

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

Texas A&M Aggies

Coach Buzz Williams

Wade Taylor IV

Henry Coleman III

Postgame Press Conference



WADE TAYLOR IV: Yeah, we've had a lot of great memories here in the SEC tournament. Tampa in my freshman year. We've been blessed to be here. We've had a lot of success here. I'm thankful for my teammates and coaches because without them I wouldn't be able to achieve that honor.

Thankful to be here. Thankful we got another day to wake up and we're still able to play. Excited for that.

Q. Wade, with that experience in this tournament, you are probably best positioned to see how this league has toughened. Can you pin it on one thing? How much fun, or is it just a meat grinder, when the level of play is this good across the board?

WADE TAYLOR IV: It's great. I feel like the competition builds us for what's coming. Every night, no matter who you're playing, if it's on the road, on home, neutral site, every team is going to give you their best punch.

It's exciting. You want that. You grow up as a kid dreaming about playing against the best. Over the years, the SEC has turned into the best conference.

We were excited to play tonight. We've been excited to play all year. We're going to continue that excitement and play for one another.

Q. Does it ever surprise you the ways that Wade is able to draw a foul or get into a play? Any today that stood out?

HENRY COLEMAN III: No, not really. He has a super high basketball IQ. I know he watches a ton of film. He studies things, players, plays, the opposing defense. I'm not shocked at all.

Q. Henry, out-rebounding the first half, turning the corner in the second half in overtime, out-rebounding Texas, what changed there? Down the stretch, what was that physicality battle like?

HENRY COLEMAN III: I would say just our mentality. I

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THE MODERATOR: We're going to go straight to questions for the student-athletes, then questions for coach.

Q. Wade, towards the end of the game in overtime, how important was it when you got to get to the line and get those free throws?

WADE TAYLOR IV: Yeah, that's kind of how we want to go about our things throughout the whole game. We want to go to the free-throw line and try to get free-throw makes. We just wanted to continue to attack downhill, try to get to the free-throw line.

Q. Henry, you had spoken this week about how if you ain't ready to play, don't get on the plane. Obviously there's no moral victories in this. How do you feel about your team's efforts today?

HENRY COLEMAN III: I felt we competed on both ends of the floor. I thought every single person in that locker room, coaches, managers, players, were all 10 toes and they wanted to be in the fight.

I think we fought in the middle of the ring the entire time. I don't think anybody backed down. Proud of everybody in the locker room.

Q. Wade, not the way you wanted your last SEC tournament to end. Setting the record for all-time SEC tournament scorer, adding that to the list. Looking back on the SEC tournaments over the years, what does that mean to you?

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thought all game we were physical. You're playing a team that's trying to be more physical than you. I thought we handled it right in the second half as far as being the more physical team.

Credit to even the guys, Jace, Andy, Solo, Pharrel, Hayden had a big one in that game. Everybody contributed to rebounding tonight.

Thankful, and just more work to do.

Q. You've talked about purging all season. Obviously an emotional loss here. How quickly do you have to flush this one knowing what's ahead?

HENRY COLEMAN III: I would say it's everybody's background, everybody's character. Everybody on this team, from the coaches to the players, have been through something. We've gone through trials and tribulations ourselves. It's nothing that we haven't experienced.

We're going to get back, we're going to go to sleep, we're going to be ready to work. I don't think anybody in that locker room has any doubt or any fear. Nobody is built like that within our locker room from the coaches to the players, even the managers. We're not that excited right now, but we are ready to purge again and ready to go.

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

Q. I have to ask you about the timeout. What did you see? What was the thinking there? What were y'all trying to do on the inbound play?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Talking about in overtime?

Q. Talking about the first overtime, four-point lead.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: That was in the second overtime. I'm not sure, that's why I was asking (smiling).

I just thought it was scrambled, two-possession game. We had possession. I'm pretty confident that we had two timeouts. We had gotten I believe two scrambled offensive rebounds. Both shot attempts were just okay. I felt comfortable with two timeouts and short clock. I understand IV made the shot, I apologized, but I still agree with the premise of a two-possession game, if you score, that turns into a three-possession game. With two timeouts, I was okay with that after what had transpired that possession.

