

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 12, 2021
Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Missouri Tigers Cuonzo Martin

Postgame Press Conference

Arkansas 70, Missouri 64

THE MODERATOR: Questions for coach.

Q. In a game with that many offensive fouls, how difficult is it to kind of get a rhythm established? At a certain point, do you feel you need to see some sort of adjustment from the drivers?

CUONZO MARTIN: I mean, they called it both ways. Man, I've never seen that many in a game, so I guess they were charged calls. You drive the ball, you're being aggressive. Yeah, till the guy drops his shoulders, get around it, what we normally see in practice, get your shoulders around his knee or his hip, then make a play.

But I don't think I've been a part of a game with that many offensive fouls. They called them at both ends, so...

Q. What did you see from J.D. Notae's game? How did you try to negate what he was doing?

CUONZO MARTIN: He had two deep threes early. I think that really kind of got him going. He got his confidence up. He's a confidence scorer. I don't think he scored that well lately. Again, you know it was coming at some point because he's an aggressive scorer.

If his shot is falling, they went through him, he made plays. I think it was a three-point game right there. A loose ball, he got it, put it up. That was a tough one right there.

I thought our guys did an excellent job fighting back. Proud to see Parker game ready, he came in and played major minutes for us. He's that type of player. Some nights he doesn't go for it. I don't think he played in the second half at our place. Obviously played well tonight.

Q. How does a game like this prepare you for the upcoming NCAA tournament?



CUONZO MARTIN: It's simply basketball. It's a good opponent. They're good players. It's basketball. I think the NCAA, you don't know, you might have a team that runs a Princeton style offense, a team that plays 2-3 zone the whole game. You don't know.

I think we've had enough preparation just in our schedule all season long. You just never know the style. I think that will be the adjustment more than anything.

Q. This is always a matchup game with Arkansas because they can play big or small. When they went small, did that give you a little more trouble?

CUONZO MARTIN: I'm not sure it gave us trouble. I think the advantage, we needed to probably get more out of Tilton when they're small. We feel like that's an advantage for us. We didn't win that battle. They want to go small, let's make them pay. I didn't think he had one of his better games. That should have been an advantage for us.

Even with whoever they started in the game, we felt like going with him we could have great production.

Q. I don't know how much you've sort of been able to hear the news around the country of some programs not being able to play today. Now that you have the tournament in front of you, this part behind you, does that change any of your approach to how you make sure you're insulated?

CUONZO MARTIN: The thing for us is we go on from here to Indy. Like we tell our guys, we always say: Stay out of the homes, put yourself in position, don't do anything to jeopardize not just you but your teammates. We try to do the best job we can. I think our guys have done a great job in trying to prepare for the unknown. We've taken our COVID tests. We've been good thus far.

Again, you never know. You have to put yourself in position to do the right things.

Q. Is there an update on Pinson after he left?

CUONZO MARTIN: Not right now. He just went into the locker room. He was able to walk in the locker room on his own. That's all we have right now.

Q. For Jeremiah and Mitch to foul out early in that second half, how did losing those two guys down low affect the outlook of the game?

CUONZO MARTIN: I think the same for any team. We have key guys that you count on, especially in Jeremiah's case, a guy that you feel gives you low post production offensively. Mitch does a lot of different things, defending rebound, making a three-point shot, timely basket at the rim. Jeremiah is a guy with a post presence. You have to identify this year get good post touches and also double the post, offensive rebounding.

It's a key loss. You're talking about two guys we count on.

Q. You said last night you are who you are at this point. How do you approach this next week? What are the focuses?

CUONZO MARTIN: I thought we had too many turnovers. I think both teams probably had 20-plus. I don't know how many offensive fouls there were.

I just think for us, of course I think we'll probably take a day or two off. I think you start game planning. We won't necessarily practice for two days, maybe watch film, things we need to correct and get better at. Then you start game planning for whoever that opponent is. Outside of general stuff we practice, work on ball handling, executing, those sorts of things. We'll try to be more specific especially for the first game, whoever that opponent is.

Q. Finishing at the rim was a bit of an issue again. Nine of 23 on layups. Is it just want to at this point in the season?

CUONZO MARTIN: Just making 'em. I mean, you got opportunity to get to the rim, it's making 'em.

Plus oftentimes you got to be good at the rim. It's got to be something you normally do. You have to be confident finishing at the rim. It's just a matter of finishing at the rim. Those are layups. There's traffic, bodies, hands. It's finishing at the rim. Concentration more than anything.

Q. Before he got hurt, it did seem like X was really trying to get north and south. Offensively did he give you a chance?

CUONZO MARTIN: I thought he was getting downhill, making plays, putting pressure on the defense. I thought

he did a good job.

Q. Is there anything you want anyone to know about your team going into the post-season that we don't know already?

CUONZO MARTIN: No. I mean, we're in the tournament. I'm not giving away secrets. If anything, that's their job to find out. You guys know us very well. Anybody else, it's their job to find out.

Q. Kind of similar to that, you know what kind of potential your team has. Also not been the best month you've had. What is it you'll try to get across to them to tap loose what you think is their potential in the tournament?

CUONZO MARTIN: I think any time -- these are exciting times. Once you hear your name being called, find out who you're playing, new energy, always new energy. You've seen teams, five, six, seven, eight seeds all of a sudden make a great run.

It's just a new energy, refocusing on the task at hand. It's probably good to play somebody you haven't seen before.

It's basketball. It's exciting times. I think you're able to get rid of a lot of things that you might have thought negative or want to change, do better because it's a new season.

Energy is exciting. It's truly one-and-done. It's truly one-and-done. You got to win, you don't, you go home. I think those things are exciting times. Regroup, refocus. Like I said, we have all the parts. We just got to be consistent in what we do.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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