

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Florida Gators

Mike White

Postgame Press Conference

Florida 69, Vanderbilt 63

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by coach. Questions.

Q. Mike, the defense in the final 5 minutes, do you think made a difference?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, definitely. But they had a couple open ones there. It wasn't great, but it was better. I thought our guys responded in our 1-3-1. It gave us a little bit of life, a little bit of juice.

The activity of really Scottie. Scottie didn't get it going offensively. I didn't put him in the game there for a little bit, of course, early on. But I thought down the stretch, his defensive energy really helped us.

Trey Thomas missed an open one right across from Coach Stack on that left wing that would have been a big one for him. But he obviously hit four huge ones, went on probably a 9-0 run by himself, if I remember correctly, at least it seemed like it.

Q. He did.

MIKE WHITE: I thought down the stretch offensively we were better. Got to be even more sharp tomorrow and moving forward. Then, of course, I thought our ball security and converting at the foul line and the command of our point guards in Tyree and Tre were positives, as well.

Q. There was one stretch there where your ball security wasn't very good, three straight possessions with turnovers. Was there a chat about that?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, I mean, we had a few chats throughout the game offensively and defensively. Just continued to play a little bit too rushed at times. We want to play fast physically, but mentally the game has to be slower for us. Had an errant jump up in the air, throw it backwards, backcourt violation. Threw a bullet at our



teammate's head when he was just 2, 3 feet away. Just played a little bit too fast at times.

I think some of that is the first one in the tournament setting. A lot of it had to do with Vandy. Vandy, it's a do-or-die for them, as well. I think both teams played really hard. Vandy came in with a lot of momentum and confidence the way they shot the ball last night. They continued to execute well.

We were 15-12. I mean, you go back and look at it, you're upset with some of those decisions, some of those turnovers. That's probably as good a turnover ratio as we've had in a while.

Q. As far as the two guys that weren't there for shootaround that was reported by the network. That is obviously disappointing to you.

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, absolutely disappointing. It's unacceptable in this program. I mean, you got to get on the elevator and get down to the first level of the hotel that you're sleeping in. We're not doing that here.

We've got really good guys. They responded well. They'll continue to respond well. Resilient group, as we've talked about all year. Vandy makes a big run, and our resilience showed again. We'll be resilient again tomorrow, hopefully on top of that, execute offensively and defensively enough to advance. We'll see.

Q. How tough a cover is Scotty Pippen? How much better is he than a year ago?

MIKE WHITE: He reminds me of Tre in that regard. You have two of the more improved guys, definitely guards, in all of college basketball. We've been asked about Tre all year. I don't get a chance to talk about other teams' guys but, what, two or three times a year.

I love his game. I got a lot of respect for how hard he plays. We talk about command with point guards a lot. He has got command out there, offensively, defensively. He's playing a video game out there, in my opinion. He sees everything before it happens. Draws fouls. Incredibly



intelligent as a basketball player.

I don't know him. I'm just watching him. Just a fan of his game. Incredibly quick thinker. He's very, very difficult to defend. 10-10 from the foul line. He has a ton of poise at that line, as well. 15 of 15 last night. That's just incredible in two games.

Q. I wanted to know, how do two players miss shootaround at this point of the year? How disappointing is that from a coaching standpoint in terms of accountability to the team and to your teammates at this point of the year?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, I don't know what was written, said, reported. I don't know any of that. No one missed shootaround. We had two guys that were late to a walk-through this morning in the hotel. Everybody made shootaround. That's it.

It got out there today. I've been head coach 10 years now. It's not the first time. Won't be the last. I think we've had maybe one earlier this year. I think we had a couple last year. Three or four last year.

Sometimes a guy is not starting, and you're never asked about it. Sometimes you just wait till the second half to put a guy in. Sometimes you send a message in a different way. It's easy for a guy who is starting to just say, Hey, you're not starting now.

You also have to move on. These guys are young men, they make mistakes. We all make mistakes. Just like on the court, you get upset with a guy. Again, young man, 20 years old. Misses a block-out. You might holler at him. We all move on to the next play.

Q. Just had a game with Tennessee. Obviously Tre was out for that. The familiarity, played them a couple times. How much just having Tre, how much will that change the game tomorrow?

MIKE WHITE: Tre, he's an all-league player. It will definitely help us, I think give us a better chance. I don't think it guarantees anything. Tre has to play well. It's not like it's just a given that he's going to play great against a top-10 defense in the country. His teammates have to play well, in addition. We've got to defend better, rebound better than we did in Knoxville.

They're a very good team, well-balanced, playing really well. We've all got to do a better job than we did last week to have a chance really.

Q. He got a few shots up at the end. But Castleton

had four field goal attempts towards the latter stage of game. He hasn't been taking a lot of shots. Is there a confidence issue? How can you get Castleton a little bit more involved?

MIKE WHITE: It all depends on how you're being defended, really what you're running. It doesn't come to mind, his individual performance in Gainesville. But I know in Nashville early in the year, early winter, early January, he was really good.

We were running different stuff. We got out and played really fast. We had a couple weeks off. He got some lobs to the back of the rim. Some of that was press attack, playing with a lead. Vandy was gambling a lot, playing high risk. I think it resulted in some of his baskets.

He's earned the respect - he's an all-league guy - of the our team's scouting report. I think Vandy did a very good job. I thought he made good decisions. Any time he caught it within 10, 15 feet, they sent another guy at him.

A couple possessions where I wish maybe he would have thrown it up there on the rim. Credit to him for unselfishness, trying to get the best shot for us as a team.

Q. Tre has become more the guy for your team, taking a lot more shots. He's been more efficient over the last couple games. What do you think has been key to him not only taking more shots but being more efficient with opportunities?

MIKE WHITE: I think maturity. I think more balance within our roster. We're executing just a little bit better than we were a month ago. We've slowed tempo just a little bit to where these guys are getting their wind back at times. So we've kind of found more of a productive identity for us here late.

He's playing with great confidence. I think also Tyree's decisions over the course of the past two, three weeks have gotten a little bit better. That allows Tre to be more productive on the ball, off the ball, when those guys are playing together.

Some of it's just simply maturity. Physical, mental toughness. He's just getting a little bit older.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

MIKE WHITE: Thanks, guys.

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