

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Georgia Bulldogs Sahvir Wheeler

Postgame Press Conference



Missouri 73, Georgia 70

THE MODERATOR: We're joined first by Sahvir Wheeler. Let's go straight to questions.

Q. Obviously a little bit of an agonizing game I would say there, almost maddening. What is your takeaway just on how you guys played tonight? Obviously the last game of the season.

SAHVIR WHEELER: Yeah, first I want to say, it's still 'Sahvir', you said it wrong. Last week, this week, it hasn't changed (smiling).

It was a disappointing effort. They made a few more plays down the stretch. We didn't finish some plays. But we fought back. We got down 10 to 12 early in the season, I think kind of would have collapsed in. This time we came back around. We knew we were capable of making a run against the team because the same kind of situation happened. This time around they made a few extra plays than we did. We missed some.

Proud of our effort that we fought back. It was just unfortunate that we lost.

Q. A lot of people are going to look at the last shot. Missouri got that three-pointer right before the first half. What kind of a turning point was that, gave them momentum going into the locker room?

SAHVIR WHEELER: Yeah, I mean, it was a great shot, a big shot for them. But we still had the lead. I think we came out the half and we scored on our first possession to get that right back.

It was a big possession, probably gave them some confidence, momentum. But I feel like we responded well right after halftime.

Q. The charge, you hit the floater in the lane, the 9-0

run, talk about that run, how you got that going.

SAHVIR WHEELER: We know we didn't want to go out with a deficit like that when we had been playing pretty well defensively leading up to that point when they made their run.

At this level, basketball is a game of runs. Great teams are going to make runs. We had to counter-punch. That was the biggest thing, getting one stop at a time, going down and making shots, shots that were makable shots, shots we got off each other's momentum, sharing the ball, playing for each other. That's how we got that spurt going and cut the lead.

Q. Broadly, what do you think the fight and momentum y'all showed at the end of the game kind of says about this team and the season as a whole?

SAHVIR WHEELER: Yeah, I mean, I think that kind of sums up the season as far as just looking at that run, how up and down it is in the pandemic. This is a first-time experience for everybody, especially playing through a pandemic like COVID-19.

It showed the heart and fight that we have as a team not to quit, not to bow down to anyone. Like I said before, I'm not a real big moral victory kind of guy. I want to win. A win is a win, a loss is a loss. I'm a little upset that we lost. I feel like this is a game we could have won.

Q. Off the top of your head with the season being over, what are your thoughts on how the season went? You finished higher in the SEC standings than you were predicted at the end of the season.

SAHVIR WHEELER: I think we were projected second-to-last. We finished higher than that. Every year has been progress, especially since Coach Crean has been here. The first year, what, two or three wins. Last year five or six wins. Now we're seven wins and we're above .500 to end the season. There's definitely progress.

The players have all gotten better under Coach Crean. For us, we're just looking to take this and grow from it. With



this group of guys, we have a good chemistry. We wish we could keep playing. Hopefully praying it's not over just yet.

I've really enjoyed playing with these guys. Wouldn't have it any other way.

Q. You guys shot a good percentage from the three-point line today. To shoot that well behind the three line, still fall short, how disappointing is that?

SAHVIR WHEELER: These are good teams. This is the SEC, one of the best conferences in college basketball. You can play your best basketball and still lose the game.

So we shot the ball pretty well from the three-point line. But I don't think we got to the free throw line as much as we wanted to.

At the end they kind of got some loose ball, kind of like, did they really even mean to score right there? I remember one possession where Kobe Brown was trying to make a post feed, he tips the ball, goes into the rim. That's not design. They had a couple possessions like that.

It's hard to go through that when they're making a run. It is what it is.

Q. Y'all played close with a good team tonight. You've done that a lot. As far as the big picture goes looking forward to the off-season, what does the end of this season mean for what this program is going to look like next year?

SAHVIR WHEELER: You're referring about the next SEC season, like next year?

Q. Yes.

SAHVIR WHEELER: I mean, hopefully a lot of guys come back, come back better. We know what we all need to get better at. We're going to stay hungry. Coach was just talking about that hunger in the locker room now, stay hungry, stay wanting to get better.

Next year we're looking to be a top-six, top-five range. I know to some people that might sound crazy. We've been in a few games right there, a couple possessions here, a couple stops there, we'll be right in these games.

Next year I'm going to take a little more pressure for the SEC. That's my personal goal, is to finish top five. I know we can make that happen with these guys here and with these guys coming in. I believe. Coaches, they're game planning on me game by game, for the program. We're changing the culture here one day at a time.

We definitely have all the players and pieces to do it. We're just looking ahead to get on the train and change this program to a winning basketball culture.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time.

SAHVIR WHEELER: Thank you.

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