

**March 13, 2013**



Colorado – 74  
Oregon State – 68

An interview with:

**COACH ROBINSON  
ERIC MORELAND  
ROBERTO NELSON**

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement, please.

COACH ROBINSON: I'll start by saying, while it didn't look like it this season, we've made a lot of progress. You know, when I first got to Oregon State, we were trying not to lose by 30; and this year, because of these guys' hard work, continually we were in absolutely every game we played in the Pac-12 this year, which is a first for us.

I know I use that term -- I use the term, it's like kissing your sister when you say it's a moral victory. But I would be remiss if I did not point out to you folks how hard these guys have worked for this entire season when trial and tribulations here every single spot we could have -- they could have stopped playing.

As you saw out there, they weren't going to stop playing even with 18 seconds left, and I'm extremely proud of these guys. So with that, I'll open it up for questions.

**Q. What was the difference between this game today and the game four or five days ago?**

COACH ROBINSON: Is that a trick question, or did you not see André Roberson out there?

**Q. I did see André. Was that the only difference in the game, do you think?**

COACH ROBINSON: I thought that the fact that we beat them was the difference. They came ready to play, first and foremost. I don't want

to take anything away from them. They had a great game plan, and that's first and foremost.

But I think the real thing that had hurt us were the second chance points, offensive rebounds. We played them at their place, and we did a great job on the boards. We did not do as good of a job this time around.

Yet, having said that, we were right there even with the mistakes that we made.

**Q. What did they do defensively to shut down Joe and Ahmad, and specifically Joe to see him go out this way?**

COACH ROBINSON: Well, you know, I'll back up for a minute. They did a great job on Joe; they double teamed him. But Joe's tough game has come from the fact that we've had to ride Joe this season way more than we could ever have possibly imagined. While they did a great job on Joe, Joe is spent this season.

There have been games he's played 35 minutes, 36 minutes, and absolutely carried us all season long. And I think just the miles caught up to him. But I do not want to take anything away from Coach Boyle and the Buffaloes. I like their team a lot. I like Tad, and they did double him.

But we missed Angus and Daniel Gomis this year, and Joe had to pick up the slack for both of those guys.

**Q. Colorado has had some struggles closing out games from the free-throw line throughout the season. You elect to start fouling and sending them to the line with over two and a half minutes remaining. Can you talk a little about that decision?**

COACH ROBINSON: Yeah, the decision to foul that far out was because we were that far away, and we had to find a way to hopefully get a chance to get it closer with the clock stopped.

I don't think it was anything that was masterful. It was what we had to do. We were trying to foul the guys we thought might miss, and then we got lucky when a couple of the guys who

don't normally miss, missed. With a 1:53 to go, 1:52, we told our guys not to foul, and they called a real touch foul at the end there, which I thought was completely out of character from the way the game was being called. That was kind of the only weird thing that happened.

But, you know, when you're down and it's a two-possession game with almost two minutes left, I wouldn't foul automatically. I thought that was a little weird.

**Q. You had mentioned that you guys made a lot of progress this season, and obviously talked about the process throughout the season. That being said, heading into next year, where do you want to be? What is next year in the process?**

COACH ROBINSON: We want to be an NCAA Tournament team next year. I mean, that's where programs at this level strive for. That's what we strive for. We have tried to raise the bar every single season we've been here. And I think we've done that in a way that doesn't show up in our record this year. I think most of you folks who know me know that if I thought we were stinking up the place, I'd probably say it. I think at times in games, we stunk up the place.

But I think overall, these guys played so darn hard for so darn long, I would not trade these dudes over here in for anybody.

**Q. Defensively tonight you guys were running the zone and it really shut them down last week in Boulder. But tonight they started knocking down shots. Do you think that was really the difference to this game?**

ERIC MORELAND: Yes, they were knocking down some tough shots. The big thing with us losing this game was, like Coach said, them outrebounding us. Last game we controlled that, and this game they made an adjustment and came over our backs and just punked us on the glass. I think that was the big thing. This is a major conference, so people are going to knock down shots. But I think the big thing was rebounding.

**Q. Roberto, couple questions about Spencer Dinwiddie. You guys have gone back and forth the last two games. Can you talk about what you see in him and the player he is and the match-up that he is?**

ROBERTO NELSON: For me, it's really a fun match-up. Spencer and I are really good

friends, and last night we were talking about the game and giving each other just little fun jokes and playing around.

But when it comes down to it, we're really competitive, and we're out there trying to play our best against each other and trying to one up each other. He's a great player, man. I've got to give him a lot of credit. He made me take a lot of difficult shots today, and Colorado did a great job of being in help and just being a solid team overall defensively and offensively.

Like I said, man, it's a fun match-up playing against Spencer. Hopefully, I can play him again some next year.

