

**March 25, 2013**



Duke – 66  
Creighton – 50

An interview with:



**COACH KRZYZEWSKI:** The game was a heck of a game. Both teams played great defense. It was just so difficult to score. It's the best defense we've played all year. Our guys really fought. It was just tough to get buckets. Tyler's shot at the end of the half was a big lift, but they came right back, and Seth put on a display -- I thought he just got us a working margin of seven, nine points, and we got in incredible foul trouble, and Josh Hairston and Amile Jefferson really stepped up, and Tyler Thornton defensively, and then Rasheed was terrific throughout the whole game. He had that big three, but he was just really good the whole game.

We beat an outstanding team. My kids played really hard and well together. I'm really proud of them.

**Q. Seth, can you talk about how your shin is feeling, what you're doing to manage it and what rest means for it moving forward?**

**SETH CURRY:** It's feeling okay. It's getting a little bit better as the year has gone along, and we're doing a great job of just getting it ready for the next day, next game. Just quick turnarounds, and Shane is doing a great job of getting my treatment in, and I felt great tonight for the most part. I'm excited about it.

**Q. Rasheed and Seth, talk about getting past these first two games now and**

**moving forward. Talk about the challenge of those two games, getting through those and now moving on.**

**RASHEED SULAIMON:** You know, the first two rounds I felt challenged. The first game we didn't play as well as we could, but we were just happy to get past there. And this game playing against a great team like Creighton we stepped up our level of intensity, stepped up our level on the defensive side. I thought these were two great games in preparation for Michigan State next weekend in Indianapolis.

**SETH CURRY:** Just like he said, I think the games just taught us a lot about what the NCAA Tournament is about, physicality in the tournament, just how you prepare for it, things like that. I mean, I think today our team just came together on a different level than we have in a while. Guys were playing great defense, communicating on the defensive end and things like that. It took all however many guys played, eight, nine, whatever it was, to pull off this win.

**Q. Rasheed, was the game plan for you to be particularly aggressive looking for your shot early tonight?**

**RASHEED SULAIMON:** The coaches always tell me to stay aggressive and to look for my openings when they're there, not to force anything but just to make reads, and if I have the shot to take it with confidence, and if I see my teammate to make the right play and make the right pass. We all have confidence in each other in all of our abilities, and they just want me to continue to play my game and just put pressure on the opponent.

**Q. Rasheed, playing at Duke, you're obviously no stranger to big games and national television and whatnot, but how much different is it now being in the NCAA Tournament compared to some of those regular season games?**

**RASHEED SULAIMON:** We've played in



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some tremendous games this year, some very big games, and they were all nerve racking. But to be here in the NCAA Tournament, it just brings it to another level. Both teams are playing with a tremendous amount of urgency and nobody wants to go home and finish their season.

It's definitely that much more intense, but I think the games that we scheduled in the preseason and playing in the ACC has greatly prepared us for these situations, and we have three great seniors to lead us, and we're all following their lead. I thought we played a tremendous game today as a team, and like Seth said earlier, it took each and every one of us who played to get this win tonight.

**Q. Could you talk about the defense, particularly in the second half, and talk about how you kind of shut Creighton down that allowed you to expand your lead in the second half.**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, Creighton has a well-conceived offense, and with McDermott, he's a great player, especially on the offensive end. So they have good movement, and so you have to have great communication. And I thought that was the best we talked on defense, and were able to make switches when we needed to. I especially thought Thornton helped us defensively in that second half when we were in all the foul trouble, when Amile and Josh were in, he was able to kind of orchestrate us and make the switch up on top so McDermott didn't get it, and then he had to move a little bit more to get it.

But communication was huge for us, and I thought Tyler was outstanding in getting us together and doing it.

**Q. Sort of following up on what Rasheed said about playing games against different opponents, different styles, big venues, big atmospheres, is that something that's distinctly designed for weekends like this, the Final Four, the national championship game in mind, and sort of when did you, I guess, realize that that was a good thing for your teams to experience every year?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: About 1984. We used to play actually sometimes two games on one weekend when the other team that we played only played one, like we'd play NC State on a Saturday night and Notre Dame on Sunday. We'd do things like that just to build our program. And since then I think we've always had a top 10 scheduled. I think

this year we've had the toughest schedule. Our guys want that. You learn about yourself as a team, everyone learns about themselves, when we're in those situations.

