

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 10, 2023

Texas A&M Aggies

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

Coach Buzz Williams

Henry Coleman III

Wade Taylor IV

Postgame Press Conference

Texas A&M 67, Arkansas 61

THE MODERATOR: Ready to begin with Texas A&M. We'll ask Coach Williams for some general thoughts on the game.

Coach.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: We'll just go straight to the questions. Thank you, though.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Henry, what was the mindset at halftime? What did you think was the key to the comeback in the second half?

HENRY COLEMAN III: I would say none of the guys on the team panicked. Our leaders stepped up and said the right things. Coach came in and prepared us for the second half. We weren't really playing Texas A&M basketball in the first half. I thought our ability to get downhill, control the free-throw line, control the glass was a huge key.

Some of the guys that came off of the bench, Andersson, Soloman, Dre, came with tremendous energy. They do things that are not quantitative, you're not going to see it in the box score. Their energy, how they play defense, how they space the floor on offense is kind of the reason why we won today.

So credit for those guys.

WADE TAYLOR IV: We went into halftime talking about more on the positive side. They hit a three at the buzzer



off the glass. Can't really control that. So we just went into halftime talking about the things we can control, trying to control the controllables.

We were doing tremendous on the offensive glass. I think they only had maybe two offensive rebounds. So we were doing pretty good on the defensive glass, too. Try to come out on the second half, control the things we can control and put some stops together.

Q. Wade, I know it's a simple play, but what goes into your drawing the reverse, drawing the charge? Do you feel even a simple play like that can shift the momentum?

WADE TAYLOR IV: I knew we got to the ball very, very fast, which I think was a big key to the game. I knew he was trailing me, so I wanted to stop in my tracks, see how it played out. We got two free throws out of it.

Q. Henry, what are your thoughts on I think it was the 11-point run you had coming out of the second half?

WADE TAYLOR IV: It was amazing. I'm sorry.

HENRY COLEMAN III: I thought it was good, but it really wasn't the offensive end, it was the defensive end. We were able to get three stops in a row, kind of able to turn them over, start playing Texas A&M basketball.

The offense was a result of our defense. I thought our defense was locked in the second half, guys were playing in passing lanes, willing to take charges, stay in the drive, do stuff that Texas A&M is known for, that we practice every day.

Q. Wade, take us through your steal.

WADE TAYLOR IV: I think we were in five code or something. Yeah, code to five. I switched off on one of the bigger guys, one of their post guys. I just tried to hold my ground. They shot it and got it back, I just kind of tried to be a gnat, try to get it out. I got it. We had maybe a four-on-three. We had Dex and Dre running. They both athletic guys. I was going to throw the alley-oop, both of



the players went for it, I tried to finish it.

Q. Wade, No. 3 hurt you guys in the first half. Was there any special emphasis to slow him down in the second half?

WADE TAYLOR IV: Just continue to just stay in the drive. He's a phenomenal player, really helps their team. He's very long. Just try to stay in the drive, making his shots pretty much tougher. Pretty much that's it.

Q. You are obviously leading the nation in free throws. What was the key to converting?

HENRY COLEMAN III: I would say first to even get to that point, we had to get defensive stops in. In the first half we weren't getting defensive stops. You don't get defensive stops, you can't really play offense how you want to.

I think it started on the defensive end. We got our confidence from our defense. That's just Texas A&M basketball. I think our guards have a unique ability to kind of use their ball-handling ability, get downhill and create unfair advantages for the bigs and stuff on the other team. I think that's what the guards did tonight.

But it really started on the defensive end.

WADE TAYLOR IV: Like Henry said, it started on the defensive end. Once we get stops, we're able to play in transition. Easier to get to the paint and the rim. We tried to play our two and get inside to our big guys like Henry. Henry and Ju, they were tremendous in our comeback, getting the fouls. We just converted at the line.

Q. Henry, late in the second half, how chaotic did it feel? How important were the two timeouts that Coach took?

HENRY COLEMAN III: Coach does an unbelievable job of using the timeouts. Credit to his assistants, though, who always give him great assistance on when to kind of call 'em, when to use 'em.

Credit to him, slowed us down, people were able to get a breather. I thought the game was a very fast-paced game, physical game. Everyone responded. Coach calmed everybody down, showed the plays we needed to run, how many timeouts we had, whose possession it was. Credit to him and to the assistants.

THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse the student-athletes and continue with questions for Coach Williams.

Q. Last night after Arkansas won, Eric Musselman was

complimentary of you. Nothing but respect. The way I see it, you two have a similar temperament on the sideline. What is it like coaching against him?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think going into tonight's game, he had won 74% of his games. Incredible job at Nevada. Then what he's been able to do at Arkansas in the four years he's been there, it speaks for itself.

Has been a mirror opponent. We only played them once during the COVID season. Their game at our place was canceled because we had the virus. It requires a lot of study because he puts his players that are ultra-talented in great positions to play the way they play.

