

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 14, 2024

Texas A&M Aggies

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

Buzz Williams

Tyrece Radford

Wade Taylor IV

Postgame Press Conference

Texas A&M 80, Ole Miss 71

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Texas A&M. We'll ask Coach for some general comments on the game.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: We can just go straight to questions.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go straight to questions for the two student-athletes.

Q. Could you talk about how close the game got there at the end, y'all were able to win it at the free-throw line. How tense was it?

TYRECE RADFORD: It started to get close. I mean, Coach Buzz have us shoot a hundred free throws a day. All we had to do is step to the line, take our time, knock down the free throws.

Ole Miss made big-time plays later in the game. But we did good with keeping our composure, just waiting to get fouled to make the free throws.

Q. Looking at the free throw situation, do you feel this is a game y'all could win earlier in conference play when free throws were struggling? How do you feel the team has turned around?

WADE TAYLOR IV: I don't think free throws was the reason we won today. I think we had a different mindset previously than when we played them in College Station. We're a whole different team now.

We did okay on the defensive end. We only had three turkeys; the last game we had eight. But I wouldn't say that if we made free throws back when we played them in



College Station we would've won. I think our whole mindset that we had then and now is pretty much different.

Q. Tyrece, how much do you think Solo's energy in the second half sparked you?

TYRECE RADFORD: I don't think it's just the second half with Solo. I think Solo always had that energy, that motor, even at practice. What you saw is just Solo on the daily. When that impacts the game, it helps the team, helps the staff, just get us back on the right back.

Shout-out to Solo for that. That's big. It's going to help him in his career and in his life also.

Q. Tyrece, the first game in the tournament, always the toughest. Did you feel any nerves? You played 36 minutes. How does that set you up for tomorrow night?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: That's what he plays every game.

TYRECE RADFORD: Yeah (smiling). It's not a focus on how much I'm playing. I know I'm going to play. The focus is on after the game, like what and how I'm treating my body, just going to see Eddie Benion. Just got to do my treatment, you know?

Q. You're both offensively-minded guys. Big picture college basketball, how do you feel the block charge change has changed college basketball? Obviously to your benefit.

WADE TAYLOR IV: Kind of hurt when you try to take a charge and they don't give it to you because of the rule. Elite level players, playmakers get into the second moves and third moves because the secondary for that has to be there before, like a long time before you take your last step. I think it's pretty good.

TYRECE RADFORD: I'm really big on just focusing on what I can control. That's out of my hands. That's just the game evolving in different ways.

Yeah, what folks said is offensively getting to your second



and third move, creating for others.

Q. You really went off when you played Kentucky the first time. What do you remember about that game being able to go off like that?

TYRECE RADFORD: Yeah, I mean, it was a big game. It was a big game for us. We can't bank off that game. We past that. We're a different team now. And they're a different team. I guarantee they're a different team now, too. We can't think about that.

Yeah, we had big games, but honestly it's on to the next one.

WADE TAYLOR IV: Yeah, we have to go home now, reset, refocus, just figure out what we got to do tomorrow. That's pretty much all I got.

Q. You mentioned how Kentucky is a little bit of a different team and you are. Two months since you played them. They have Big Z coming in. What is your mentality in changing your game plan?

WADE TAYLOR IV: Our game plan will change based off what I think we need to do, things we messed up on last game that we can be better at.

I'm not sure that Big Z will determine if we change our game plan for the better. I'm pretty sure he's a terrific player, but I just feel like we going to focus on things we need to focus on to win the game.

TYRECE RADFORD: I pretty much say the same thing. Right now we getting back to the hotel, resting up, just focusing on us when that time do come. That's all I got, too.

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

Q. How much did Solo's energy seem to calm things and bring a little spark in the second half?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: When he defends without fouling and when he doesn't get caught up emotionally in things that he can't control, he's a needle mover for what we do for sure defensively and on the glass.

I think when he's in that mindset, I think he also plays with the appropriate level of poise that's important for us. We need him to play without negative emotion. We need him to play without foul trouble because it restricts our maneuverability.

I don't know exactly, what was the timing on when he fouled out?

Q. Two minutes.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I think he could have helped the last two and a half, four minutes. They were scoring at a really high rate that last stretch. I'm not saying he could have stopped it, but I think he would have had some level of influence on it.

I actually agree with Boots. I don't necessarily think it was the second half. I understand the question. I think the difference in our team in the second half was our ability to get stops with rebounds.