**Q. Did you guys feel like André Roberson made a difference out there on the floor? Did you feel it out there today?**

ROBERTO NELSON: Most definitely. I think so. It gave us -- well, it gave them a different look. They knew that if they missed a shot, he'd be up there near the glass. As far as offensively with us, me penetrating and having a big presence like that in the paint who can leap and get extremely high, definitely makes it tough and makes me alter a couple of shots. He does a lot for their team, and there's a reason why he's one of the best players in our league.

**Q. Roberto, can you talk about Spencer's half court shot? Did you think that changed the game in any way?**

ROBERTO NELSON: It definitely gave them momentum going into the half. We were trying to foul, and sometimes that's just how the ball rolls sometimes. It was a good shot. I mean, I was just hoping that it didn't go in. I was watching it and I was hoping and it went in. They got momentum.

But we came back and fought. That's been what we've been doing this whole year, and that is what our team's all about. We haven't given up through all the adversity that we've had this year. And with the record that we have, like Coach said, it doesn't indicate how hard we've been working.

But with the record that we have, we've had plenty of chances to give up. It really shows our character fighting through it, just persevering and going hard each day, especially when you're not getting the result you want.

It's tough when you're not getting the result

you want to come out and work hard every day, but we fought through it. That goes to say with the great coaching staff and the great players we have on this team.

**Q. Roberto, you've been around for a lot of the process that Craig's been talking about. Are you guys not necessarily still believing in it, but do you feel it's working? Do you guys still think that it's set up for next season to be a tournament team like your coach is talking about?**

ROBERTO NELSON: Most definitely. You look at what we're missing as far as Angus Brandt being there and Daniel Gomis, those are big pieces. A lot of people forgot about it, because we're playing in a lot of the games without those two.

But just imagine with them. It takes a lot of pressure off everybody. Those are two leaders out there on the floor. I mean, commanders in Angus and just more guys that we can rely on. It would definitely cut a lot of minutes down for people. It just makes things a lot easier.

You saw with Colorado, how much better they played when Roberson was there rather than when he was out. I mean, Angus Brandt is good. I know a lot of you guys in here should know that. If you don't know that, you'll see next year. That guy can play. So it definitely will be a lot easier with him, but not having him, there's no excuse. We fought through it as a team, and that's what we do.

**Q. Coach, looking ahead to next year, is one of your goals to maybe play more man-to-man defense?**

COACH ROBINSON: Well, we were playing man-to-man probably, if I had to give you an estimate on percentages, I would probably say up until our last two games, this game and the one against Colorado, we were predominantly playing man-to-man with a little 1-3-1 in there.

What we try to do with our personnel is try to play the defense that gives the other team the most trouble. But I tell you, the way these guys played our 2-3 zone the last couple of days, I might have to revisit it. But I thought our man-to-man had gotten better over the last year and a half. So I hope that answers your question.

I think we played a lot more man-to-man this year than we've ever played, and we're always going to try to find that right balance.

**Q. Is the CBI any possibility? And would you favor continuing to play this season if you had the opportunity?**

COACH ROBINSON: Well, normally, we'd say yes to that. But these guys want to be NCAA Tournament guys. I don't know with our record if we'd even be invited. But we are raising the bar, and we want to feel the sting of not playing in the postseason for the first time and see how that motivates us for next year.

**Q. I was in there talking to Joe. He's obviously very emotional. Can you just sort of put a capper on his career for us? And also did you feel like this game was kind of typical of your season?**

COACH ROBINSON: Let me answer the second question first. It could be viewed that this was typical of the season, but I've got to tell you. We feel like we're playing much better than we were playing at the beginning of the season -- at the beginning of the conference season. I think we were playing even better when we were at full strength with Angus. But it didn't feel like we were out of that game so much.

Like I said earlier, when we cut it to 6 with 1:50 left, it felt like, okay, we can do some things here. Then there was that foul call that took it back to eight, and then it started to feel like the same old, same old.

With regard to Joe Burton, I'm sure he's emotional. We were all emotional. I was the main one emotional, this being his last game and Joe being my first real recruit here and helping sort of turning this program around.

And I told Joe, he was really upset that he didn't play better. And I tried to explain to him that we wouldn't even be where we are as a program, going from being sort of the laughing stock before I got here, to being competitive in every single game you play, without Joe.

Joe has been a wonderful citizen of Corvallis. He's been a wonderful representative of Oregon State. His philanthropic personality is infectious in the community, on the team, with his family. We are going to miss him.

But the best part about Joe Burton is that he is a wonderful kid to coach, and he has matured in such a way that his family and his team and our school can be proud that we were a part of his development.

But what he sort of evolved into is just the

kind of person that you want out there representing your program and representing you when you're not around.

**Q. Eric, you're a guy that's gotten a lot of talk about NBA potential and playing at the next level. With this season now over, have you thought about what you're doing next year? Are you coming back? Have you thought about that yet?**

ERIC MORELAND: I haven't had a chance to think about that. I love the team. I love the coaching staff. It's hard to think about that during the season. I love playing here, and I'll think about that stuff after the season. But I love this place, so that's not even a thought right now.

COACH ROBINSON: Good answer (laughing).

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