

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 12, 2021

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Tennessee Volunteers

Yves Pons

Postgame Press Conference

Tennessee 78, Florida 66

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Yves Pons.

Q. Yves, nine blocks for you today, highlighted a good defensive effort. What do you feel like went well for you guys? Did it help you just played Florida a week ago?

YVES PONS: I don't think so. I mean, that was a completely different game. We beat them, sure. But we have to forget, and we have to remember they beat us pretty bad the first time we played them.

We still had in this mind. We went out there. It was about us, about Tennessee playing our offense, our defense, and that's what we did.

Q. How motivated were you guys after what happened to John in the second half?

YVES PONS: Of course, it kind of piss us off, motivate us to keep going, don't relax. We have Johnny's back, so...

Q. What did it feel like being back on the floor? Being able to play this year after you came over there last year and were told at the last minute you couldn't play.

YVES PONS: It feel great. Last year we finish in bad situation, a lot of frustration for a lot of guys. We think about John didn't get a chance to play the SEC tournament. So we went out there, we play for him, we play for Tennessee.

It feel great. It feel great to be back, so...

Q. You were talking about the elbow there. What did you see on that play? Did you think that moment galvanized the team, added some emotion the rest of the way?



YVES PONS: Yeah, they kind of get into an entanglement. I saw him elbow Johnny on the face. That's nothing to do on the basketball court.

Of course, we took impression. We love John, and we had his back, so...

Q. I know there's some games where teams don't try to attack you defensively, sometimes they try to get you in foul trouble. Sometimes teams won't attempt layups around you. Were you surprised that Florida kept giving you opportunities to block shots today?

YVES PONS: I think they're trying to be aggressive. It's a team that score a lot of points in the paint. We did a good job of protecting in the paint, protecting the rim. That's what I do, really defense, that's my first job to do on the court. So that's what I did.

Q. It's been a long time since you guys played Alabama. What do you remember about that game? What makes them such a tough opponent?

YVES PONS: I think it's a good challenge, really good team. They beat us the first time. We have to take revenge. I can't wait to play tomorrow. We'll be ready for them.

Q. Great defensive performances even though having a week off. What has been the key to the defense returning to early-season form?

YVES PONS: I think the biggest thing we adjust is to play together, back in defense. Also in offense, play together, move the ball. Just really play Tennessee basketball.

Defensive-wise we know we are a really good team. When we play good defense, we are really hard to beat.

Q. What was it like to see Uros get out there?

YVES PONS: Oh, man, amazing. He run the floor, he take out the ball. He really give us some rest, too. He did an amazing job when he was on the floor.

Really happy for him. I expect more for him in the next game. Everybody has to be ready. Everybody has a role to play on our team. We deserve tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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