

NCAA Wrestling Championship

Saturday, March 19, 2016

J'den Cox

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Joining us is Missouri's J'den Cox, 197 pounds. Make a brief statement about your match and then we'll open to questions.

J'DEN COX: Like I said, he's a tough competitor. Wrestled through position, we saw that today. I swear I had that cradle. I swear I did. But it's exactly what I said it was going to be. He's tough, he's strong. He wrestles good position. Great scrambler. Great knowledge. I'm grateful to come out on top.

Q. Was there any point in that match where you were getting frustrated because, especially in the second period it looked like he was backing away from you a lot?

J'DEN COX: Yes and no. I think the frustration was coming more so from myself, because whenever I don't get to someone's legs I don't really view it as that person's fault. I put it on me, like I missed or I didn't go fast enough. Because he's doing what he's supposed to do to move his leg. It was my job to get there and I didn't get there on time. No, I don't think it was so much frustrated. I was more so frustrated when I saw there was three seconds left until I got riding time. And I saw that he got out at 57 seconds riding time. But I was just, like, gosh dang it. That one kind of sunk in on me there. I was like, well, that stinks.

Q. Does it feel good to be back on top?

J'DEN COX: Yeah.

Q. Which one felt better, this one, New York City, or the one in Oklahoma?

J'DEN COX: I think they both feel great in their own ways. Oklahoma felt great because I was really young and I had done something that was very rare and that was -- and at a weight that was basically all men. So that was really cool. This one it's more so great because how much I had to change and give up and sacrifice and train and do certain things that changed myself and changed my body. It made me have to -- it was a growth period. And to see that stuff pay off is what makes this one so great. That's why afterwards you don't see a great celebration, because it was more of -- I was more proud of everything I had gone through and everything I had to do. And I was proud of myself. But it felt great just knowing that.

Q. Is this one dedicated to anyone? And you talked about wanting to come out here and dominate en route to this title. Do you feel like you succeeded in that goal?

J'DEN COX: Yes, I believe I did. I believe I had a great outing here at NCAAAs this year. Definitely improved from the last few years. Dedication for this title goes to everyone that's ever had my back. Everyone that's always been there and not just when times like this happen, when

things are great, but everything, when everything's going wrong and things are hard. People that have your back like that and the people who are always there, that you consider family, even though they're not blood, those are what this dedicates to because this was not easy. It was not an easy journey. There were times in this year that I was very frowned upon by the social media and social eye. And so to find those people, know you have those people around you, it's a blessing to have those kind of people. So this goes to them, because they kept me on the right track and kept my mind stable and they helped carry me. They helped carry me.

Q. Talk about the key to that takedown that really made the difference late in the match and how you got it. And the secondary question would be are you planning to go to the Olympic Trials and test yourself in a few weeks in Iowa City?

J'DEN COX: Well, key to getting the takedown is getting both legs. That's basically it. I've always had trouble getting both of McIntosh's legs together. I've never ever -- I don't think I've ever just got a clean takedown on him. It's always a little work. He's definitely one of those guys, when coach says, make the guy work, (indiscernible) in practice, when you're drilling, he's definitely one of those guys that does that. That's what you're training for. Never got a clean takedown. So I knew I had to get both of his legs together. Once I got his right leg on the first shot I had taken, which I didn't expect to get to -- I was just taking it to hopefully set him up for a sweep single to the left. But I got there, (indiscernible) but I thought I had it. And then he kicked out, and then I got the left leg and I was way more comfortable because it was like I had already gotten the sweep. And then he stepped to his foot and his butt was on top of it and I just drove down, put weight on his legs and drove him down to the mat and got the tail.

Q. Olympic Trials?

J'DEN COX: I'm not sure about that yet. I'll take it day-by-day. When that day comes, when that door comes, I'll be sure to let you know if I'm walking through it if not. If not, then we'll know that too. But right now I'm the two-time NCAA champion, so I'm going to enjoy that.

Q. Two years ago when you were going to the finals Brian Smith actually took you out to the race stage to show you around. He said you were a kid in a candy store. Are you still that kid in the candy store still enamored with all this?

J'DEN COX: My motto is the kid leads the man and God leads it all. I'm a kid in a man's body, and I'm a Christian and God is going to take me wherever he so pleases. But that's how I live. Kid leads the man. God leads all. I live my life, God leads it.

Q. The list of Missouri two-time champions goes Ben Jasper and now J'Den Cox. How does it feel?

J'DEN COX: I'm not going to make the mistake after owning it my freshman year. I'm not going to let my diet fluctuate. I'm not going to yo-yo, I'm going to pursue to get better. I think a big goal for me next year is not just to make it to the finals. I've got two big goals. And I already knew what they were, and one of them was kind of this year, this year's goal, and I feel I could have made a good argument to beat it. But my next year's goals are, one, to dominate the NCAA Finals. And NCAA Tournament I know I can do that. So that's going to be something that just sits in the back pocket -- we're going to go ahead and try and train for that. But I think the NCAA Finals, because I don't think I have a dominant-dominant match. But also my other goal for next year is to win the Hodge. I want to be part of that and I want to be a part that, and I want to be

part of something that people have to recognize, that you're one of the best wrestlers in the country. I feel if I didn't have my blemish maybe I would have had a chance at the running. So it was very disappointing to know that one blemish takes you out of that thing. But that's why you have next year.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.