

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

Georgia Bulldogs

Coach Mike White

Asa Newell

Silas Demary Jr.

Postgame Press Conference



ASA NEWELL: Yeah, Silas for us, he's an impact on both sides of the court offensively and defensively. We just didn't key in on our details. They took advantage of that.

Q. Silas, as coach was saying, you're sitting here now 20-12. Just went through a crazy season, schedule. What are your thoughts as you look back and wait until Sunday to see what happens?

SILAS DEMARY JR.: Obviously we took a tough one tonight. He don't want to lose a game. Want to win as many as you can.

I would say looking back over the course of this season, went through a lot of adversity, had positives and negatives. I would say that Florida game, I think we came off two four-game losing streaks. To see the guys' morale. After we lost to Auburn, going into that Florida game on Sunday, we had a lift and everybody was still up in great spirits, we were chanting together in the weight room.

I think this team's camaraderie and the way we came together. The back half of this season being able to go 4-0 was great. To see myself and my team just grow over those couple months, especially these last few weeks, I think we just made a big jump.

I think although we lost this one, we're just looking ahead and seeing where we're going to be, just be ready to go at the next chance that we can.

Q. Silas, Oklahoma had a ton of threes in the first half. From a defender's perspective, what were they doing well to create those open looks?

SILAS DEMARY JR.: I would say they went four guards around one big. They kind of started spreading us out. It started early. Fears hit a couple tough shots. Moore hit a couple tough shots.

Obviously Moore has been shooting the piss out of it lately, him and Fear. I think they capitalized on some of our mistakes.

Oklahoma 81, Georgia 75

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Georgia. We'll ask Coach White for a couple thoughts on the game, then questions.

MIKE WHITE: Congratulations to Oklahoma. I thought they played really well, shot it really well. Made 10 threes at halftime, of course. Spread us out. Moved it well. Defended well. Took some timely charges against us on the interior. Played with toughness. Played with a high-level sense of urgency.

We fought. We did some good things offensively and defensively. Not enough obviously to advance. Unfortunately we break the four-game streak that we had. We were hoping to get to five and advance. Thought we could really be competitive here in this tournament. And we were.

Going home a little bit earlier than we had hoped.

This team has accomplished a lot. We're ready to get a little bit of rest and move on to the next thing, get prepared for the next thing. Feel good about our opportunity right around the corner. We're excited for Sunday. We'll be prepared to go to battle.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Asa, it felt like when Silas had to sub out with five minutes left, Oklahoma was able to take advantage of it. What did you feel like was the key to Oklahoma making that run, the struggles you had trying to score?

As a defender, it's hard. I thought I'm a guy that's a high-level defender just seeing those shots go in. At some point you have to give something up. They capitalized on us being able to hit those shots. They hit big-time shots. They hit 10 in the first half. Obviously you have to live with some.

And credit those guys working on their game. Don't never want to knock anybody, but credit those guys those guys. They stepped up and hit big-time shots.

Q. Silas, another productive game for you.

SILAS DEMARY JR.: Just being aggressive. When I'm aggressive towards the start of those games, a lot of teams have to kind of change their coverages. That opens up everybody else to have more opportunities. A lot of teams have changed with our flow after they make a bucket, just having to put two on the ball that. Opens up other teammates. A couple times I was able to hit Somto, Asa in a short roll. Just create the advantage on the backside for the defense.

Coming out, being aggressive, being confident in myself, believing in myself, knowing I had to command so much attention, it makes it easier for the guys on my team.

Q. Asa, your first taste of tournament action. Talk about playing in this sort of environment at the SEC tournament.

ASA NEWELL: Yeah, this is a great opportunity to play the game I love with my brothers. Unfortunately we didn't go as far as we wanted to. I'm just blessed to be here. Would rather take this knock now than a knock in the NCAA tournament.

We're going to use this as fuel to the fire and get back to it.

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

Q. It seemed like when Silas had to sub out with his fourth foul, the changed the offense. How detrimental was that?

MIKE WHITE: It certainly didn't help us when Silas went out. He had fouls because of Oklahoma's offense, their ability to draw fouls, put pressure on the rim, our entire defense.

We had times, though, when Silas is out of the game where it's flowed a little bit better for us offensively. Tonight it was a combination of things offensively and defensively for them to make that run when he was out.

Our back court collectively is better than we played tonight. It's got to be better next week. But I thought that he and Blue did some good things. I thought both of them played well. I thought Asa was Asa with a tremendous motor.

You look down, tonight was another example of thinking postgame the ball didn't touch his hands a lot for obvious reasons. They play small. For 72 hours it's about pounding the thing in the post, getting paint touches, drawing fouls, you rep and rep and rep it. They did a really good job of limiting our bigs' touches at the rim, him in particular.

Then when they did get it, they took a few charges on us in the interior where, again, we're trying to take advantage of our size and we just couldn't. It was a huge factor in the game.

Circling back to my initial point with Asa, feel like he didn't touch it much, but he gets eight offensive rebounds, 17 rebounds total. Just speaks again to his motor, his intensity level in a game where we're calling plays for him and couldn't get it to him. Didn't do a great job passing the basketball to the interior. We'll continue to work on it.

