

March 11, 2011



Quarterfinal – Game 8
Richmond – 55
Rhode Island – 45

An Interview With:

**RHODE ISLAND
COACH JIM BARON
MARQUIS JONES
JAMAL WILSON**

COACH BARON: Well, we knew it was going to be a hard-fought game after beating them the first time, and we've coming off a good win against St. Louis. I think the first time we had beaten them, you know, we did a good job of rebounding the basketball. I thought we did a real good job of sharing the basketball and we did a real good job of defending.

But you know, I think we fell short coming into this game with, you know, not sharing the basketball like we had been doing to win basketball games, and I thought the first half we did a good job of rebounding the basketball, but then they came back and stepped up and made some good plays. I thought that the zone was real good. It was very effective.

But, you know, we needed to make plays, whether it was layups, whether it was free-throws, whether it was shots, and they hit some pivotal shots and they got to the free-throw line and stepped up and made their plays.

And they're a good basketball team. I mean, they won 24 and they got some very fine players. But I tell you, I told our guys I was real proud of how they fought the fight. And, you know, again, if you want to come out on top, you gotta continue to understand the equation.

Q. For either player, did they do anything differently tonight than they did what you when you scored 78 points in January?

JAMAL WILSON: No. Not really. Again, like the first game, we had 18 or 20 assists, I forget the exact number. Tonight we only had maybe, what, five. Again, sharing the basketball was key.

But, no, they played solid, as they normally do, and we again had more mental lapses as we always do, and unfortunately we came up short.

Q. When you say mental lapses, is that defensive rebounding? Is that switching off when the shot goes up? What do you mean by that?

JAMAL WILSON: That's everything. Coaches do a hell of a job of getting us ready and preparing us for a game. And they're a team that does a lot of back cuts and a lot of small things that are key to get them open shots, and mental lapses mean to remember that you got to be outside, that you got to be off your shooter to help your big man fronting the post, little things like that.

COACH BARON: Some of the stuff that we ran, we were very lethargic. We needed to be quicker. And we knew that they're very different. They're very different than St. Louis. They're very different than a lot of teams because they match up and they trade off. So when you make cuts, you got to make them quickly and you got to react quickly to what they're doing.

But, you know, I mean, still, with all that, we make a couple of free-throws, we make a couple of layups, we just do a better job of rebounding the ball so that they don't get second shots and we're right there in this basketball game.

But they stepped up and they made some big plays when they needed them. But if you were to tell me coming into the game that we would hold Justin Harper to 12 points, I would have told you there's no way because I think he's such a good player, but he goes three for 14.

But (Kevin) Anderson stepped up and made some big plays down the stretch. He

attacked the bucket and made some big plays.

Q. Marquis, do you hope to play more basketball this season?

MARQUIS JONES: Yeah. I mean, any tournament we get invited to, luckily we get invited to a tournament, looking for to wherever we play at.

Q. Marquis, why is their match-up zone so tough? What do they do that other teams don't do?

MARQUIS JONES: They're disciplined. They know their assignments. They know what part of the court they belong to or who they're guarding. So, I mean, it disrupted us a little bit in our offense, trying to get slips and trying to be more aggressive going to the rim. But real good disciplined team and they showed it today.

Q. Jim, can you talk more about that defense, and do they compare to anybody else you played this season with that match-up?

COACH BARON: Yeah. I mean, they played Duquesne. Duquesne plays a little bit of a match-up. But first time we played them, we had 17 assists, 17, 18 assists. You got to share the basketball. Nikola had 26 points. Orion Outerbridge had 18. Akeem Richmond had double figures. And I told our guys, we just -- the equation is you got to share the basketball.

We had a couple of guys were taking the ball to the bucket and they were triple teamed. And you got to make the extra pass. I think the first time we played them, you know, we were really ready to make that extra pass. And tonight, for some reason, we just felt, you know, guys wanted to take it and be aggressive. They wanted to be aggressive, but we also have to share the basketball.

Q. How much of the defensive rebounding problems are being in a two-three zone and not matching up with a body on body?

COACH BARON: Again, you still got to box out in the zone. Regardless of what you're playing, you still got to box out, whether it's man-to-man or zone. But they missed a lot of shots and they were getting some second shots and, you know, stepped up and did a good job. I told our guys at halftime, we out-rebounded them the first half. And I said the team that out-rebounds wins the battle of boards the second

half is going to have the best chance to win this game. And they ended up doing that. They ended up out-rebounding us 42 to 35.

Q. Jim, the same question about playing more basketball this year. Do you want to play and have you received any indication that you might play?

COACH BARON: Yeah, there's no question. I think this team definitely deserves it. You win 19 games -- and we've had some great wins and we had a very challenging schedule, you know, and we had some adversity with Jamal breaking his foot the first semester and academically.

So again, I think these kids deserve it. And we're right there against Richmond. So we beat St. Louis the first game of the tournament, and 19 wins and, you know, is -- especially, you know, coming off of last year, winning 26, so yeah, there's no question that we want to continue to play.

Q. Jim, there was a nine-minute stretch end of the first half, beginning of the second half, their only basket was the Harper 3-pointer. What were you doing right defensively at that point? What were you doing right?

COACH BARON: I think we were doing a good job of guarding him and I think we were keying on him and I think we were doing a much better job of rebounding the basketball, limiting them to one shot. And that's why we were able to out-rebound them the first half. So we wanted to continue to do that.

But I thought we had the pace of the game and the right -- and once Marquis got that first foul and then Delroy (James) got into foul trouble as well, we wanted to shorten the game with Delroy. Especially Delroy. He had the two fouls.

So I thought the pace of the game was going, but we just needed to make -- we needed to make a couple more shots, we needed to rebound the ball a little bit better, and then we needed share the basketball because that's what we did the first time that we were able to beat them. And we had 17 assists. You can't beat a good basketball team with five assists. I've said this to you guys -- after every game, you know, to beat good teams, you have to have between 15 and 20 assists. And we've come out on top when we were able to do that.

But different circumstances, now all of a sudden, guys think that they may need to carry the team or whatever. But I think that our guys have really shown -- a guy like Nikola (Malesovic), a guy like Akeem Richmond, a guy like Orion Outerbridge, they really have shown that they can play and they can score. And, again, we just have to keep trying to share the basketball.

Q. So far through two full days of the tournament and knowing the league like you do, how is this league showing itself in front of the nation so far this week?

COACH BARON: There's no question. I'm just telling you, and I think that that's why you've had so many upsets so early. But this league is a terrific league, and you got great coaches, you got great players, and you got excellent teams. And I don't think we have to take a back seat to anybody. Again, when you talk about extra teams going to the post season, I mean, you have some legitimate teams.

I mean, we all have elevated our schedules. We're playing different teams outside the schedule, but I just think this is an excellent league.

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