

**March 8, 2013**



WICHITA STATE – 69  
MISSOURI STATE – 59

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

**COACH PAUL LUSK  
ANTHONY DOWNING  
KEITH PICKENS  
MARCUS MARSHALL**

THE MODERATOR: As is usually the case, we will start with a statement from head coach Paul Lusk and then take questions for the student-athletes before rounding out with questions for Coach. Coach?

COACH LUSK: I thought our guys really competed. Give credit to Wichita. They're strong, they're physical. They've got experience and the difference was on the glass and we knew that was going to be a concern and that's where Wichita excels and we simply couldn't keep them off the glass.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Anthony Downing, Keith Pickens and Marcus Marshall. Questions for the student-athletes? Front row?

**Q. Anthony, after a grueling game last night for you and Keith, do you think fatigue was a factor in the last seven, eight minutes?**

ANTHONY DOWNING: No, not at all. Our training staff did a real good job of getting us back and getting treatment today and we got well rested.

**Q. Marcus, just your thought on tying the MVC record for freshmen and then 43 points in two games, talk about what you left here in St. Louis.**

MARCUS MARSHALL: Well, right now, it doesn't really mean much. I mean, everything with these guys right here. I'm really happy how they went out and fought throughout the whole season. They stayed patient with us. They worked hard in practice and everybody tried for that.

**Q. Anthony, you guys didn't finish the way you wanted to, but you had a great run through the tournament. Can you tell me how you feel about the tournament?**

ANTHONY DOWNING: I feel good. You know, I wish we could keep on playing, because I don't want my season to end, but it's not how it works and sometimes you got to move on in life. But I feel real good how my team fought and they knew this was me and Keith's last go-around and they gave it their all and I'm proud of our guys for not giving up, even though our record, I think we're way better than what our record shows, and they just kept fighting throughout the year and I wouldn't trade my teammates for nothing and I'm glad they stuck with it, even through the hard times.

**Q. Keith, just talk a little bit about coming out and playing as hard as you did the last two games with all the injuries and making the decision before getting here that this was going to be your last game.**

KEITH PICKENS: I wanted to leave it all on the court for the conference tournament and give the younger guys a better understanding of what it means to go hard at all times. And me making a decision was tough, but it was the best decision for me, and my coach respected it and I talked to Coach Lusk about it and the training staff. And it was the right thing for my body.

**Q. Keith, can you just talk about you and Anthony coming out of the game for the last time, how emotional that might have been for you?**

KEITH PICKENS: Didn't hit me at that point that it was the last time I'd be coming out of a college basketball game or any basketball game, for that matter. Definitely emotional. Hugging all the players and just having them support me and tell me that it's been a pleasure to play with me. IT means a lot to me.

Me and Anthony, we stuck together and we held everybody together on the team and I



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**Missouri State – 03.08.13**

think the team learned a lot with it and the coach did a great job with us also.

**Q. For Anthony, just talk about where this team came from December 29 'til the end of the season, how much progress you made.**

ANTHONY DOWNING: We made a lot of progress. I think it all started in the end, with the loss against Alabama A&M. We had to come together and stuff like that. It took us a few games after that game to get it started, but I think that's where it started. We came together and we fought hard. That's all that really matters, is that we gave it our all.

THE MODERATOR: Anything else? Gentlemen, thank you so much. Appreciate your time and attention.

Questions for Coach Lusk. We'll start on the right.

**Q. Coach, just talk about Marcus Marshall's performance last two games and his tying the record tonight.**

COACH LUSK: Well, he's a good player. We knew he would be a guy that could make an impact right away, and, you know, the thing that you like about him as a young person is where his mind and his heart is. He and Downing, and especially Downing, they became very close this year. And, you know, he's more concerned about those guys going out than he is breaking any record.

It's great moving forward, because he's going to be a piece and we have to continue to add pieces. So very proud of him for his effort. He plays, he's got a very mature pulse to him. He doesn't get rattled. And then he's just going to continue to get better because he likes to play, and he's got toughness.

**Q. Tie game with about eight minutes to go, I mean, you probably couldn't have asked for anything more than that at that point.**

COACH LUSK: Well, you know, you ask the guys about being tired. They fought, but when you're going against those physical bodies out there, and there's a size advantage, and they're awfully talented, and they're tough, and they're well coached, it tends to wear on you.

