



TV PRESS CONFERENCE

The bus was equipped with plenty of large monitors allowing every player to have a premium view of the big game being broadcasted tonight.

Similar to many of his teammates, Chaz loved to watch all sports and was particularly excited about the football game that was on the monitors. He was providing non-stop chatter, which Antonio and James couldn't avoid since they were sitting nearby.

"This game's been awesome," said Chaz. "It's been back and forth the whole time, just like they predicted."

"It's been fun to watch even though I'd preferred to have heard more of the announcers than you," Antonio said to Chaz.

"What can I say? I just get excited watching good football, especially when it's the Eagles, baby!"

James and Antonio looked at each other and rolled their eyes.

Chaz continued to talk, "Did you happen to see that graphic they showed talking about the 2018 and 2019 Super Bowl Champions?"

"No, I missed it. Sorry," Antonio said. "It probably said that Tom Brady is the greatest, blah, blah, blah, yadda, yadda, yadda?"

"Don't be a hater. He's the GOAT!" Chaz exclaimed.

"Okay, I'll bite," Antonio said. "What'd that graphic say?"

“It mentioned how the 2018 Eagles Super Bowl championship team and the 2019 Patriots Super Bowl Championship team didn’t have a single 1,000-yard rusher or 1,000-yard receiver. Neither one did. In fact, the Eagles had a backup quarterback lead them through the playoffs and to the championship.” Said Chaz.

Antonio acknowledged that statistic. “Pretty impressive,” he said.

Matt was almost as big of a fan as Chaz was and so he decided to enter the conversation.

“I think they were trying to make the point that the best teams are not always made up of the best individual talent. They showed another statistic that blew my mind. When the Patriots won in 2019, more than half of the NFL’s top rushers and top receivers played on teams that missed the playoffs. In other words, as good as Julio Jones was, he couldn’t lead his team to the playoffs, even though he led the NFL in receiving yards. It takes a team and not just individuals.”

Matt continued talking about roles and teamwork. As someone that wanted to be a coach one day, he was passionate about these topics.

“It reminds me of a post I saw on social media that said ‘Every team in America has five starters and a leading scorer. What does it matter if you are starting or a star player? Not every team in America wins. Winning is more difficult and special than being a starter or star.’”

“Wow, that statement kind of punches you right between the eyes, huh?” Chaz said.

“That’s probably the way those Patriot and Eagles teams went about their business,” said Matt. “We before me. I’m guessing that’s not just a cliché for those guys.”

“The announcers also said that Julian Edelman was only like the 30th top receiver that year in the NFL, but he was the best for the Patriots. They didn’t need individual star performances. They valued team performance, instead.” Chaz pointed out.

“I like that the Eagles won a Super Bowl – with a backup quarterback, no less. Maybe there’s hope for us Eagles, after all,” said Antonio.

“Maybe we need to start approaching things like those Super Bowl Eagles and don’t be concerned about who gets the credit or accolades,” Matt suggested. “More to the point, we have to put our egos to the side and be more concerned about the team. We play a team sport, after all.”

“Hey, sorry to interrupt,” said Chaz. “But here’s the highlight I was telling you guys about that happened while we were playing today. They’re showing that player from State whose coach went off on him today on national TV.”

One of the players asked Mr. Frank to turn up the sound so they could hear it better and the booming voice of the TV host echoed throughout the bus.

“Today’s big win by State isn’t what leads our broadcast tonight,” said the studio host. “Instead of the game’s outcome being the most talked-about story in college basketball today, it’s something that happened during the game itself that has everyone’s attention.”

The announcer’s words could be heard while the video showed exactly what happened during a tense timeout.

“Early in the second half, Tom Winston committed one of his game-high eight turnovers. At the next timeout, we can see Coach Henry giving Winston an earful. It appears that the coach has to be restrained by some of Winston’s teammates. This exchange went viral on social media with various people weighing in on both sides. We’ll now hear from both Coach Henry and from Tom Winston at the post-game press conference.”

The players saw State’s coach seated at a table with a microphone in front of him.