Q. Late in the second overtime, Zhuric with the three. Do you like that shot there?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Delicate balance, but probably categorically overall I wish we would have got to the paint a little bit more. I know our free throw attempts are okay in the second half and overtimes. Not in the first half. Both teams got to the bonus probably a little early in the second half.

Some of that special stuff that we were doing that created some of those fouls is new. I thought we executed it pretty well.

We were somewhat manipulating the pieces, and some of that stuff we were doing in the full court. Not a problem with Zhu shooting a three or four, or even CJ's threes. Anytime time-score momentum, if we're down, we can stop the clock, we would like to.

Q. A new rep with these guys going home early.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I try to handle the emotion of it the right way. I think anytime you play a game that's a one-possession game for 50 minutes, there's a lot of exhaustion, not just physically but mentally.

You're always - I don't, but a lot of our staff is trying to figure out the logistics. Because I don't have all the information, we'll try to figure out how to handle the weekend the appropriate way. Based on what happens on Sunday, we'll decide how to handle the week, whether we play Thursday or Friday, do we travel Tuesday, do we travel Wednesday.

I don't think that for me postgame after all that transpired over the last three and a half hours was the appropriate time to answer it.

Q. I know you're big into the feeling around your guys, understanding how they feel. You didn't probably learn anything new about them. What do you say about their effort today?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I believe love wins. It may not win on the scoreboard, but when you allow love to control your heart, then there's no anxiousness. When there's no anxiousness, typically speaking, your best comes out.

I thought a lot of our guys did a lot of really good things. A credit to Texas, their players, their coaches, they did a lot of great things.

I think in the month of March, regardless of the seed, regardless of the opponent, not just in the SEC tournament, but wherever we are next week, I think that's why it's called 'madness'. I think handling all that comes



with it, it's never going to go perfect. You don't want to be exclusively outcome based. There will be some lessons that we can learn.

I didn't think that we played to our recipe quite as exact as you have to in the first half. I think we had three offensive rebounds, which was 14% offensive rebounding percentage. Was that because our guys weren't doing a great job or playing hard? No. Was that because too many of our shots were what we would deem unpredictable? Yes. I think we only shot 27 balls, which is a high number in the first half. They shot 35 balls. That's too high of a number.

Our offense needs to help our defense. When we're not controlling the glass at the rate that we have become accustomed to, both things are going to suffer. We're not going to collect offensive rebounds, we're not going to collect free throw attempts, we're not going to get our defense set, and now we're kind of shaving both sides of what's important to us in our recipe.

Similar to what happened in Baton Rouge on Saturday. I thought in the second half, in our last regular-season game, we were tremendous. We finished the game with a 39% offensive rebound percentage, and 80% defensive rebound percentage. Now we have a chance.

Now we make more free throws, now we shoot more balls, now we win time of possession. Even though that's not a basketball stat, it is within the metrics that we do. So now we shorten the game. That plays to our advantage. It at least bends it our way.

Credit to Texas, credit to their talent, credit to their coaches. But we also know our recipe. So our knowledge is important, but our execution of that knowledge when you get to post spring break, you have to bake the cake a little better.

Q. Aside from them fouling out, how promising did you feel that Andy and Manny's performances were tonight?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think Andy's been playing probably as efficient and as effective as he has in his entire career. I think he was averaging 5.8 points in conference play, 5.9 in conference play. I don't know that that shows his impact.

I think when you look at some of the analytics that are involved, not the Van Alstyne plus-minus, but you look at some of the things that are happening, our team functions a lot better on both ends of the floor.

I also think that Solo has that same impact defensively. For most of the month of February, Gochi had that same impact offensively.

I thought Mo had a really good vibe in what he was doing. I don't think he was trying to do too much. It looks prettier when the shots go in.