Q. Tournament time, fears has one of those nights. You were able to do a lot with your week off. In this time you have between now and the tournament, is it fine-tuning or...

MIKE WHITE: No, great question.

Potentially you add something or two. I should just go on record, in case anyone watches this, talk about all the different zones we're going to throw in and all the stuff the next opponent has to prepare for (smiling).

Most importantly it is fine-tuning. For instance, you run a play, you run a cross screen to throw it in to Asa, you have a guard with a safe bounce on the wing, he's open. Didn't have enough poise just to wait for him to be a little bit more open. We're throwing it to the guy at the top of the key who is not open. Little things like that.

We had a post pass early in the game where Fears got a steal off not holding a seal. He was on one of side of our post offensive player, we should have thrown the ball to the other side away from the defender.

We're a team that has struggled with passing it, with valuing it all year. We've gotten better. We're sitting here with 12. We had 12 turnovers tonight, which is a lot better than we had earlier in the season, of course. 12 was enough for us. But their 12 threes, of course, and their

ability to get downhill late when they got in all the switches, which was out of necessity for us just to try to throw them down.

They got a little bit stagnant there in the second half, but we felt the necessity to do that late first half. They put us in peril with hitting their bigs on shorts and dives. Wague did a good job. I'm rambling about all kinds of stuff, I apologize.

But Moore is an underrated guy in his ability to stretch you offensively as like a big guard, and he doesn't get exposed defensively. He's battling with our 6'10"s and holding his own to a certain extent. He's a really valuable guy for the Sooners. They're a good team.

Q. And Fears?

MIKE WHITE: Oh, my goodness. Fantastic. The separation live bounce threes are one thing. He hit I want to say a couple well-defended deep threes in the first half. I don't know what he did there in the second half from three.

He draws you out there a little bit deeper. You push up on him, and then he's got a burst, but he's got great strength for a point guard. He's a wide-bodied, strong kid who has a high-level ability to finish.

He made some individual plays against a pretty good defensive team. I mean, I shouldn't say 'pretty good'. We're a good defensive team. He made some big plays in isolations there in the second half.

Yeah, just couldn't get enough stops.

Q. On the defensive side of the ball, what is something you maybe wish you did a little bit differently to contest some of those threes or maybe avoid some of the issues of their spacing?

MIKE WHITE: Defensively for us?

Q. Yes.

MIKE WHITE: That's a tricky one. I don't have a great answer for you. I mean, if we were heavier in the gap, they would have gotten more threes off. They hit 12 threes. If we screamed about disallowing, negating threes, making shooters bounce the ball more than we did, they would have had more layups.

When they were in space, they got to the rim, made plays. Fears in particular. When you got a guy in a rhythm like that, who's playing with that level of confidence, making

those type of plays, and the level of diversity in those plays, post bounce, 15-foot fades, 25-foot separation threes, drawing fouls, shot fake pivot, step through, draw another foul, get to the rim with speed.

You over-help, keep him out of the paint. Moore hits a couple threes. When they're in that type of rhythm, they're really tough to defend. You go into halftime with them having hit 10 threes, whew. Just didn't get off to a great start.

With that said, when they watched them closely at halftime, they had a couple really good looks. Their first three was off a missed rotation right across from our bench. It was a mistake on us. That said, the reason we didn't rotate is because we would have left No. 2. I don't want to butcher his name. He was a terrific shooter in his own right.

They just put you in peril with some of those things. With the number of shooters they have, middle ball screens with Wague, he's terrific at separating from his defender, to sprint to a ball screen, then separating to dive to the rim. Made good decisions on some of those short rolls. He's got really good speed.

They've got senior veteran guards in Miles and Elvis, they can go create one. I want to say Elvis hit a huge one at the end of a really tough possession for us, a good defensive possession that ended with a made three. Again, rhythm dribble, left-handed, kind of a step back contested one. Some of them were contested. But that's what good offenses do.

Those guys, they move it, they space you, they play with confidence, and they make good decisions in space. They're going to be a tough out, especially offensively.

Q. I know it won't become official till Sunday, but what would making the NCAA tournament mean for your team in the third year?

MIKE WHITE: It would be incredible. It's what it's all about. It's why we all came to Georgia, all of us, to build something. We just lost to an NCAA tournament team who has the potential to beat most teams in the country. Analytically, it's our worst loss. When you think about that, that's how good our league is, how good our schedule has been.

We went into today in the SEC tournament, of all the teams that played today, the metrics will tell you that we're the best team. The numbers will tell you that. Obviously we just got beat by a team that played better than we did. I hope that they make a great run. I hope all of our SEC teams make a big run here in March.



The level of opponents that we've played all year, the fact that we got 20 in the regular season, the fact that we played Marquette pretty close, beat St. John's, win your last four, playing this well coming into the SEC tournament, as anyone in the SEC, the best league in the history of college basketball.

Our metrics are terrific. We continued to improve throughout the entire year. We have a ton of youth, not a ton of winning experience. These guys learned how to obtain some of that winning experience. I'm proud for our group. It's my favorite group I've ever been around. I could literally call practice at midnight tonight, we'd probably have a pretty good practice. That's how these guys are. I'm anxious to get back to work with them.

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