“Our players come here because they want to be coached and because they want to be part of something bigger than themselves,” State’s Coach Henry could be heard saying on TV. “Our players know that I love them and want the best for them. Sure, I get upset sometimes when our standards are not met, or players are not doing things in the best interest of the team. We don’t have 12 players with

their own individual agendas. We have 12 players that support, love, and encourage one another. They also want to make sure that they don't let each other down. Tom was not living up to the standards that he had set for himself. He was not focused, and he was not being a team player. I was not out of control, but he definitely needed to wake up and realize how his actions were affecting his team.”

The TV coverage then switched to a different person sitting in the same room at the same table. State's Tom Winston was now addressing the media and his words could be heard clearly and there was no mistaking his thoughts on the matter.

“People just see Coach yelling at me and going all crazy. Coach is passionate. He doesn't do things quietly but what people don't see is the love he has for each of us,” said State's Tom Winston. “I was letting my teammates down. It wasn't just about turning the ball over. It was how I turned the ball over. My man had just scored, and I was determined to get back at him, so I forced the action and tried to play my own game. My own game led me right into trouble and I lost the ball. Making matters worse, I loafed back on defense. I was doing my own thing and that's not how we do things here. That's how bad teams do things but not us. That doesn't fly here.”

James and Antonio looked at each other in disbelief as the player from State continued with his surprising comments.

“I didn't even think it was a big deal at the time,” Tom Winston said. “I've told Coach Henry a bunch of times that he can be hard on me. I've told him I want to be coachable and be the best that I can be. I was surprised when I looked at my phone just a few minutes ago and saw all the messages and all the stuff about this going viral. I needed to refocus during the game. I don't worry about how Coach says something to me. I just worry about what he's saying to me. I want to always be improving. I know that when Coach is yelling at me or getting after me, it's never out of harm. It's never out of hate. I interact with him every single day and we have a bond. A connection. I know that he pushes me because he wants the best for me. He's a

great coach and an even better person. He is also an emotional person. I love Coach. I love my teammates. I'm glad that I get to be part of this program."

As the TV went to commercial, the bus was silent. It was safe to say that the players on the bus had not heard a player say those kinds of things before. But then again, most of them had not been around a program with as good of culture like the one at State.

"Wow! I guess that's all that I can say. Wow!" Chaz repeated.

"I can tell you right now I don't know if I would've defended Coach if he yelled at me like that," James admitted.

"It would be hard. But then again, State seems to have something special," Antonio pointed out. "That dude said he wanted to be coachable. He wanted to be coached hard. He wanted to improve. It makes me wonder about me."

"What about you? What do you mean?" asked James.

"Well, I know for a fact that I've gotten defensive in the past when coaches questioned whether or not I was coachable," admitted Antonio. "I've always thought I was coachable."

"We probably all think that we're coachable. But maybe our coaches or teammates don't see us that way," Chaz acknowledged.

Antonio was serious about this and wanted everyone sitting around him to know it.

"I want to be the best player I can be," Antonio said in Matt's direction since he knew that Matt was always a team-oriented guy.

"I don't doubt that but are you wanting to be good for you or for the team?" Matt asked him.

Antonio thought about that question for a moment and then responded, "Winston said a bunch of interesting things just now, but there was something that bothered me because I've said it a bunch. He mentioned 'playing his game'."

"Yeah, so has your mom," James said. "I've heard her lots of times. 'Just play your game, baby. Just play your game. You do you'. I can hear her now."

“Like your mom hasn’t probably yelled something like that out during a game, either.” Mentioned Chaz as he came to Antonio’s defense.

“Touché,” James responded.

It was obvious that Antonio was serious about his thoughts right now because he didn’t bite or get caught up in his roommate’s jokes.

“Tom Winston was trying to do his own thing and it hurt his team,” Antonio acknowledged. “Maybe when I’m trying to improve, it’s essentially so I can look better personally. My motive might not be to improve so the team is better but so I get more exposure or attention.”

“That makes sense. I don’t know. You might be on to something,” said Chaz.

