

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 12, 2021

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

LSU Tigers

Will Wade

Postgame Press Conference

LSU 76, Ole Miss 73

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you want to give an opening statement.

WILL WADE: Great win. Proud of our guys. We talked about winning the first game here, which was huge, something we haven't done in four or five years. So just really pleased.

This is two straight games we've been really good in the 6-minute game. We've made plays. I thought all our guys who played tonight made some big plays for us. We're certainly going to have to be better rebounding, especially in the second half against Arkansas tomorrow. It will be another big challenge.

We got to go back and get some rest. Very pleased. Ole Miss is a great team, a NCAA tournament team. It was a big, big game for us. Proud of our guys for digging it out and making plays. Made some big plays down the stretch.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How impressed were you with your team's poise there when they came back on you?

WILL WADE: I thought we did a great job getting off to a great start in the second half, which gave us that lead. When Javonte picked up his third foul, that really, really hurt us just in terms of our rhythm and our flow with the offense.

But I was proud of our guys. This is two straight games we've been down in the second half. We were able to withstand that barrage from Jarkel Joiner, that was as good of a shooting exhibition as you'll see. We were able to withstand that, hang in there, claw back, and fight back.

Just very, very proud of our guys. It's very, very good that we've done this in back-to-back games. That shows some



growth.

Q. It sounds like you lost your voice. I'm going to assume that's from yelling at me the other day.

WILL WADE: Our guard play was pretty good today. I don't know if it was elite today, but Cam hit some big shots, Javonte made some big plays, had a nice assist. I think our non-elite guards, we only had six turnovers tonight. Is that right?

Q. 14 assists, six turnovers. Pretty good ratio.

WILL WADE: 14 assists on 29 makes, something like that.

I'm just messing with you. What you got?

Q. Just the versatility you showed tonight, early in the paint, late to come back from range.

WILL WADE: Yeah, I thought in the first half we passed up a bunch of open threes. I was mad as hell at halftime. We were passing up threes, driving it in there. Give them credit. They were letting both teams play. They weren't going to blow the whistle, let them decide it. It was physical, physical tournament basketball, which is fine.

When you're driving it in there and just tossing things up. We're a good shooting team. We got to sit there and make the shots, hit the shots. I was really mad at halftime just about us not shooting open shots.

I thought we were able to play inside-out. I thought Trendon Watford was tremendous. Days did a great job finishing. He played inside-out. I thought it was really just an overall very good game for all those big four guys.

I thought Cam showed great patience. They were on him early in the game. He showed great patience to dig out whatever he ended up with, 16, 18, 19 points, whatever it was. He had to work for everything tonight.

Q. A lot of times this year your guards have carried you. Tonight they were struggling early offensively. Your big guys carried the load tonight. Talk about how



well they played.

WILL WADE: Yeah, I mean, Days and Trendon were awesome. I think our guards were 3-15 in the first half between the two of them. We knew that wasn't going to happen the second half. Trendon was unstoppable getting the ball in the high post, driving. He had all of his shots working, his whole game was working. He was just tremendous.

Days hit big shots, had big rebounds. He was able to cut behind the zone a couple times. Just really, really good.

Q. You mentioned how you guys are a good shooting team. People might say a little perimeter oriented. Did you show something tonight to win such a physical game? Is this the kind of team you feel like you can be when you have to?

WILL WADE: Yeah, I mean, we've won two physical games back-to-back away from home. That Missouri game was really, really physical as well. I think we've shown an increase in our physicality. We lost it a little bit down the stretch in the second half. But I think we've shown we can be physical when we need to.

Q. You obviously beat them pretty soundly at your place, they had a good win at their place. How do you see this game tomorrow at a neutral site?

WILL WADE: I mean, Justin Smith is playing so well, he played well today from what I could see, hitting a bunch of those little floaters. Devo Davis hurt us in the second game. Are they going to have Williams tomorrow? I heard he may be out till Sunday.

Q. That's what we're hearing. They're not being super informative about that.

WILL WADE: I got you. They don't have Sheldon Nichols to ask the injury report question every press conference.

I mean, he's been a problem for us. I think I saw today against Missouri they started Ethan Henderson in the second half. He killed us at their place last year. Then they ended up playing small for most of the half, if I'm not mistaken. They ended up playing four guards around Justin Smith, and played really small.

I got to go back and watch the film. I have to rewatch our game with them, both of our games with them. I have to rewatch the game today, get a feel on some things.

They won 12 in a row in league. They're playing great. It will be a tough challenge. As you know, the Hog fans are

here. I walked out before our game, they were calling the Hogs with about 5 seconds left when Devo Davis was at the free-throw line. It will be a big challenge for us tomorrow.

We're excited to be in the semifinals. First time we've done this in four or five years. Go back, get some rest, we'll give it all we got.

Q. Notae was sick, Eric said he was throwing up.

WILL WADE: He didn't look sick. He had about 30, didn't he?

Q. 27.

WILL WADE: Damn, I'd hate to see how he plays when he wasn't sick (laughter).

Q. What is the message to the team as far as where you're at and the steps you are taking?

WILL WADE: I mean, this was the first of the progression, was to win a quarterfinal game, get to the semis. This is huge to get to Saturday. We haven't played in the championship in 30 years. I'm not even talking about winning it, we haven't even played for it in 30 years. It's the next step.

We have a huge, huge game in front of us. I think tomorrow, they start doing the seeding and stuff. I think tomorrow is probably our last opportunity to move up a seed line, as well. I don't think really what happens Sunday is going to matter too much. I think it's a big game for us in terms of seeding, as well. There's a lot on the line for us tomorrow. We certainly want to play as well as we can.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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