

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 10, 2022

## Texas A&M Aggies

Tampa, Florida, USA

Amalie Arena

## Coach Buzz Williams

## Hassan Diarra

## Henry Coleman

### Postgame Press Conference

Texas A&M 83, Florida 80

**BUZZ WILLIAMS:** Just another incredible game. I'm not sure why it works out that way any time we play Florida, but it's just an invisible line between winning and losing when we play against Coach and his team.

They put so much pressure on us in so many different ways that it feels as though we're always playing from behind in the possession. Very similar to our game in College Station. They just dominated us on the offensive glass. We needed our offense to help our defense more than it did. We did not close the game very well, but I thought resilience and the character of our guys in overtime was revealed, again, very similar to what it has been over the last three to four weeks.

So we're thankful and grateful to have a chance to stay.

**Q. (Off microphone) Hassan, the last shot, was it planned for you to take this shot, or was it just that's the way the play was going, and you just felt like you had to take it?**

**HASSAN DIARRA:** It was planned for me. Coach drew up the play in the timeout. He knew that my man would tag Henry on the roll and I will be open on the shake-up.

**Q. And, Henry, was there ever a moment or why wasn't there a moment where you all gave up? You all had the lead. You lost the nine-point lead, and then y'all got behind in overtime. How was it y'all were able to bounce back from losing that lead and then being down?**

**HENRY COLEMAN:** I think that's kind of been our whole



season, who we are as a team. You know, Coach always talks about our R, talks about our response. How can you respond to adversity?

I thought we did an unbelievable job of that, even in moments where we were a little bit down. You know, going on the eight-game losing streak really taught us how thin the line is between winning and losing, and so you try to have that R always in the back of your mind. How can you really respond to these adverse moments.

And I thought we did an unbelievable job of that.

**Q. Hassan, I'm watching the replay here, and you looked pretty excited after that shot. You're sitting there. You look so calm. How do you get kind of psyched up for the upcoming game tomorrow?**

**BUZZ WILLIAMS:** That answer would take longer than the press conference allows.

**HASSAN DIARRA:** Definitely, like Henry just said, Coach always talks about our response. And, yeah, we have the win, but we got to focus on what's next and what's in front of us.

That's how calm I am right now.

**Q. I actually wanted to ask you guys about Kentucky's big man, Oscar Tshiebwe, someone who is so dominant at rebounding. What's it like physically to go against someone who is so physically imposing down there?**

**HASSAN DIARRA:** Very good player. Very good rebounder. We just try to put multiple bodies on him when we play him.

**HENRY COLEMAN:** Like our Coach says, it's beast on beast. You know, with myself, I'm a pretty physical player too, but like Hassan was also saying, we have multiple bodies on him. He is an unbelievable player, and he is a better human being.

**Q. To either one of you guys, or both, how confident**

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**that ya'll could win in overtime without Quenton who had just fouled out?**

HENRY COLEMAN: Q is a huge part of our team, but I think the whole season has been next man up, and I think you've seen that throughout the whole season. Somebody goes down with an injury, somebody is not playing, somebody fouls out.

So it's just been a next-man-up mentality, and I thought whoever came in for him, Wade, Dre, Manny, Hassan, they did an unbelievable job of being poised and being calm and hitting big shots, so credit to them.

HASSAN DIARRA: To be honest, there was no doubt in my mind. Honestly, our team is made up of very good players, and we already know what we have to do throughout the game.

And we believe in each other, and Coach believes in us so, producing is not a problem.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Ethan Henderson. I know he is not a big scorer and star and all that, but he played Arkansas. Just wonder what kind of teammate has he been, and what has he added to the team this season?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Go ahead.

HASSAN DIARRA: Ethan is an unbelievable kid, and he brings so much to our team just with his size. And defensively is he probably the best defender on our team, so we love to have him out there on a defensive end.

And he has crashed the offensive glass, so he is an important piece to our team.

HENRY COLEMAN: I would say the same thing. Especially being a big man and putting in work throughout the whole season with Ethan, with the other guys, Ethan is an unbelievable defensive piece.

Like Hassan said, I would agree he is probably the best defender. He has the best feet, and he has an unbelievable nose for the job for shot blocking too, so I think Ethan is just getting better each and every day.

**Q. I know it's a tournament environment. Does this kind of feel like getting a road win in a sense, though, considering the supporters they had?**

HASSAN DIARRA: Yeah, definitely. They had a very good crowd out there, a very good environment, so it definitely does feel like a road win.

We even took the road game pic, so looking to post that soon.

**Q. So, Buzz, the same question I asked Hassan. He said the play was for him, so what was the reasoning or what was it about Hassan that made you want to have him take that last shot?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Well, we wanted the ball in Boots' hand, and then we were trying to maybe predetermine what their ball screen coverage was, and then put them in a precarious position on the strong side, which would allow Hass to be open on the shake.

