean that can really rebound on the offensive glass, we just wanted to stay poised and continue to execute well and defensively. Didn't really -- we didn't want to be overaggressive because he's good at drawing fouls from the point of our spot.

We just wanted to stick with what we do because basketball is a game of runs, and we knew they was going to make a run so we just had to be prepared to it and we was able to come out the win at the end.

Q. Chris, you got off to a really good start. What was the key to that? You were 9-0. In the first half you were dominating them.

CHRIS WRIGHT: Besides going out there and trying to have fun, not over-think the game,

just go out there and try to be poised and relaxed. If you go out there too excited, you just start going crazy, things that you don't want to do.

I was able to go out there and be poised and we were able to go out there and play together. And we knew that we had share the ball because that's a team that, you know, is good defensively as well and you can't do it alone. So we was able share the ball and find each other and get into open spots because they were going to dominate early.

Q. Chris, right at the end there when Luke whacked his head, I saw you kind of come up and calm him down or say something. What exactly happened?

CHRIS WRIGHT: I don't even think he heard me. Right towards the end, I knew he heard me because he started shaking his head, yeah. We were just telling me that we needed him and I told him I needed him. And I just told him all the hours that he put in the gym, just shooting, shooting.

I was happy with the rebound. I knew the free-throws was going to be good because that's what he does. He's a shooter, and I was just happy that he got that board.

Q. Luke, can you ever remember making game-winning free-throws like that any time in your career, anything close to that?

LUKE FABRIZIUS: I don't think so. I mean, hitting shots from here and there and high scoring at AU, but never at the free-throw line. So just had to catch my breath, catch my breath quick. And we played well as a team tonight. We wouldn't have done it without Dev. Dev had a huge man for the first half. Obviously got hurt. We saw him go down. We knew we had to pick it up for him. So every guy out there contributed tonight.

Q. Coach, it looked like you were subbing a lot more today. Why?

COACH GREGORY: Different reasons. One, last week of the season, we played Sunday, against Xavier Wednesday, Saturday. And we had to -- since last Friday, we've only been home one night. We travelled to UMass and played and so forth. So, yeah, I felt that we needed to try to stay as fresh as we could. So that was number one.

Number two, we did have foul problems. In the first half, Paul had a couple fouls and so

forth and Josh Benson gets in foul trouble, so that was another reason.

And the third was when you play as many games now, especially in the last couple of years, other than our one game at home last year when we won big, every game goes down to the last two minutes, and we just wanted to try to stay fresh.

Tell you one thing, last three minutes, we were dead tired. I think both teams were exhausted. The emotional, sometimes you get off to those leads or you take a lead and emotionally it drains you as much as physically. And I think that happened to our guys.

But trying to play some bodies and stay as fresh as we can has been something that's worked for us. And they had some foul trouble early with Dante and only went seven deep today. And those guys, subs played 15 and 14 minutes. I was getting a little upset how long it was taking to drive the floor at time because that was a good rest for Xavier there. And the refs look at me like I was crazy.

But it is something that they've dealt with all year long and done a great job of organizing those minutes and getting guys rest in key periods.

Q. Coach, half court, defensively, you seemed to disrupt their flow all game, particularly with ball screens. Can you speak about that?

COACH GREGORY: Yeah. We had five different coverages on ball screens. You can't guard them the same way all the time. Tu Holloway and Lyons, here's the deal, man: Every time you make a mistake on the ball screen coverage, they take advantage of it. More so than any team in 21 years of coaching that I've ever seen. If you're sloppy, they can shoot behind it. If you're too aggressive they split it. If your guards don't get over the top, they reject it. Then they started hitting rolls. They did a heck of a job.

And they hurt us because they countered some of our stuff with quick throwbacks. That's how McLean got the dunk there during that stretch.

But we changed up there at the end of the game, and it was fairly successful. We talk about it, that you have to be so focused every single ball screen and it has to be five guys covering that ball screen, not just the two involved in the ball screen.

I'm proud of our guys because they did a good job in a short prep time, even though we played them twice. You know, they did a very

good job executing that.

Q. The job that Fabrizio did tonight, just not only right at the end there, but he hit a couple long shots where you got a couple rebounds. He wasn't a factor in the other two games, but today he really stood out.

COACH GREGORY: Well, he's been playing a lot better. He didn't play that well a week ago or ten days ago when we played them.

But he does more than just make shots now. He keeps the ball moving on offense. He's become a motion maker for us offensively. We're actually at times best offensively when he's in the game.

You know, he's really gained some toughness in terms of defense and rebounding. And he got that offensive rebound at the end of game, didn't he? Yeah. They don't have him. He's going to be ticked because he didn't get credited for the offensive rebound.

But he's had a tough year. In many ways, kind of mirrors our team. Inconsistency. He's back. He's healthy. He's in good rhythm. Then he's banged up a little bit and out of rhythm. And then it takes a couple weeks to get back.

But the one thing is he does an unbelievable job. He believes in everything we teach. He knows our system inside and out. He's a guy that I think could be a great leader for us, but it's hard to lead if you're not playing. And that was the challenge that he's faced because of some of the nagging injuries and so forth.

