

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 14, 2024
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Target Center

Maryland Terrapins

Kevin Willard

Jahmir Young

Postgame Press Conference



Wisconsin - 87, Maryland - 56

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Maryland head coach Kevin Willard and Jahmir Young. We'll start with questions for Jahmir.

Q. Jahmir, you guys have hung your hat on defense all year. How much do you think fatigue might have played a factor in Wisconsin getting off to a quick start?

JAHMIR YOUNG: Yeah, they hit ten threes in the first half, and it was tough. They shot at such a high percentage from three, and we couldn't run them off the line. They had us running on defense for a majority of the game.

Hat's off to them. They had a great game. That's really it.

Q. Jahmir, I know it's tough right now, but when you checked out and you embraced everyone on the bench, what were the emotions going through your head at that time?

JAHMIR YOUNG: Just thankful for the year. Just taking that last walk. Just thanking all my teammates and thanking Coach for embracing me these last two years.

Q. In your role as a leader on the team, what were you kind of trying to tell the team as that first half kind of went on and Wisconsin kind of kept growing that advantage?

JAHMIR YOUNG: I was just trying to tell them, I mean, it's 20 minutes left, just to try to leave it all on the floor. Just take it one possession at a time, chip away.

The game got a little ahead of us, and we couldn't fight back.

Q. How much of just how draining this season has been, how much do you think that was kind of felt as the score got out of hand in the second half and just the emotions of kind of how the season has gone?

JAHMIR YOUNG: There was a lot of emotions, especially this game, knowing that it was our last one. Just the game getting out of hand and us just -- you could see us just deflate a little bit.

Wisconsin was on a run, and their confidence was just building every shot that was going in. The game was just getting away from us, and we were just embracing that. Me and Tay just embracing our last time in a Maryland uniform.

Q. Fatigue, how much of a factor was that at the beginning of the game? Looked like you were maybe a little bit slow.

KEVIN WILLARD: Yeah, I think playing at night and coming back at 1:30 is tough. You have to play better during the season, so you don't get in that position.

Q. The team's three-point defense has been really strong throughout the year. What did you see open up for Wisconsin early that allowed them to drain a couple of threes?

KEVIN WILLARD: Wisconsin's team is really good. Give Greg and his team a lot of credit. They came out -- we were going to play Blackwell as a driver just because he'd been driving the basketball so well. He had played really well the last four games. Three games, I think he scored in double digits, and he was excellent against Purdue.

They made a couple shots early, and they got going. Give them credit. They just kept going.

Q. What can the freshmen, younger players get out of this experience, just getting a taste of the postseason and kind of build for the future?

KEVIN WILLARD: That's a good question. I think it's really



important for them to understand kind of the first time you're in a conference tournament and you're playing back-to-back games. I think every experience for them is really valuable.

I thought DeShawn, more than anybody, kind of embraced the tournament a little bit. Jamie, it's a tough matchup for Jamie with Klesmit and A.J. Storr. I think all experience at their age is really important. I thought they both had great years, playing in probably the best basketball conference in the country and probably the oldest conference in the country.

So I think they both will take a lot out of it, and I think they both had great years.

Q. Coach, obviously there was a lot of optimism entering this year. What do you think made it tough for you guys, and how do you think you can trend back in the right direction going forward?

KEVIN WILLARD: To be perfectly honest with you, the roster was built -- the way we built the roster, I felt was good. Just as the year went on, I was just really, really shocked at how much we struggled to shoot the basketball.

I just think our inability to make shots just led to nine three-points-or-less losses, and that adds up. It just wears you down a little bit. Wears you down as a player, wears you down as a coach, and I know it wore the fan base down.

We'll retool the roster, and we'll be back next year.

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