

**March 19, 2014**



An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Justin, Steve mentioned when he was talking about tournaments, he said one of the things he was excited about was to catch up and see you play you and catch up with you. What do you remember about him from your high school time with him?**

JUSTIN JACKSON: Steve's real quiet, but he's a cool dude. I knew him from high school.

**Q. Tommy mentioned that he saw both you guys, I was curious, did he, Tommy Amaker, ever talk to you?**

JUSTIN JACKSON: Yeah, I met him in high school, he's a cool person too, a good guy.

**Q. I saw you against UCONN. When you guys force turnovers you're a menace, just a menace. Talk about getting the ball out of their guard's hands, like Siyani and Wesley, and trying to speed them up and turn them over.**

SEAN KILPATRICK: That's something that we really harp on, especially with us being the defensive minded team. Being able to just really turn the team over and get fast break points is something that we really scramble for. It makes our job a lot easier and keeps our big men out of foul trouble. We know it's going to be hard to keep

the guards out of the lane, because they're pretty fast and they make a lot of smart decisions with the ball, but we got to continue to keep doing what we do.

**Q. Talk about your matchup with Harvard. We'll start with Titus.**

CARL BAPTISTE: We know -- we respect that team, we know that they were preseason ranked. We saw they played UCONN really hard, they only lost by four. And they have players, even though they're Ivy League team, they have good players. But we're worried about us, we think if we do what we do best, then everything will take care of itself.

JUSTIN JACKSON: Just going on what Titus said, we just handle our business and just play Cincinnati basketball and take care of the basketball and just harass the ball and make them turn over the ball and just do what we do best, we will be all right.

SEAN KILPATRICK: Just piggybacking off what they said, we know that they're going to come out with a lot of fire, because they're a team that is a veteran team as well, but they also have a good chemistry on that team and that's something that we got to keep in mind, as well. It's not going to be any type of blow out throughout this tournament, especially throughout this game tomorrow, so we just got to come in and play Cincinnati basketball.

**Q. Is there a stat that you guys look at, whether it's number of turnovers forced or number of possessions that you try to limit them to, that dictates if your defense is working the way it should?**

JUSTIN JACKSON: Deflections. We look on deflection. If you get more than 40 deflections a game, then nine times out of ten we're going to win the game. So we just harp on getting deflections.

TITUS RUBLES: We're undefeated when we get 40 deflections or more, so I think we're real big on deflections.



**Q. All three of you guys, what's it feel like when the President picks against you in a bracket?**

JUSTIN JACKSON: Who?

**Q. President of the United States. You guys -- it's the 5-12 matchup and Harvard is a trendy pick. What's it feel like when people are picking against you?**

SEAN KILPATRICK: It's nothing new, we're used to it. We're so used to being counted out throughout the regular season that now it's something that it's like second nature towards us. We don't take it no type of way, that's their opinions. We can only just really focus on what matters with us and the team in the locker room and getting our team focused. But we have been counted out all year and look how far we have got now.

JUSTIN JACKSON: So harping on what SK said, it's nothing new for us. We have been doing this for four years now. They been saying we won't make it to the tournament for four years. And so it really doesn't matter what someone has to say, at the end of the day, it matters on the court.

TITUS RUBLES: I have nothing to add.

**Q. Sean, how would you describe the progression of your career at Cincinnati and what have you gotten better at to where you were able to be as good as you were this season?**

SEAN KILPATRICK: I got better at taking better shots, taking better shots and really getting my teammates involved. I know that everyone knows, that plays the game, knows it's not a one-man show or anything like that, and you need your teammates to really help you get over a lot of situations. And these two guys up here with me, they have helped me out there out everything. And without them, I don't know where I would be, especially without my teammates as well.

But just really being able to read defenses, just really taking more sort of leadership role and making sure all my teammates are really focused on what's going on. That's something that I hold accountable of myself. So I just really focus on just really being a leader and just really making sure that my team is focused for the next game and really just taking it a day at a time. You can't really force what you really want to happen, because

once you start forcing situations, then bad things end up happening. So I just take it a day at a time.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about what Sean means to your team.

JUSTIN JACKSON: SK is the second leading scorer in our history. He's an All-American. He's a ball player. When it gets down to it, he's going to do what it takes to win the game. And we're 27-5 or whatever it is. It shows. It speaks for itself.

TITUS RUBLES: Yeah, but I want to say something about him, I think the most improved part of his game is his leadership. Last year he got buckets, of course, but he was a little more silent. But this year he's more of a leader and he takes a leadership role. When we get down, he keeps people composed. So I think that's the biggest jump I've seen from last year to this year.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll excuse the student-athletes and take questions for coach.

**Q. Your players talked about deflections being a number that's important on the defense. Do you have numbers and how much you win if they reach 40?**

COACH MICK CRONIN: If we reach 40 in the last two years, we're undefeated.

**Q. And if you don't reach 40? Do you still win most of the time?**

COACH MICK CRONIN: Not most of the time, but 35 would be the next barometer for us. But 40's the one that we shoot for.

**Q. Can you explain a little bit how that works then, the deflections lead to turnovers and disrupt the offense?**

COACH MICK CRONIN: You would hope that it led to a turnover, but at the end game, it's -- you're at least disrupting the opponent. But you don't necessarily have to get the turnover.

**Q. SK said defending these guys might be something like defending Georgetown because of the way they pass and cut. Do you see that and just how do you feel about how you're going to defend these guys?**

COACH MICK CRONIN: Well, I think you can tell probably -- you guys obviously just talked to the guys, what great respect we have from watching film of Harvard, how good they are.



They're a great passing team. So, they don't run Georgetown's offense. But I think it's a -- I didn't give him that comparison, but I got some veteran guys that have been around, so they know teams that they have played that are great passing teams.

So, they will run plays or sets early in their offense where they will throw six or seven passes before the ball hits the floor. And then your head's spinning and the guy just goes by and shoots a lay up because everybody is so busy chasing their man around.

So, it's a problem, no doubt about it, they have great player movement and great ball movement. We have great respect for what they're doing on offense and I think that the last part of that is can you run a lot of things, but if you're guys can't pass, it's not going to be effective. They got guys that can pass. They're a very skilled team when it comes to passing the basketball.

**Q. Does that make it even more imperative to get turnovers so that you don't have to guard them for 35 seconds every time?**

COACH MICK CRONIN: They don't necessarily hold the ball, but for us, with our style of play, we just try to focus on what we have to do to be as good as Cincinnati can be.

Our defense -- we have to impose our will defensively on whoever our opponent is. Now, obviously, if we don't beat Harvard there will be no more opponents. So tomorrow it's Harvard. We have got to be able to make our defense a factor. If not, we become an average team pretty quickly.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thanks.

COACH MICK CRONIN: You got it.

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