The personnel grouping was a little different. We've run the play before. We just ran it to the other side because Boots is left-handed, and I wanted the ball in Boots' hands, just like it finished in regulation.

And so I trust him to make the right decision, and obviously, Hass has made multiple big shots this season, and they executed it. Obviously, he made the shot. That helps.

I thought what was important on the last possession in regulation and the last possession in overtime is the timing of when the shot took place. You don't want to go too fast, but you also want to give yourself time to get an offensive put-back, and I thought both possessions in regulation.

4 threw it to Boots at the elbow. That was the right play. We didn't know if they were going to be in man or zone on that possession, so we ran a play that would work regardless.

And then in the overtime we thought they would be in man and wanted to take advantage of their ball screen coverage and overload the side.

**Q. Congratulations. You're up by ten for most of the second half, and then all of a sudden you find yourself in overtime. How difficult is it? I know you're coaching Xs and Os, but how difficult is it to psychologically get your team to refocus during that five-minute period?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Good question. I think in a sincere way our staff is better from a tactical standpoint than I am. I try to be the biggest cheerleader for our guys on and offer the floor, and so from a psychological standpoint, that's where I want to be my best in regards to helping them, and so I'm sure you followed our season.

We started 15-2 and 4-0 in the league, and then we lost for

one consecutive month. A lot transpired during that time. And then to close the regular season, we won five out of six, including winning the last four, and so from an emotional standpoint, we've been on a roller coaster a lot since mid-January.

And actually, that's all I talk to them about in between regulation and the start of overtime. Well, this is just another rep. It just happens to be a postseason rep. So just like Henry said, our R, our response to what has transpired is going to be what's important.

Overtime didn't even start very well I didn't think. But the residue of how regulation finished and to be able to turn it was -- they've done that a lot this year.

And I think another thing -- it was the first time that Q had fouled out of a Division I game, and so that was the longest stretch of time that we had played without him, for sure with as much on the line as what today was.

**Q. How would you assess your team's chances for an NCAA bid, or worthiness for a bid? And what do you think you have to do here to make that happen?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: What I've tried to do, John, is just let Coach Calipari be the spokesperson for our league, and I completely agree with what he tweeted out.

If you go 9-9 in the SEC, you ought to be in the tournament. But I am not in the Hall of Fame, in any Hall of Fame, and so I direct all postseason questions to Coach Cal.

I know you have access to him, so I'll -- whatever Coach says, that's what the Aggies vote for.

**Q. Hey, Buzz. I was just wanting to ask you about Ethan Henderson as well. This is kind of an off-the-wall question, but somebody, some of the coaches are wearing pullovers and polo shirts, and you're there you are in a three-piece suit and then you come in here in a T-shirt. Why do you like to dress up, and what's the deal with the T-shirt?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I'll try to answer it in a sincere way, not a condescending way.

**Q. Appreciate that.**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I'm blessed way more than I deserve, and I'm from a town without a stoplight.

And I was a manager at a junior college and a manager at an NAI school, and so I am not judging anyone, but for me

I want to be as respectful as possible to the game and to all of the people that have helped me along the way, and I never thought it would turn into what it's turned into.

And so for me, the same that I ask of our players, to give their best every day, to me that's in spirit, that's in body language, that's in tone of voice, and so I want to be as respectful to the game and to all of the coaches that I admired as a kid growing up.

Bill Snyder wore a three-piece suit to work every single day. Eddie Sutton wore a sport coat and shirt and tie to work every single day. My junior college coach wore a shirt and tie to work every single day.

And so for me not to be my best while holding our guys to some standard of being their best, that's important to me. And when I see a prospect's mom or a player on our team's mom, I want them to know that what I told them the first time I met them holds true whether it's game day or not.

And so I would love to wear a polo. I would love to wear a T-shirt, matching belt, matching shoes, and tweet them out. I think that's really cool, and there's some traction in a recruiting standpoint.

But for me, because I never thought that this would be the case, I want to wear the best suit that I have.

You know, all of these kids we signed off Zoom, and I didn't know what Zoom was when all of that started. I don't think my Zoom etiquette was very good, because as a person, I think I'm an intangible person.

I think that was one of the reasons we had such struggle last year. The protocols prevented us from spending a lot of time with our guys. I'm around our guys way more off the floor than I am on the floor, and so I remember the first Zoom with E.

He is not an extrovert, and you couldn't really tell what his spirit was like. He is one of the more beautiful human beings I have ever been around. And similar to what Hass and Henry said, he is for sure the best defender that we've had in our program since we've been here before the ball is shot.

He has great instincts. His ball screen coverage is elite. He can guard multiple players, and we do a lot -- you saw the game. He played 12 minutes and 41 seconds, and I would say 10 minutes and 50 seconds of that was exclusively defense.

Like, he has really anchored our defense. We need him to

do a better job on the glass, but prior to the shot being taken, he is superb.

Thank you.

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