They put so much pressure on the rim, this year's team. Yesterday they shot 81% at the rim against Auburn, and today they shot 91% at the rim against us.

There is layers to how you get guys to be that successful at the rim. Their talent and his skill, I think it's the combination of the two.

Q. So many times this year you've commented about your team doesn't flinch in pressure situations. Did they take it to another extreme tonight?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Yeah, we were not very good in the first half. That's a credit to Arkansas. IV being in foul trouble is a little unsettling. We tried to play him offense for defense as best we could. Nine turnovers is not good. Nine blocked shots is not good. The reason they shot 55% is 18 times we gave them the ball and never got our defense set.

The compound effect of that is we're playing in a broken floor defensively. They're going to shoot and score at a high percentage. So now all of a sudden without IV playing, we have to play slower.

We did a really good job on the glass. I think we had maybe nine or ten offensive rebounds in the first half. So when we didn't turn it over, which wasn't often, and when we didn't get a blocked shot, which wasn't often, we got an offensive rebound.

We were much more under control off two feet and being able to get stops so that we can play early offense a little better. We're dependent upon early offense. We're dependent upon offensive rebounds.

To his point, we're also dependent on free throw makes. If you have that high of a turnover rate and that high of a block percentage, you're not going to get offensive rebounds very good, and you're for sure not going to get fouled.



Q. HogStats, the website, he is super reliable stats guy.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I'm going to study it.

Q. He tweeted out Arkansas won 78 straight games when they led at 13 or more at halftime going back to 2007.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Is that right?

Q. They bank in a three. What were you thinking? What do you think about that stat?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I didn't know the stat. I think that speaks to the first question. Just really good players and a Hall of Fame coach.

We were just out of sorts. I wasn't necessarily, like I told the team, concerned about Arkansas in the second half. I was more concerned about us at least getting in a position to worry about Arkansas.

We were never in a groove. That's completely Arkansas. But we had no shot if we didn't get back to more of our identity and more of the recipe that we need to follow.

I think our guys understood that. I think there's multiple, multiple examples of when things weren't right in a game, after a game, they've had the ability to respond. It doesn't necessarily mean the result is going to work out the right way, but our guys, even though that's not a stat, as a group, their response throughout the season has been phenomenal.

Q. What was the importance of those two late timeouts to you?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I shouldn't have used the last one. It was 15.8 when I called it. I was just anxious. I think when we're more calm, we're better. They have to foul. But it was broken floor, bobble ball. No, let's stop.

I thought the two before that were right. I thought the execution out of that was good. But the last one, even when I called it, I told IV, I said, My fault. And Ju was saying, No, that's great. And I was like, It's only great if you guys finish this the right way because it's side-out. We need to throw it towards their basket so we get the 10 seconds in the backcourt. But that's dangerous, particularly when three is guarding four.

If you don't complete the pass, that's a layup and now it's a completely different game.

Keep going.

Q. The backstory on the home run kind of pass to Tyrece?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: You've seen that a couple of times. I think we did it twice earlier in the year. I think one was non-conference. Maybe both of them were conference play.

Dre is the quarterback. Maybe a better quarterback than combo guard. If he wouldn't have broken his wrist, I think he would have played football at a high level.

We knew they were going to foul, so we're playing with four good free throw shooters. Our press offense is really not designed for four guards.

Some of the possessions leading up to that, I didn't think we were really sure in our press offense. I want IV to have the ball, but I thought IV made some uncharacteristic decisions over the last minute and a half.

Then the last timeout was when Boots was -- his Baja was out of whack. I at least wanted the ball coming towards me. They're more athletic, they're taller, they're longer. We need to get the ball out of there.

I think there was a timeout prior to that, that may have been my third timeout. Oh, it was a review. I just told the guys, hey, we have a name for the call. We have to do this. Dre, you're the quarterback, Boots, you're the wide receiver, and you got to complete the pass.

Q. What are your thoughts on the energy from Soloman and Andre?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: He's grown up so much. We've been very reliant on Andy and Solo throughout the month of February for sure. I thought both of those guys were phenomenal in our first game this month.

Andy has continued to find ways to help us, that's not necessarily in the box score. It's a little bit of an accountability thing. I thought Henry and Ju were combined the worst that they had been at Mississippi State. We subbed Solo and Andy in earlier than normal, and they played great.

I think it holds Henry and Ju accountable. But I think that Dexter Dennis' daily example to mature, competitive, learner spirit has really impacted Solo. I thought in the month of February, he's -- he's the funniest person on our team. It's not close. Everybody adores him. But he's had

a very good 40 days of growth from a maturity standpoint. Understands the value of a possession. Has been very accepting of what we need him to do. Has not tried to get outside of those rails.

I think he had seven rebounds last Saturday, which were ginormous. At that time Henry and Ju had zeroes, zero defensive rebounds, zero offensive rebounds. Solo and Andy were superb.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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