

**March 12, 2014**



AN INTERVIEW WITH:

**COACH JOHNNY JONES  
ANDRE STRINGER  
JOHNNY O'BRYANT, III**

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from coach and then the questions for the student-athletes.

COACH JONES: Certainly look forward to a great challenge here in the conference tournament here. After a very tough season and the always tough Southeastern Conference. We felt like we had a challenging year and certainly had our moments, but look forward to these next few days here in Atlanta against some very competitive teams. We know that it's going to be a very competitive tournament.

It's been a great year. I felt like here in the year end our team has played well, especially during our home slate, and it's been very challenging on the road for us as well. We know that these next few days are very important for us.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Both of you mentioned the other day how you need to get better on defense, in this tournament in particular. This late in the season, how do you do that? How do you find a way to be better on defense?**

JOHNNY O'BRYANT, III: I think it's just effort. You know what you got to do. You play a team twice already maybe this will be your third time, so you know what you got to do. It's just about just being mentally ready and just going out and executing.

ANDRE STRINGER: I agree with Johnny. You think it's refocusing, watching more film on your free time, knowing the player that you are going up against better. And obviously, as he

said, we played them a couple times before, so it's all about just executing and doing it.

**Q. For both of you, Johnny, what's it like coming into the environment here? I know you guys have played better on the road in raucous environments. It may be a little bit more quieter here. How do you create the energy in this environment to give yourself that motivation?**

JOHNNY O'BRYANT, III: I think it starts inside the locker room. You got to get your team pumped up. We are ready to play. We are really ready to come out and play. And that's where it starts, it starts inside the locker room. So that's what we got to do.

ANDRE STRINGER: I think our guys have a great deal of excitement right now. It's the SEC tournament. We have guys on our team never played in this before, young guys. I've been playing in it a couple times. So everybody's excited, especially knowing how rocky our season was, some games we didn't do as well in and we're anxious to play.

**Q. Along that line, you mentioned it's been rocky. How much do you guys feel like this is atonement? It's four days where you can makeup for any missed opportunities on the road or games where you haven't done what you wanted to do. Do you feel like that's the theme coming in, is atonement?**

JOHNNY O'BRYANT, III: I think we just got to take it one game at a time. We can't worry about the past. This is a four-game season right now. So you take it one game at a time. You know you get one win, then you move on to the next. I think that's how you handle business down here.

ANDRE STRINGER: Definitely. Same as Johnny, you got to focus on what's ahead. You can't think about the past. We understand things happened, but this is a

challenge that's been placed in front of us and it's time for us to go out and execute and go on to win.

**Q. For both you guys, coach mentioned the other day that Alabama is a lot different than when you guys played them. They're doing some different things and one of their big guys are out. Have you been able to gauge what they have done well and differently since you played them and what you have to do to adjust to that?**

ANDRE STRINGER: They have done a number of things. I think that more importantly it's focus is on our guys and our locker room and what we do. I think if we can make sure that we do the great things that we can do as a team, focus and take our game plan to the game, then the things that they do won't really matter to us, if we're locked in.

JOHNNY O'BRYANT, III: I think just go off of what Andre said. It starts with us. We got to come out and make sure we execute. Because you play teams two or three times and they're changing things around this time of year, so you just got to come out and be mentally ready.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll excuse you. You can return to the locker room. Thanks. Take questions for coach.

**Q. I think it was Johnny the other day mentioned that Alabama's zone gave you guys some trouble that first time. That's been so long ago, are they more 2-3 or 1-3-1 or do you think you'll see a lot of that?**

COACH JONES: The zone starts off mostly 2-3. They start kind of in a 1-1-3 look, and then set up and they're back in the 2-3.

But they have done a great job in terms of trying to guard the interior, trying to make you play up over the top and make sure that they put Johnny in traffic. And they did a great job and you have to make sure that you shoot the ball well against them from the perimeter. If your perimeter shots are falling, then you make it a little bit more difficult for them to stay back in that defense.

**Q. Flip around a question I asked you the other day about maybe playing zone. Because of the big dome, have you gotten a sense, for especially Andre and Hickey, I guess, how they might shoot in this environment? I think that Stringer played here three years ago, so he's maybe used to it. But**

**have you kind of talked to them about how it is a little bit different?**

COACH JONES: No, haven't talked about it. I think the good thing is we have an opportunity practice here today. I think that would consist mostly of shooting, trying to get a feel of the depth perception here in the Arena. We have to understand that everybody will be kind of in the same situation. So we'll look forward to.

Those guys are good shooters. You to lock yourselves in on the basket, on those rims, and get out there and play. That's what you really have to focus on. So I think that in terms of those guys who are our outside shooters will have the ability of locking them themselves in and playing well.

**Q. Along the lines that I asked Johnny and Andre, you guys have gone through your own kind of struggles and your own up-and-downs this season, but when you come in here, you look at the draw in front of you, and that's favorable matchups to get on a roll, do you see that yourself -- as a coach, I know you pay attention to how the seedings and stuff sort of the shake out. Do you think this is a set up that you guys can kind of get set and get rolling in this venue?**

COACH JONES: We look at most of the positive things that really happened to us this year that occurred and how close we were on some other situations and how well and how tough we fought really all year long and been very competitive. That's important to us.

Now you've got another opportunity in what we like to call the third season, to have an opportunity to come out against some great competition. Everybody will be vying and playing and trying to put themselves in a position of these next few days to win the championship, cut down nets and hopefully at some point hang banners. We just happen to be one of those teams.

We have to have an edge about ourselves because we know that every team in this conference have shown on any given night that they can play well and be victorious. We got to make sure that we guard against that.

The other thing is we have to make sure that we understand how close we are to being that team and we need to play to that.

**Q. Have you come up with any kind of no sleep schemes or anything? Talked to Dale about any kind of stuff that you might put to use?**

COACH JONES: No, we just got to make sure that these guys that we have been fortunate enough to have all year long, that hopefully they're playing with an edge and at their best. If they do, we'll get plenty of sleep at the appropriate time.

**Q. Did he really not sleep?**

COACH JONES: I wasn't in there. You have to ask him. He was up in there. I think coach had his number, he kept him up.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you very much.

COACH JONES: Thanks.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports....**