

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Vanderbilt Commodores

Jerry Stackhouse

Postgame Press Conference



Vanderbilt 79, Texas A&M 68

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for joining us. Why don't we start with opening thoughts from you on tonight's game, then open it up for questions.

JERRY STACKHOUSE: I'm super excited for our guys, happy for them, happy for our fans. Been a little while coming to get our SEC win, but we're excited about this one, excited about the challenge ahead of us tomorrow.

Thought we did some really good things today offensively and defensively. Didn't rebound the ball as well as we needed to. The effort we had on the defensive boards won't allow us to win tomorrow's game. Hopefully we can fix that between now and tomorrow to give ourselves a chance to keep this train rolling.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Stack, when Texas A&M got it back to tying it up at 45, how big was the composure and toughness you saw out of your guys to get control of the game back and not let it get away?

JERRY STACKHOUSE: Yeah, I mean, it was important. I thought it was good that you play through it because we knew they were going to make a run. It just so happened to be at that time. I was looking up at the clock. I was like, Man, it was right there at the media timeout was coming up. I was trying to hopefully not try to burn one with them getting the game back close to where we may have needed that down the stretch.

I thought we did a good job of just weathering the storm. We did it to ourselves. Transition defense, Scotty, Max, they all had an opportunity to get there and get some good verticals. For whatever reason we sold out and gave them some easy opportunities.

I think they struggled to score against our halfcourt defense

and then some of the zone stuff that we kind of mixed in today. But when we did play great defense, like I say, they got some good opportunities on the offensive boards. That's something we got to clean up, putting bodies on guys. We're capable. You know what I'm saying? We're capable of being more physical.

I thought they weathered that storm. Guys stepped up and made plays. Scotty didn't have his best game tonight from a scoring standpoint. He still was able to score. He got to the free-throw line. Just shooting from the field, it wasn't his best night.

But other guys stepped up. D.J. stepped up. Max stepped up, made some shots. Jordan was good for us. I thought Trey was huge for us down the stretch. We're going to need those type of efforts across the board if we want to keep advancing the way we did today.

Q. On Scotty, when the ball isn't falling for someone like that, what is the maturity level required to still play the overall game that he played tonight?

JERRY STACKHOUSE: Yeah, I mean, I took him out just to gain his composure a little bit. He's still a young kid. No matter what you think, as much success as he's had, as much as he means to our team, he's still a young guy. Just sometimes it takes coming out of the game, watching a little bit. I thought he did that, saw where he could pick his spots, went back in and did a really good job for us.

The good thing about it, he normally doesn't do that two games in a row. I'm expecting a big output from him tomorrow. Again, it's just a different offense, a different type of style we had to play with their matchup zone. I told you, it's just about guys getting into the middle, making some plays, doing some different things. I thought we had a pretty good plan for it.

I think with Florida tomorrow, they're more of a man team. He's going to be able to get into some rhythm of our offense a little bit more. But they mix it up as well. They do some 1-3-1, do some different things. We got to be prepared to play some different styles.

I like the balance that we had today. We need to continue to have that balance and hopefully we get our guy back up to playing at the level that he's capable of and giving us the numbers that he's capable of.

Q. Did it feel like a conference tournament out there tonight? Just a few dozen fans. Tell us what it seemed like.

JERRY STACKHOUSE: Yeah, I mean, I think we know where we are. We're at the end of the year, we're at the conference tournament. I think the league does a good job of really putting all the bells and whistles out there. Guys get to see their likeness in different images throughout the arena, different slogans that we use as a team. They picked up on it and placed it throughout the place.

I mean, it feels like we're somewhere. I thought our guys stepped up and responded in this environment. Obviously we know that the fans aren't there. It's not 15, 16,000 in there. At the same time we create our own enthusiasm. I think the good teams find a way to not have a silent bench. We got to make sure that we have energy over there. I thought our guys did that. The guys that weren't in the game were really supportive of the guys that were. That's what we're going to have to continue to do.

But still obviously it's not the normal feel that you would get of a big conference tournament. But I think the league, we're all doing the best that we can to try to make it that way. I'm pretty sure tomorrow probably will have a little bit more life, more people in the building as well.

Q. Jerry, a lot of times we don't know what we had until we lost it. With this year, did you ever catch yourself being a little bit more appreciative of being out there on the court? What was going through your mind?

JERRY STACKHOUSE: Yeah, I mean, I think we're all excited to be here, man. For the guys I talk to locally most of the time, I tell them one of the happiest time of my day is when we get that message and it says, All COVID tests are negative. You know what I'm saying (smiling)?

We know every day, if one of those tests comes back positive, it changes everything. Now we're into contact tracing, probably maybe not even able to play this game.

We're hoping to keep everybody safe. We're not only praying for ourselves, but every team in this tournament so we can have an opportunity to play. Again, one positive test, that can set this whole thing in a tailspin. Preferably we're able to get through it and give these kids a chance to showcase their talents, participate in something they've

dreamed about all of their lives.

I'm just happy to be a part of it, happy to be able to lead our group.

Q. Obviously quick turnover here with the next game tomorrow. How much does it help having seen Florida before? What do you expect them to give you tomorrow?

JERRY STACKHOUSE: Yeah, I think definitely we played this team twice. We can go back, look at some of the things they've done in both of those games. Things that went well, things that didn't go well. We kind of got down early with them. We got really aggressive and did some things with our trapping, where we was able to get back into the game. Could be an option to do some of those things tomorrow.

More so than anything, just coming out and competing. They're a talented team, they're a good team. They got good guards, they got bigs, got guys that can crash. We got those same type of guys. I think talent is a floor, but your character, your integrity, your work ethic, that's the ceiling. I think we got guys that really exemplify all three of those things.

Maybe you look at that team top to bottom, yeah, they're probably a more talented team than we are. But when you put that integrity, that character, and that heart and that competitiveness to the forefront, I like our chances.

Q. Specifically about your freshmen, Myles and Trey. How important were they? You mention tomorrow probably have more of a feel. What do you think the benefit is of to be in that with four games, be in that atmosphere especially for your young guys?

JERRY STACKHOUSE: Yeah, I mean, I thought they stepped up, man. Those guys stepped up. They're not afraid of the moment. Stepped up and made big shots on the big stage. I mean, it speaks volumes of who they are. They put in the work.

I mean, these guys after practice, before practice, you can see them. They stay. They're not cliché guys where it's like, I come in and stay late. They really come in early and stay late. I'm not surprised when they step up and make the shots that they do. Super proud of them.

When things don't go well, you always hear about recruiting, this, that, and the other. But I'm proud of our guys, proud of the guys that we brought in here, what they've been able to do. Hopefully they can just keep it going.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks a lot. Appreciate it.

JERRY STACKHOUSE: All right, guys. Appreciate it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