But being a kid from my high school and growing up in the same neighborhood, that was pretty sweet, you know, him making those free-throws. I know that Mt. Prospect and Arlington Heights are going nuts right now, so that's good.

Q. Coach, how are things looking with Devin's ankle and what are his prospects for playing this weekend?

COACH GREGORY: Well, the one thing is, with Nate Seymour and Mike Bewley, those two guys are like miracle workers when it comes to stuff. And if anybody can get a kid back after a twisted ankle -- he's got bad twisted ankle, again, no doctor, so I have no idea. Just laymen's term, he twisted his ankle. But they'll do everything they can to try to get him back for tomorrow.

He's been playing good. He played well the other night. He gives us that senior experience

inside, so hopefully he'll be ready to go. If not, then I thought Matt Kavanaugh gave us good minutes today. Again, it was a total team effort for us.

Q. Coach, you talked a little bit about preparation and you guys came out of the gates 21-3. Tell me about how you prepared differently for today's game as opposed to the first two.

COACH GREGORY: Sometimes you guys give the coaches way too much credit. We showed them what we did well on offense. You gotta remember, the second half at our place, we scored 37 points on them. And we scored 70-something the first time. When we push the ball -- and we don't necessarily have to score in transition. We had seven transition points that's it. That's not a ton. We usually get 15 to 20 a game. We're not getting those as much this year.

But the pace, just the movement, you can see -- when you start seeing guys driving and movement and make the extra pass, that's when we're good. We did that in the second half down there at our place, and we did it in stretches today as well as we ever have. We did it on Tuesday or Monday or whatever day it was at UMass.

So the same preparation, it's the same offense, it's the same principal, the same system. When we execute it really well, we're good.

Now, you gotta make some shots too, you know. We shot the ball well. We got some open looks though. The only time I thought we got in trouble was sometimes when you get it going, you start losing your -- you gotta remain humble when you make some of those shots. You can't get hungry.

And I think at times we said, okay, we got it going, I can take this shot. That gets you in trouble against really good teams, and it did today.

Q. Brian, wondering about the five-second violation. You had that two-point lead. What happened there? And defensively, the last 5.8 seconds, what were you hoping to accomplish?

COACH GREGORY: Well, they had a foul to give. So we knew we had to get the ball inbounds and they were probably going to foul us on that inbound. We didn't execute that well. We had a timeout. I'm on the sideline. To be honest with you, I probably should have called a timeout.

The inbounder was instructed to call a timeout. So I take responsibility for that.

I'm watching the guys cut. We didn't cut as hard as we needed to, so screwed that thing up big time. We did.

But at the end then, we executed the offensive action the next play very, very well. We executed the defensive assignment on Holloway at the end of the clock. Chris Wright did a tremendous job. Juwan got wiped out on that play. Chris comes up and corrals him and forces a difficult shot.

So for the most part, unfortunately, when you play a really good team, all it takes sometimes is one mistake, and I'm just glad that because of our execution on that inbounds, it didn't cost us.

Q. Coach, can you take us inside the huddle for that final timeout? Was it about six seconds left?

COACH GREGORY: Yeah. We just wanted to make sure -- okay, I'll be honest. You know, we didn't want Holloway to beat us. He's a great player. Talk to another A-10 coach, called him an assassin, and that's kind of what he is. We wanted to corral and then jump him and double team him. And there wasn't a lot of time left. Juwan did a great job of disrupting that handoff to him right there, which kind of threw him off rhythm a little bit. And Chris Wright did a great job of recognizing him being open and did enough to contest the shot and force a difficult shot to win the game.

MODERATOR: Final question for Coach Gregory.

Q. Coach, you spoke about Matt Kavanaugh giving you a lot of quality minutes today. I thought he was very effective on the defensive end as well as rebounding. And then on the offensive end, I saw he was in a lot of pick and rolls, and he did a great job of going to the basket and was open quite a few times. If you saw that, can you speak about how the guards were unable get him the ball on the roll?

COACH GREGORY: Are you from the Centerville newspaper? (laughter)

No, he played well. I'm just joking. He did a lot of good things. They trapped every ball screen. They really extend up, so you want to hard roll, and Matt does a good job of that.

And because of our ability to make some shots, now they're getting stretched on the backside. A lot of times then that roll comes off the next drive, and he made himself available, made a couple of those shots.

Defensively, he's still got a ways to go. He's still got a ways to go. He fouled Holloway on that drive on the baseline. He gave up a dunk on the blob. Sometimes that's just experience, not knowing exactly what the coverage is.

But again, you can live with mistakes when it comes from guys that really care and believe in what you're doing. And so Matt is one of those guys. He's going to get his butt chewed when he makes those mistakes, but he'll come back and want more. And then that's why he's going to, not only the remainder of this year but also down the road, help us continue to win a lot of games.

And so -- and we needed him today, you know. No question about it. Devin goes down, someone had to step up. Devin goes down, Josh is in foul trouble, we needed a big to make some plays, and Matt did a good job of that.

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