It can wear you out, too, if you get beat, and the injuries that we've had, for our guys to keep everything afloat while Ryan was out was key. But we've got another five days to live here, and maybe we can get even a little bit better. We're going to have to be really good playing Michigan State.

**Q. I think this game went a lot differently than a lot of people expected more of a rock fight than a scoring game. What does it say about your team's maturity and flexibility to be able to stick with it despite that because it was not an easy game to stay in?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: No, and I think for both teams, I think both teams ramped it up on the defensive end. I think Creighton has been the most efficient offensive team in the country. They're not given credit for playing defense. But they were really outstanding defensively tonight.

We have guys, those three seniors are -- even though Mason and Ryan were in foul trouble and Ryan didn't hit a shot, I thought they stayed in the game the whole time, and for them to come back, we kind of had to massage the second half in how we used them, but Mason came in from about the 13 minute mark until the 9 minute mark with those four fouls then we got him out. Ryan was able to play a long time with those four fouls, and that's where the maturity comes in. We tried not to get conservative, but we didn't want to run with the ball because if we could eliminate about six or seven possessions without being conservative, then it means six or seven -- I mean offensive possessions, so six or seven defensive possessions where these guys might not foul. Having these three veterans in there, and Tyler, I really can't say enough about him on the defensive end of the court tonight.

**Q. Both teams had stars in foul trouble early. How much did that kind of affect the offensive rhythm of the game?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, they weren't in as much foul trouble as we were. I mean, it's a game of adjustments. I mean, nobody I'm sure -- their coaching staff and certainly our coaching staff didn't expect everything that

happened today, and so your team has to adapt really well. And it's a game of adjustments.

So our bench came through for us, Tyler, Josh and Amile were outstanding contributors for us tonight. That's what these guys were saying, it took all the guys on the team to win tonight.

**Q. Can you reflect on what Seth has gone through this season with his shin injury and how he's been able to manage it? How much better is he on extended rest?**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, he's better on -- not too much extended rest, though, because then you stop being sharp. He's been absolutely incredible. I mean, I've never had to do this in my whole career, in 38 years, where a kid really has been hurt the entire season. And you didn't know on a day-to-day, game to game basis for sure if he was going to be able to play because it would be based on how he felt after the game he just played.

Our medical staff and Seth, I mean, Seth has given credit to the medical staff, but he's made a commitment. I mean, he's in there all the time getting three and four treatments, and then he lets us know about how he feels, so he's been honest with us.

The cool thing about it is we've seen improvement in X-rays where his leg is getting better. It's still not 100 percent, but it's gotten better. Thank goodness. I mean, he could have been operated on in September and he would have never played this year. Instead he's had just a sensational year.

**Q. It wasn't just McDermott that you guys frustrated, you really got after their guards. How much does Ryan's presence really help you guys? I mean, the numbers really reflect it in efficiency and everything.**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Well, first of all, he defends his position well, and then he talks well. He communicates well. He can block shots or he changes shots. Somebody may not want to shoot if he switches off to them because he's 6'10". He's a very smart basketball player.

You know, we're just a better team. Again, to me, it's so good that we won and he scored one point. And he knows he played a heck of a game. Again, when we were talking about maturity, that's maturity, also, because that ball is not going in, it can affect you on the other end of the court, and it never did that for Ryan.

**Q. This is somewhat of an offbeat question, but you're 6 and 0 now --**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Are you an offbeat guy? Is this unusual for you?

**Q. It is. You're 6-0 in Philadelphia tournament games. Is that a coincidence do you think or is there something to --**

COACH KRZYZEWSKI: Yeah, we've had a good team. I mean, and by the way, Temple has done an incredible job in hosting this whole -- all the games here. I mean, everything has been first class and been terrific. I want to thank them, Bill Bradshaw and his staff, for the incredible job that they've done, and the Wells Fargo Arena, terrific job.

