

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Georgia Bulldogs

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

Coach Mike White

Blue Cain

Justin Hill

Postgame Press Conference

Georgia 64, Missouri 59

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Georgia.

Coach.

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, big win. I mean, anytime you can win in the SEC tournament these days, with the strength of our league, it being the best conference in college basketball, we'll take it.

I was really, really impressed with Missouri's fight, especially early second half. I thought that they dominated that middle part of the game. I thought we got off to a really good start. Obviously we finished really strong.

But those guys have had a bunch of adversity. They sat down and guarded and flew around and flew to the offensive glass. It was a hard-fought game, and we're really fortunate to have advanced.

I thought both of these guys to my right played really well, not only with shooting it's and scoring it, but with their decisions. Collectively a 6-2 turnover ratio. Obviously as a team, these two guys were a big part, we defended at a really high level.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Blue, when Coach called that pressure, you get that steal, what was going through your mind?

BLUE CAIN: Just to play hard and just trust myself. But more importantly trust my teammates. Just play hard, just compete.



Q. Coach talked about how it felt like they dominated the middle part of the game. How were you able to hold your composure and know there's still plenty of basketball to play, come back and win?

JUSTIN HILL: Yeah, I feel like we've been in that position plenty of times this year. We carried it well. We know literally win or go home. We were just going to play hard today.

BLUE CAIN: Yeah, Coach White's thing is always just respond. He says that probably a hundred times a day. We know it's a game of runs. Whenever they made theirs, we had to respond and make our run back.

Q. Was there a feeling of desperation, down four or five late, before you make the steal? Can you describe what you saw on the steal inbounds.

BLUE CAIN: I wouldn't really say it was desperation. It was just continue to compete and trust each other. We just trusted each other and just played hard.

JUSTIN HILL: Yeah, what Blue said. We know this could be it. We have a lot of seniors and grads on the team. We tried to trap the ball and see what happens.

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

Q. What were you telling your team when you went down eight in the second half?

MIKE WHITE: Blue said it: respond. We've been really competitive in SEC play, as has Missouri. I think both of our records are a little bit misleading to a certain extent in that some of the best teams in the league who are some of the best teams in the country, we found ourselves in position to potentially beat them. When adversity hit in a few of those, we weren't the same team down the stretch.

We'll continue to preach that to this particular team because we've gotten off to a lot of really good starts in league play, as we did tonight. This is a really good practice team. It's a team that likes each other, a team that

works. Hopefully we'll get off to a good start tomorrow.

But adversity will hit and we'll see what we do. Down the stretch we finished as strong as we possible could, finishing on a 12-0 run. I say turnovers, I know one big turnover for us. These guys hit some big shots down the stretch, as well.

Q. It felt like they were attacking when you were blitzing the ball screen in the second half. What went into the decision to switch? How did you get them to keep Connor Vanover out of the paint?

MIKE WHITE: Yeah, like those guys, I feel like our guards are really scrappy, too. East and Honor, those guys just fight you for every inch. Noah Carter. I thought our guys matched their intensity. I thought we played really hard and fought with some of those mismatches.

We sent a second defender at times, of course, for some lobs with some really good tracing of the basketball on airtime. We were able to get a couple deflections on a couple of those lobs to the big fella.

But their halftime adjustments I thought were terrific in exploiting our blitzing by cutting across the baseline, catching us off guard there a couple times. Got us in some rotations, hits some threes out of it, which forced us to change coverage.

Q. It's getting late, you had only been to the free-throw line six times. Your points in the paint were down. Was that just what they were doing? Were y'all settling for threes a little bit too much?

MIKE WHITE: I liked our three looks, I really did. That said, though, I think the intensity level of the game probably had something to do with both of us missing some open looks.

They did a really good job of swarming to the basketball on baseline drives. Even on middle drives. Then obviously with Vanover playing the minutes he played tonight, you've got legitimate size in there. I thought Noah Carter had a couple pretty aggressive wall-ups, too.

But credit those -- I mean, they did a really good, again, of defending the interior overall.

Q. Obviously Florida tomorrow. Can you talk about that matchup.

MIKE WHITE: I'm going to feel really good about this one through the postgame pizza, then start stressing about that one.

They're really good. I mean, they've got a chance to make a run in the tournament, in my opinion. They've got great guard play, really good depth, especially the front-court depth that they've got with skill level. The willingness to pass to one another. The interior passing of all four of their bigs. Their ability to dominate the offensive glass at times. That's kind of where it starts.

Pullin has had an amazing year. Their other guards are really good, too. Clayton has had a big-time year, as well. They've got really good balance and depth. Their first shot offense is really good. They're as good as anybody in the country in terms of getting extra shots.

We've absolutely got our hands full. That's just the defensive end.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

MIKE WHITE: Thanks, guys.

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