

**2010 General Shale Brick
Atlantic Sun Basketball Championships
Mercer Bears vs. ETSU Buccaneers, March 6, 2010, Championship Round**

Mercer Head Coach Bob Hoffman:

Opening Statements:

“Really thankful that I could coach these men and be a part of their lives for a short time but they will be a part of my life forever. They invested in us when they didn’t have to and chose to believe in us when they didn’t have to. They have set an amazing foundation for our basketball program to be successful for a long time and I will always be eternally grateful for what they were to accomplish.”

On what the players have done

“It’s really good for the future but I hate it for these guys. We all wanted to play but this moment is over now for them. Guys just chose to keep fighting through and it’s a credit to who they are and their upbringing and what they are going to be in the future as men in society. They are going to be unbelievable.

“They are special. It’s a word, maybe over used, but I am not worried about nothing about these guys, I told them that I was thankful to be their coach and it didn’t turn out the way we wanted but it wasn’t because these guys didn’t give every ounce of effort and make deposits daily trying to make it happen.”

James Florence

On the different defense

“First time that they zoned us the entire game and it was the first time the zoned Danny. They were trapping him as soon as he got the ball so it was a high risk of turning the ball over so we have played it a little safe.”

Daniel Emerson

On the flow of the game

“Every time we tied it up or had a chance to tie it we would either miss a free-throw or miss a shot and they would come right back down and we just couldn’t get the stop or get the ball back.”

On the nature of the game:

“You just know that the next game you lose will be your last in college and so it kind of forces you to play as hard as you can. It’s tough to go out in a game like especially in a championship game. This week you don’t want to stop playing, you don’t really want to leave college to don’t really want to leave college basketball especially when you have teammates and coaches you really love. It’s just fear you don’t want to be done.”

E.J. Kusyner

On seemingly being tired

“We can’t really blame anything but ourselves. We shot free throws all morning whether its legs or not those are free shots with no one guarding you. At a stage like this I don’t even think that comes into play because you are playing with so much adrenaline that you don’t have time to think about being tired.”

ETSU Head Coach Murry Bartow:

“First of all I want to congratulate Mercer. Bob has got a great job, not a good job - a great job. They have a heck of a team. Obviously they beat us twice in the regular season. He is the leader of the team and he does a really good job coaching the team. We are fortunate to get out of here”

“I’m really proud of our guys. It’s been a long hard tough year. Obviously the death of Seth McCoy, the injury to Mike Smith. With these guys, they are fighters. We just have a resilient team. Seems like yesterday we got beat by Belmont at home and things were headed the wrong way. These guys just kept battling a scraping and fighting. You know we knew we could defend and these guys defended hard. Scott Wagers has done a great job with our defense. But here’s what I really want to say – It comes down to players. Very little coaching in a game like this. You better have good players and they better make big plays. That’s what it comes down to. We have a great bunch of guys. They are better off the floor than they are on the floor. I’m really proud and happy for them.

On Defensive Scheme.

The two times we played Mercer they have been in the 80s. WE felt by studying a lot of tape that the zone would give us the best chance of winning. It wasn’t going to ensure winning but we thought statistically it would give us the best chance – and it did. Slowed the game down. We didn’t have a great matchup on Emerson inside so it kind of eliminated that problem. The one thing we’ve done fairly consistently all year was we guarded. Tommy I think is the best defender in our league. I know Hardy was voted that and he’s a fantastic player and defender, but there’s no better defender than this guy sitting next to me. They have bought into the defense and rebounding offensively.

On the tournament.

From day one we’ve been talking about March 6. From the first second of the first meeting we talked about wanting to be there on March 6. We’ve been in the final 3 of the last 4 years, been fortunate enough to win 2. I know as a coach its incredibly hard to be the one out of 8 teams that wins the tournament.

On the game.

Could have gone either way.. It was a tight game when Justin hits the 3 to put us up 4. Made some free throws late but that game could have gone the other way. Fortunately we made the big plays down the stretch.

Micah Williams:

Its truly a blessing to be back here for the 2nd year straight. Just lookin at the stats, we had 5 guys in double digits. It just shows what a team effort it was tonight.

Tommy Hubbard

On Justin’s 3

Its kind of ironic. He wasn't playing great in the last two games of the tournament and I was talking to him last night, talking to him this morning saying you're a shooter. Keep on shooting. Out the gate he was aggressive and he hit the big 3 like he is capable of doing.

On Defense

We talked well and did a good job switching It up. We pressed to slow them down.

On Seth's death.

Everyone was playing for him. Every second and every possession we are playing for him. We are fortunate to be able to play with each other and know he is looking down on us.