

2002

Interview no. 1641

Jerry Armstrong

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Recommended Citation

Interview with Jerry Armstrong by Luis A. Saenz, 2002, "Interview no. 1641," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Jerry Armstrong

Interviewer: Luis A. Saenz

Project: 1966 NCAA Championship

Location: n/a

Date of Interview: n/a

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Transcript No.: 1641

Transcriber / Summary: Patrick Driscoll

Jerry Armstrong played as a forward on the 1965-66 Texas Western Miners basketball team that won the 1966 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Tournament; Mr. Armstrong briefly explains how he got recruited from high school to play basketball for Coach Don Haskins; he explains that his desire to leave Missouri was to see a different part of the country; he describes the campus, climate, and friendliness of locals in El Paso and Texas Western College. Mr. Armstrong describes Don Haskins personality on and off the court as demanding but fair; he describes the 1965-66 team as very good and confident; he mentions how teams in the western U.S. did not receive the same coverage as eastern college teams at the time. Mr. Armstrong recounts how at the time he did not recognize the significance of an all-black starting lineup defeating the all-white line up from the University of Kentucky for the NCAA Championship; he notes other schools had black players but Texas Western was the first to have an all-black starting lineup. He states Don Haskins chose to start the black players due to them being the best players on the team in order to defeat Kentucky; he explains that Don Haskins molded the team together for years and that the players were very close to one another; he mentions that he saw no racism towards the black players nor experienced problems with them within the team. He describes that defense was the key to beating Kentucky including early steals in the first half by guard Bobby Joe Hill. Mr. Armstrong gives his opinion that publicity after the game as mostly positive, not personally witnessing any negative or racist backlash to their win.

Length of interview 8 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a