

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

West Virginia Mountaineers

Coach Josh Eilert

Jesse Edwards

Josiah Harris

Postgame Press Conference

Cincinnati - 90, West Virginia - 85

THE MODERATOR: We have been joined by Coach Josh Eilert along with Jesse Edwards and Josiah Harris. Coach, can you give us some comments about the game?

JOSH EILERT: As I look at the box score and I told those guys we had to change the game plan from Saturday's performance, and we certainly did that and figured out how we shored up that paint, but at the end of the day, credit to them stepping up and making shot after shot.

Couldn't figure out a way to get a hand up and got a lot of dare shots out there, which credit to them, they made. At the end of the day, it came down to discipline. The parade to the free throw line, things that we can control, you know, discipline in terms of, you know, not getting technical fouls, 6 points at the line and in critical moments where we had some momentum and it just killed that momentum.

It's been a challenging year. I got a quote today or a couple days ago from Joe Mizzoula. We have been close since he was our point guard here at West Virginia, sent me a page out of a book he's reading, thought it hit home with me. It said make friends with the problems in your life.

This certainly, this whole entire year from the moment I got the job it's been filled with challenges and problems to solve and issues to deal with.

It's just been a nonstop, whether it be internal issues or external issues. It's just been quite the roller coaster minefield to navigate. What you do, you wake up every day and try to figure out how do you, you know, attack those issues and figure out solutions. We got to the finish line. It's certainly not where we wanted to be from a record standpoint, but I think everybody learned and grew as



humans, as individuals, but at the end of the day you talk about this game it just came down to discipline and playing the game the right way.

Q. For both players, Coach mentioned challenging things and a lot of things happening. (No microphone.)

JOSIAH HARRIS: Just realizing that basketball comes with a lot of ups and downs and staying level headed through it all and battling adversity. The coaches did a great job trying to keep our heads level with all the situations we had to go through. So maintaining that and keeping our heads and staying in the gym. That's what I got from it.

JESSE EDWARDS: Like Jo-Jo said, you get to see what it takes to get a team together, build that chemistry, what it takes to do a lot of things, but you usually -- when you have a team that's kind of all over the place, where there was people that couldn't play for a while, or injuries, or -- I mean, obviously all the stuff this the summer, you know, it threw a lot of that off.

You really get to -- you see the importance of that. All together, we really did some really great things, still, and like Coach said, it's been a roller coaster, and it's sad to go out like this, but, yeah. Take what you can.

Q. Cincinnati before this was your most recent opponent, and this game was more competitive and closer. What did you all change going into today? What was different overall about this game from Saturday?

JOSIAH HARRIS: Like Coach said, just giving them more dare shots, they just came out and hit 'em today. But we stuck with the game plan. In the first half we saw it worked, but just toward the end, they were hitting some crucial shots. It was a major difference from last game.

JESSE EDWARDS: Yeah, we came out with a lot more physicality this game because obviously that's what was a big factor last game. They really hurt us. We had a chance to change some things regarding the pick-and-roll



defense. It was obviously working. We did a really good job of keeping them on the low end. It was other things that did us today. The game plan worked, to a really good extent, and we got into a competitive game, made mistakes and didn't finish it out.

Q. Coach you've seen a lot of this league now. How crazy is it that 16-point leads are just not safe for anyone?

JOSH EILERT: Yeah, I mean, this is high-level basketball at its finest. This is Big 12 basketball. You saw it with what we did at Kansas State. It was a 29-point turn around in ten minutes, so high-level athletes, high-level skilled guys in this league, and when people start seeing shots go down, the confidence starts to roll and that certainly worked in their favor today.

To the game plan, you know, certainly we didn't want to dare anybody to shoot. I think more than anything our sense of urgency on getting to shooters could have been a lot higher, and we could have got more contests there, but for the most part our guys responded, and they accepted the challenge and the physicality of the game and didn't back down.

And at the end of the day, with this group, I continue to tell them we fight to the bitter end. There were a couple of games that got away from us over the course of the season that don't represent who these guys are and how much, you know, tenacity they have when they really play and they play together.

Q. Question for Jesse. This marks the last game as a player for West Virginia. I can imagine maybe it's not in your thoughts, but can you look forward to the future? What's next?

JESSE EDWARDS: At this point, nobody is looking forward yet. It's going to take a little bit, get home, um, you know, digest everything that's happened the last couple of weeks, really, and today. Then, you know, yeah, start bogging down on a future plan that all of us have going to have to make.

But, yeah, at this point rate now, not yet.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

JOSH EILERT: Thank you.

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