We did everything we needed to do. We just simply couldn't keep them off the glass. And their bodies are just different than our bodies. We have to continue to make improvements. Some of

it is youth. I think our guys understand how important the weight room's going to be.

The guys that are in the program have to continue to get better on -- in the weight room, on the floor. We have to continue to recruit. We have to continue to get pieces out there like a team like Wichita State has, because they've got very good players.

Ron Baker's on the All-Freshman Team if he doesn't get hurt this year. He's an absolute difference-maker and he came in and really was a big boost for them.

**Q. Coach, you just mentioned the physicalness of the game. You became animated on the sidelines with just how tough and physical, what was going on. Can you talk about how tough the game was?**

COACH LUSK: Well, that's Wichita. Their best offense sometimes is a missed shot and it certainly was true today with 20 offensive rebounds. Our guys didn't back down. Our guys played, and it's just, it's the grind of the game and those physical bodies and so that's what they did. I thought we were the aggressors most of the afternoon. They're going to wear you down.

I think we battled them. We just simply couldn't keep them off the glass at the end. And then you've got to make some shots. They're good defensively. I thought we did a good job on them defensively. But if you're going to beat this team, you're going to have to make some shots, and it's not easy to make shots.

I thought we got good shots. Their zone was very effective. I thought our zone was good. We could get them to miss. We just couldn't get the rebound.

**Q. I want to ask about, you guys got down ten early in the second half. What changed?**

COACH LUSK: I don't really think anything changed. I just think we got a couple stops in a row where they missed it and we got the rebound. That was important. We told our guys we'll find some rhythm offensively. I think that was the difference.

We got them to miss, and we were able to be one and done on the defensive end, because if you let them get multiple opportunities at the basket, you are going to end up fouling them. They're going to the foul line. But I think our guys

kept fighting.

We had it to a two-possession game. It was six points there with, I don't know, 40 seconds left after we caused a turnover and we inbounded the ball to A.D. and he stumbled and fell out of bounds. There was absolutely no quit in our guys, and there was no quit in our team this year.

Our record's not where it needs to be. It's probably not the most pleasant thing for the eyes, our record, but I think our guys made progress. They let us coach them. Sometimes for Anthony Downing, I'm as proud of him as I've ever been about a kid, because he's come in and he's really matured.

He had high expectations this year, he and Jarmar Gulley. Those guys would have been a good one-two punch for us. But when Jarmar went down, we just weren't in a position to be able to absorb that kind of hit right now. You got to have a bunch of players in the stable.

I think it affected Downing early, but he just kept coming to work every day. I think our relationship even grew closer, and he was just totally bought in to doing whatever he needed to do.

And then the turnaround that we had when the Valley season started, it's a good thing. And we're 7-11. You say how is that a good thing? But our guys battled.

Keith Pickens has been playing basketball for two years on one leg. One leg. Sometimes that leg has gotten spasms in it. We weren't in a position for that. We knew coming back this year Pick was not going to be a primary guy. He'd have to be a secondary guy. He was forced into a bigger role when Gulley went down.

Very pleased with Anthony Downing and Keith Pickens, everything that they've done for the program. They've got toughness. They've got grit. They're going to get their degree, and that's what it's about.

And when we do get to where we need to be, those guys are going to be a big part of it, because they left a mark for our young guys. They've impacted those young guys' lives and how they're supposed to work and go about their business, and that's a positive thing for our program moving forward.

**Q. Coach, how impressed were you with your players playing even with a really rambunctious Wichita State crowd?**

COACH LUSK: I thought we really battled. Sometimes you can battle, but it's just enough. As I said, I'll sleep like a baby tonight. I want our record to be better, there's no doubt about it. I want our program to continue to make strides. But feel very good about that locker room that I'm in with those guys, because they battled, and you can sleep well at night when your guys are giving maximum effort. That's what we did. We finished the season, I think, winning three out of five. And we were competitive most of the Valley season.

So very pleased with our effort. We have to continue to get better. We have to make strides. Guys that are in the program have to get better. The incoming guys have to help. We've got to get Gulley back healthy, and then we have to continue to add pieces to the puzzle.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

COACH LUSK: Thanks, guys.  
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