

March 13, 2011



Championship Final – Game 11
Richmond – 67
Dayton – 54

An Interview With:

**DAYTON
COACH BRIAN GREGORY
CHRIS JOHNSON
CHRIS WRIGHT**

COACH GREGORY: We had a heck of a week, and unfortunately didn't turn out the way we wanted to today. Guys have -- this team has a lot to be proud of in terms of the way they battled this week. And at the same time, you got to give Richmond a ton of credit. They played better than we did today. They're a very, very good team.

Those four seniors know exactly what needs to be done almost in every situation that occurs during the game. You know, they just end up making big play after big play.

I thought defensively, for a short turnover, our guys did a very good job of guarding their stuff. The one thing is no matter how well you play defense against them, they have a guy in Kevin Anderson that can get a shot anytime he wants, and he goes four for nine from the three. He's a great free-throw shooter, and he just kind of controlled the game in the second half when we were making some runs, and that's a great luxury to have.

So obviously, with us, we had a great run this week. Speaks volumes for how good this league is. And, you know, we had a tough time scoring but hopefully our guys will learn from the run that they had and continue to move forward.

Q. For Chris and Chris, how do you feel overall just as far as feel good about the run

you made and getting this far and a sense of accomplish?

CHRIS WRIGHT: I'm really happy with playing in the Championship game, but as a team, not winning it hurts, not to be able to get out there and get a win. We had our faith in our hands. We could control our destiny, and for us to come up short...

We lost to great team in Richmond. Like Coach said, they got four seniors who do a great job of keeping their team together and executing well. But you know, of course, we don't believe in moral victories, so we upset about losing.

CHRIS JOHNSON: Like he said, it's not a great feeling losing. I give our team a lot of credit. I mean, we played hard throughout the week and showed that we got a lot of toughness. And in continues every day and every game we got a great opportunity of doing something special.

Q. Chris or Chris, they got a double-digit lead early in that first half. Was it too much of a hole to dig out of? You guys made some runs. Just kind of too much to dig out of at that point?

CHRIS WRIGHT: I mean, in basketball, there are going to be times when you're down and times when you're up. The game is 40 minutes. Starts out where they were hot and we were able to make runs and basketball is a game of runs, but we cut it close sometimes. In the second half, we was only down six and for a stretch, they was really defending well and getting offensive rebounds. They had a team were really ready to execute they offense well. We would get down in the shot clock and they would get second chances and that hurt us in the second half.

But if you're in a hole, you just got to keep chipping away at it. You can't make all the plays in one play, but if you keep chipping away, you'll be able to come close. Down the stretch, you'll be able to put yourself in a position to win.

Q. Coach, you see this team maybe

going to the NIT or some other tournament. Do you still see a post-season for your squad given the run you made here and the way you performed this year?

COACH GREGORY: Yeah, that would take some -- that we'd be able to play somewhere in the post season. I didn't really look at anything other than trying to win today, so playing in the NCAA tournament, but I think with our strength and schedule and 22 wins and making it to the championship game in this league, even though we were inconsistent during the Atlantic 10 season, we played pretty good non-conference, beat some teams that have already qualified for the NCAA tournament. So I would think that we'd be able to play in the post season.

I think our guys are excited about it because of the fact that we're playing better right now and playing with a little more, you know, pop to our game. It's hard to do that against Richmond, but so I think we'd be excited about that.

Q. Looked like you couldn't really get your transition game that you liked going, open shots in transition. Is it just Richmond is just tough that way?

COACH GREGORY: Well, you have to get stops, defensive stops and rebounds. They hurt us on the offensive glass in terms of in particular the second half. You know, there were some offensive possessions that we had, especially when we cut it to five or six points in the second half, that were really good.

One of the problems -- I'll be honest with you -- that we have sometimes is we have some success in some of the stuff and we just get too caught up sometimes and don't continue to go to the things that have been successful.

I thought in the first half again, this team is an unbelievable group of guys. They almost wanted it too much. We were playing too fast again. And mostly, to be honest with you, on defense than on offense. We made a lot of defensive mistakes in the first half, gave up some open shots because of over rotating and so forth. But so slowed it down a little bit and made a pretty good run in the second half, but just wasn't, at the end of the day, didn't make enough shots.

We wanted to get to the basket and now they get, you know, six blocked shots against us. We got to get a couple defensive stops and rebounds and we do, and then we don't get the rebound. And so that was really difficult in the

second half because I thought there was two different points there if we got a stop and a rebound and made a basket, now you cut it to three or four, and it's a whole different ball game the last nine minutes.

Q. Coach, what's it like preparing for a guy like Kevin Anderson?

COACH GREGORY: I'm glad it's over. Glad I'll never have to prepare for him again.

It's interesting, you know, they run the Princeton offense and all that stuff. But what -- where they use him so well is all that does is stretch the defense, and now you end up having to guard him one-on-one a lot. And when the things break down, they just run the high ball screen for him.

He's one of the few guards in the country that, at any time, at any point in the game, he can get create his own shot.

We did a pretty good job on him on a couple sometimes, you know. Six-for-15 is, you know, probably pretty good, but he went four-for-nine from three, and that's where he's added that piece of his repertoire that he didn't have early in his career, his ability to knock down an open 3.

So it's hard because he's great with the ball. Very rarely you can take it away from him, and he's a tremendous free-throw shooter.

So now you're down six, seven points at the end of the game and they're running that stuff and he's got the ball in his hand, and if you foul him, he shoots 90 percent. It's a great luxury to have your point guard that is as good with the ball as he is and is also a great free-throw shooter.

Q. Just wondering if you think maybe your team learned anything about itself through this tournament run here or just, you know, they had some real nice games. I don't know if you think that realized something about themselves.

COACH GREGORY: Well, you know, I hope so. You would hope that the seniors leave this tournament feeling pretty good about the fact that they were able to kind of rally the troops a little bit. And to be honest with you, you hope the underclassmen got a taste of what it feels like to play in a championship game but also understood that their play needs to be a lot more consistent in the two months previous and you wouldn't have to go into this Sunday having to win the game to play

in the NCAA tournament.

And that's the challenge. That's the next step. That's the thing that you got to be able to do, and I think we got good enough kids for them to figure that out and run that. Now we need to go out there and do it.

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