“If I’m serious about wanting to be coachable then I should probably start to look at myself honestly and whether or not I’m in it for myself or the team,” Antonio said.

Matt shook his head in agreement. He was liking how Antonio was starting to question some of these things. Matt was going to try to keep the momentum going as long as Antonio was willing to considering all of this team stuff.

Matt said, “I like those thoughts, Antonio. Just like those Super Bowl Eagles. ‘We before me’. Maybe us Eagles can become like that. Remember in Dr. Forest’s business class when he had us watch those *Shark Tank* episodes?”

“Some of them were pretty cool. I’d be trying to get Mark Cuban and Daymond John to go in together and be my partner every time. Those dudes are awesome!” said Antonio.

“Yeah! Remember when he showed us the one about the lady that put mirrors in dressing rooms so when people tried on clothes, they looked skinnier and then bought the clothes because they liked the way they looked?” asked Matt.

“That was funny,” Chaz said as he recalled watching that episode in Dr. Forest’s class. “The reflection people saw wasn’t real or accurate. But they definitely liked what they saw. I remember that one. It was

kind of dishonest and she didn't get a deal if I remember. Why do you bring that up?"

Matt answered, "As we were talking about being coachable and being team players, I was thinking that none of us thinks we're selfish or that we're uncoachable as Antonio mentioned a few minutes ago. Maybe we're looking at ourselves like people looking at one of those weird mirrors. Maybe we're not honestly assessing ourselves."

"You may be on to something there," Antonio said acknowledging Matt's observation.

"You guys know that I love Steph Curry," Matt reminded them. "Well, he stayed an extra year in school when people were saying he should leave for the NBA. Even though he was a great shooter and scorer, he stayed that extra year so that he could play the point guard position for the entire year. That allowed him to become an even better player."

Steph Curry had nearly doubled his assist average from his sophomore to his junior year, remarkably without sacrificing his scoring average.

Matt thought of another example and said, "How about Michael Jordan? James, you'll like this. MJ, as you probably know to be as big of a fan as you are, couldn't shoot a lick when he first came into the league. But after five years in the league, he finally got serious about his overall game and worked on his three-point shooting. Low and behold, the Bulls finally got over the hump and started winning championships after that. I don't think that was merely a coincidence.

"And don't forget about Kevin Durant," Chaz added.

"I know what you're going to say." Interrupted Antonio. "Coach loves mentioning that quote from one of KD's former coaches. It's even on a poster in his office."

"Kevin Durant works like he's trying to make the team." quoted James.

"We make fun of Coach for mentioning quote a lot, but it's kind of a cool statement. It'd be awesome if a coach said that about me. It's

one thing if I was terrible and was actually just trying to make the team. But when you're a star like KD, that's a pretty cool compliment. Outworking your talent. That's a phrase Coach likes to say," Chaz said.

As a future coach, Matt loved the direction that this conversation had gone. Because these teammates were friends and shared a mutual love of sports, they were able to banter back and forth but also learn some lessons.

Matt added, "Kawhi Leonard was just like MJ. He couldn't shoot coming out of college but then worked on his shooting and become one of the best players in the NBA."

"And he has some rings to show for that," Antonio pointed out as he rubbed his fingers wishing they were home to some of that bling.

"You're right," Matt agreed. "He and his teammates have rings to show for his coachability and improvement."

"I'm starting to think that all this coachability and improvement stuff might actually be important," joked Chaz. "If I can make myself better, then maybe I can help this Eagles team be like the Super Bowl Eagles team."

Matt agreed with Chaz, "I think you're right. Instead of getting defensive or being overly sensitive to what Coach has to say to us in practice or meetings, we should take it as an opportunity to get better."

"Just like State's Tom Winston," Antonio added.

"Exactly," said Matt. "We all want to be part of a great team, but a great team requires great teammates. Are we those people on this team? I guess if we aren't coachable then we won't have a championship team like State," Matt suggested.

"Or the Super Bowl Eagles," added Antonio.

"Yes, our beloved namesake." Said Chaz.