And I want to thank all of you. You didn't ask one question about Florida Gulf Coast tonight, and I appreciate that. God bless you.

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*Jays*

COACH McDERMOTT: Congratulations to Duke. They played a great basketball game. Obviously defensively I thought they were very good. You know, the reality of it is we had some pretty good looks at threes, especially in the first half, that we didn't knock down, and that kind of set the tone for us for the game. We just weren't able to get any rhythm from the three-point line, and that's a big part of what we do.

Defensively I felt like we played good enough to win. We held a team that shoots the ball like we do, very high percentage, to 38 percent, and I would have taken that before the game and rolled the dice with my chances. But we were not very good offensively. Some of that had to do with us and some of it certainly is to Duke's credit.

But we stayed in the fight. We didn't turn it over a lot. We hung in there on the back boards. I couldn't be more proud of my team. They've been an absolute joy to coach. They've represented our University and our community in a first-class manner on and off the floor, and for that I'm very thankful that I had the opportunity to be part of that.

**Q. Doug, what did they do defensively to you to bother you so much?**

DOUG McDERMOTT: I mean, they did a great job. They were real physical with me, and it seems like they were switching every screen, down screen, pick, just they were switching everything, making it frustrating. I missed a lot of shots I normally make, so that was unfortunate. But they

did a great job finding me, not letting me get anything easy, so you've got to give them credit.

**Q. Obviously you don't reach your goal of getting to the Sweet 16 like y'all talked about, but it doesn't take away from an unbelievable year and two great seasons, 57 wins.**

GRANT GIBBS: Yeah, this group has accomplished a lot. And really the last three years, building on Coach McDermott's first season and the last two. So I think it's just disappointing to play the way we did tonight. It's tough on everyone?

DOUG McDERMOTT: I agree with Grant. It's a tough way to go out. But it's just been hard letting these seniors down tonight. We thought we could put up a little better fight. But it doesn't take away from these last two years. They've been incredible, both NCAA wins. I don't think a Creighton team has done that in history back to back years. It's pretty special to say. I don't think it's hit us yet. I'm sure it will down the road, but it feels good.

**Q. In the second half where did you see the game start to get away? It was close going into half and then they built their run from there.**

COACH McDERMOTT: Well, you know, a real telling part of the game was the last seven possessions or eight possessions of the first half. I think they scored on six of those. They had 16 points the first 26 possessions of the game, which is obviously great defense against a team like Duke, and then they scored 13 points the last seven possessions. And of course the banked three-point shot at the buzzer didn't help.

But we just never really got into an offensive flow, and we scored the first four points, I believe, of the second half and then got right back into it. They hit a couple big threes at critical times. Curry hit one on a ball screen that I remember off the top of my head that was kind of a back breaker.

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We had one where we had a loose ball on the floor, Wragge comes up with it and flips it up to what he thinks is his teammate and Duke jumps in front of it and hits a three. Sometimes you need things to bounce your way. We didn't have much of that happen, and again, a lot of that credit goes to Duke.

**Q. You talked on Friday about needing to play -- wear multiple hats with your son and the whole NBA process as this moves forward. Have you talked with him about that at all, and where do you go from here?**

COACH McDERMOTT: We discussed it six weeks ago and decided to wait until the season is over. We'll let all this sink in, and when the time is right, he's not going to be in any hurry to make a decision so I don't think we're in any rush to sit down and talk. But we will, and we'll see what he comes up with.

He'll do what's best for Doug, and he's earned the right to do that.

**Q. It doesn't take away from a great season you guys had.**

COACH McDERMOTT: No, it doesn't, and as I told them, I'm really sad that it's over. I'm sad that I don't get to coach this group anymore. The contributions that our seniors have made, Joe Kelling, who's only been with us six or seven months and just brought a smile on his face and positive attitude every day. Taylor Stormberg is unbelievably unselfish and a great energy guy in practice and has actually played some valuable minutes for us.

To Josh Jones with his situation, the easy thing for Josh to do would be to stay away because it's painful for him to sit and watch practice and be at games knowing and wishing that he could be out on that floor knowing that he'll never play basketball again. But he's chosen the high road, to be around his teammates and to try to help them.