And we did a much better job in the second half of also getting offensive rebounds. I think they shot more balls than us in the first half, and we had a much better rebounding percentage in the second half. Solo is a big part of that.

Q. (Question off microphone regarding Andersson Garcia.)

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I'm glad he shot today. That may have been his career high in attempts. He shot five balls. Just such a unique player, as you know. I actually think it's really special. I've done a poor job coaching him because I've become such a big fan of his ability to impact the game and the type of teammate that he is.

He's getting balls and throwing it back to these two guys. He's never even looking at the rim. But I do think on Saturday he had 13 rebounds and he shot zero balls. Today he had 14 rebounds and he shot five balls. That helps us, too. We need a little bit of that.

I actually thought in the limited minutes that he played, we don't count offensive rebounds if you shoot a bunny and get your own. We don't count that. But actually Wildens helped us on the glass. When we subbed him in in the second half to give Ande a drink of water, I thought his block, I thought his physicality, even if it's just for two minutes, that's a lot.

We're asking Ande to perform at an incredibly high level on both sides of the ball. When Wildens can do anything, it's manna.

Q. Y'all have been so good on the offensive boards all year, again tonight. Do you ever get to where y'all just expect that you're going to get 20-plus second-chance points or almost take it for granted?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I don't know if the kids would say that. We play different games per game based on who we're playing. As you know, you've watched most of every game I think, we're so reliant on it. I think today it was close to 50% offensive rebounding percentage. We needed all of 'em.

I think some of that is not just the guys that are getting them. I know they deserve the credit. But I also think that our guards have done a better job of being predictable in when they're going to shoot.

We shot three unpredictable shots in the first half. We can't absorb that because predictable for us is not only do we have a chance to get the offensive rebound, but when we shoot an unexpected ball, not only are we not going to get the rebound, but we're not going to get fouled, and we're probably about to give up a basket in transition.

All three unpredictable shots in the first half, that's exactly what happened. They're scoring immediately. They're scoring in the first six seconds.

In the first half, every defensive rebound they got, they scored two points per possession. That's way too much. So Ande's important. Jace is critically important. Henry, Wildens, Boots. But also those that don't get for us, we have to make sure they shoot predictable shots.

Q. Big picture college basketball, Chris Jans said he's essentially told his guys to stop even trying to take a charge. Do you think that rule change has been good or bad?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I think Jans is among the nation's best, period. So whatever Jans said, I would support.

But this is what I want to say. I don't know the exact answer. In my research for Ole Miss, I know you study numbers, too, so last year in the SEC Texas A&M finished third in points per possession. We had the third best defense in the league last year, SEC only. Our points per possession was .97. This year we finished third. Our points per possession was 1.06.

When I saw that, I thought it was a mess-up. I asked one of the smart guys on the staff, This can't be right. This number is wrong. It was confirmed it was right. Then I said, Are we an outlier? I would like to know the numbers on every OER and DER in the SEC. It's staggering.

Do I think that's exclusively it? I would have to study it more in the spring. I think it's a big part of it. I also think another big part of it is the goaltending. Every shot that is close, automatically goaltending. I'm not smart enough,

nor am I on an committee, but if every ball that's close to a goaltending is immediately a goaltending call, there's empty possessions throughout the season that impact this number.

If every 50/50 call is 100% a block, it's just become the NBA. Let's score a bunch of points. Let's make it pretty, et cetera. But I think we have to figure out are we going to keep playing defensively the same way because so much of what we're doing, and Coach Jans for that matter, and Coach Beard, I don't know if you can keep playing that way.

Neither team gets in the bonus in the first half tonight, but there's 36 foul calls in the second half. Okay, well, then it's going to be choppy. If every here I come... You don't need any rim protection, because if you try to make a play, it's either a goaltending or a foul.

I think you'll see defenses, as this rule continues to morph, you'll see defenses evolve, just like you have in the NBA. Ball screen coverage has changed. Even with us.

I think you have to make a decision on the weak side because the numbers - and I don't know what you've studied - but I would study the Power Five numbers based off the last 10 years. It has to be correlated. It has to be. I'm late to the party, but we've got to figure it out.

When I saw this, I told 'em to text all these numbers to our staff. I told them two days ago. Now is not the time, but there's a lot of lessons we've got to learn from this because we can't keep doing this.

Like our offense was fourth last year at 1.10. That's pretty good. This year our offense is 10th at 1.07. So .03 difference, and dramatic difference. Our defense is still third, and it's one point difference. That's dramatic.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to end right there. Coach, thank you.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Appreciate it.

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