He was very efficient. I think when we got down towards the end, some of our choices were eliminated because I thought collectively, particularly in the first half, we fouled more than we typically do. I understand it was a 50-minute game. We fouled 25 times. Again, that's not specific to they're difficult to defend, particularly one on one.

But the clock is stopping for them, not for us. Too oftentimes in the first half, then too early in the second half, I think we had six fouls really early in the second half, and we had only collected three. That was one of the priorities today. We have to defend without fouling, and we have to play to get fouled. We didn't do that maybe in all of the minutes that we should have.

Q. Andy was saying how difficult it was for him because the energy he likes to bring on the court. With those three guys, they're on the bench, how do you feel like your guys stepped up?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I kind of agree with what Henry said. There was a lot of manipulation in our typical roster management. Again, that's not a justification nor is it an excuse.

I think those four forwards in less minutes than normal in a 50-minute game, for them to get 30 rebounds had a tremendous second half.

But what hurt us was those fouls maybe prior to a shot attempt in the first half that prevented us from having the ability to manage it from a roster standpoint in the second half the way that we need to, and into overtime.

I think it's similar to what the question was before with the timeouts. When you're playing in these games, this far in March, your timeout management is just as important because even with the foul trouble we're subbing offense for defense, and you want to be able to control the clock a little bit, but you want to have an extra timeout when possible when you can't sub offense for defense.

I thought on the previous question, similar to what I answered, when we didn't have Andy, who gives us versatility, Solo we can play big wing or forward, however you want to, we vacillate back and forth with Henry at small forward, power forward, center, however you want to say it.

A lot of that was eliminated. So now as you get into overtime one, and I believe somebody fouled out in overtime one not only for us but for them. Then when you get into overtime two, you're trying to hedge every bet that you can and make sure that you hold enough to be able to finish the game.

I thought all of those guys, H, Mo, Jace playing power forward, I thought they did a lot of good things, even in the shot that Travis was talking about that Zhu shot.

It's because that action, everybody was in a different spot.

Q. Are you appreciative of being part of something historic when you're in it, the SEC?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I think the answer is only because of 2011. Do I have some level? I think that was my fourth year as a head coach. This is my 18th year as a head coach. I knew you back then.

I would say at that time, what the Big East was, it was the best league in the country. That was before all of the analytics have taken over.

I think during my time in the ACC, it became the best league in the country. I do not think that when I came to the SEC, would I say it was the best league.

I think what happened in non-conference obviously contributed to the narrative. But I also think, and I mentioned this postgame with somebody, maybe a media availability, we had played 17 conference games, and at that time we were 10-7. We were going to LSU to have a road-winning record if we won. The differential in points per game and points allowed for us at that time was 1.2. So that led me to look at that for every team. It didn't apply for every team.

I think there is maybe a couple of outliers just because of style of play on either end. But I do think what's transpiring is historic. And I don't think that when you're living in it you're clapping as a fan or as a media member going, This is really cool. I think you're trying to figure out how to not suffocate yourself from the burden that you feel that this possession can move the needle.

I think that I've seen so much growth. I know these guys, they represent us in such a perfect way in their words. When you live in it, I have found that the guys that we're coaching are much more receptive to the lessons because they realize that what we're trying to explain, that could be the difference in the game. You're playing through 17 games, it's going to be a one-point game.

We've played 26 quad one or quad two games as of now. I think that was either our 13th or 14th game decided by two possessions or less.

I think I'm going to be a blogger (smiling). This is Buzz and I work for BuzzWilliams.com.

Q. What did you think of the Texas A&M students, the fans that traveled? How did that play into the emotions of an SEC game?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Yeah, I could feel it. Kind of not having the normal warm-up kind of changes what we do pregame and kind of once the starting announcements, starters are mentioned, I see my wife, then I kind of just lock in.

I could kind of feel the energy from the students. I love having the band just because I'm old. I think that adds to the collegiate environment. I also think the old adults that were here to support us, I think they were pretty excited too, just from the feel of it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

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