Gregory Echenique has transformed his body more than anybody I've ever coached from the first time I met him until today, and the work ethic and the dedication that it's taken for him to do that and the improvements in his game and the fact that he's played his best basketball when his team needed him the most in St. Louis and Cincinnati and here today, I thought that was great again.

Grant Gibbs has played through more adversity than anybody I've ever coached in terms

of injuries and things that have happened to his body, yet he refuses to not be involved in practice, refuses to miss a game. They've been a true, true joy to coach, and as sad as I am that it's over, I'm absolutely thrilled that it happened and that I got to be part of it.

**Q. In Doug's case, how much of the missed shots or just shots not falling for him, how much of it was the way Duke was playing him tonight?**

COACH McDERMOTT: Well, the fact that we weren't able to get him a lot of easy ones was the way Duke played him. They switched every screen wherever we went, wherever he went, and there's probably no player in the country that sees that as often as Doug has seen it. And as he said, he probably missed seven or eight shots that he's normally going to make, a couple of the ones he had early, the little floaters, something that he's made all year long. But we rode him pretty hard. He's played a lot of minutes and our starters played a lot of minutes on Friday, and we needed him again today.

But Duke took away the easy stuff, and then the tough shots that Doug normally makes he didn't make today, and then unfortunately when Doug shot it like that, we were going to need somebody else to step up and have a spectacular game, and that just didn't happen.

**Q. You guys normally shoot the three a lot better than you did tonight. What was it about Duke's defense that limited you so effectively from beyond the arc?**

COACH McDERMOTT: I'll have to watch the film. I thought we had some decent rhythm threes. I thought most of Austin Chatman's were open. I thought Manigat, all four of his were open. Avery Dingman had two wide open ones in transition in the first half that didn't go down.

So I think some of it was certainly Duke's length and athletic ability. Some of it we just missed, simple as that. Neither team shot the ball like they're capable of shooting it tonight. Duke just made a few more plays.

**Q. Would you have thought it would be possible, I think it comes out to about .76 points per possession for your team, which I know you know the number, it's around 1.2, would you have even thought that would be**

**possible?**

COACH McDERMOTT: No, no. It was by far Doug's worst shooting game of the year, not even close, and across the board. We've shot 50 percent over 35 games or 36 games, and that includes the likes of Wisconsin and at Cal and some pretty good teams.

I wouldn't have guessed that that was possible, but things happen in the game of basketball. We at least gave ourselves a chance. As poorly as we played offensively the first half, we were still right there, and it was a two-point game with 18 minutes to go and we were shooting in the low 30s.

I'm proud that we competed and kept ourselves in the game.

**Q. Can you talk about Echenique's defense against Plumlee tonight?**

COACH McDERMOTT: Yeah, I thought Gregory did a great job. I didn't think Plumlee wanted much to do with him down there, and that was our plan going in is to play him one-on-one and try to stay close to the shooters, and that was certainly effective the first half.

Gregory, I think he can play in the NBA for that reason. I don't think there's many guys in the country that can play Mason Plumlee one-on-one without any help and be physical and stay low and make him score over the top of you. I just don't think many guys are willing to put in the effort to do that against someone as strong and as athletic and as big as Mason. Gregory is outstanding. He was great against Cincinnati. He was great in the Valley Tournament and he was certainly good on the defensive end of the floor.

**Q. A lot has happened in the three years you've been at Creighton. Talk about the state of the program moving forward now into the Big East and everything.**

COACH McDERMOTT: Well, as I told the guys in the locker room, 50 years from now long after I'm gone they're going to be able to tell their grandkids that they're a big reason Creighton moved to the Big East. Without the success of our program the last few years and the unbelievable attendance that we have, which is in the top five or six in the country, I'm not sure the Big East takes as serious a look at us as they have.

I just think when people watch us play, they don't see a team, they see a program, and that's what I am most proud of. These guys have conducted themselves in a first-class manner on

and off the floor. I've had no discipline issues the entire year. Not sure we've had really a technical hardly the entire year.

So they play the game the right way. They really, truly care about each other. So in terms of the state of the program, I couldn't be more proud of where it's at.

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