

Camping World Maui Invitational

Monday, November 30, 2020
Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Texas Longhorns Coach Shaka Smart Postgame Press Conference

Texas - 78, Davidson - 76

Q. Is the hair here to stay after the starting 2-0?

SHAKA SMART: The only reason I grew my hair out is because my daughter or wife asked me to, so I try to do a good job doing what they say. But I don't know, it's not something I put a lot of thought into, just happy our guys pulled out the win.

Q. Can you talk a little about what you have seen from the COVID safety measures here in Asheville?

SHAKA SMART: Yeah, I think the tournament's done a really good job. Kept everybody safe. The hotel is really buckled down and the guys have done a good job staying safe. Obviously this is uncharted territory for all of us. We're just trying to make it to the next day, testing negative. That's the biggest key. So appreciative of everyone from the Maui Invitational putting the efforts into making this tournament happen.

Q. Do you want to spread the scoring around like you've done here every night? How important is this to your success?

SHAKA SMART: Spreading scoring around, I mean, it's not really -- by design, we have a lot of guys that can contribute to our team offensively. I think a game like today we were a step behind defensively pretty much the whole game and we were just trying to find combinations that could defend them. They're a very good offensive team. But it really wasn't even their actions as much today as just guarding one-on-one, which is something that we got to really get better at. But grateful for the guys that contributed in different ways, and to have all those guys in double figures obviously was really big for us.

Q. How important is it to close out a tight game this



early in the season?

SHAKA SMART: I thought that, I don't know about how Davidson felt, but for our guys there was a lot of nerves, there was a lot of just kind of nervous energy and antsiness and we certainly were not in mid-season form in terms of just our poise at different times, but I thought our guys held it together for being our first close game pretty well. Courtney made a big, big play at the end to give us the lead, but certainly a game to grow on. We're going to have to grow either way, but it's certainly better to grow after a win.

Q. What do you think you guys can learn from this type of early season result and what challenges does Davidson consistently present all game on offense?

SHAKA SMART: I think the biggest challenge that Davidson presents is you're so focused on guarding their system, you're so focused on guarding their actions that your one-on-one defense suffers, your post defense suffers, and that's certainly a credit to them with their, the way that they attacked. And I thought No. 3, Mennenga, he's terrific. For a freshman he's got a bright bright future. He was a load. We couldn't handle him. We got a long way to go defensively with our guys and one-on-one defense. I think as a team they know that. But certainly learned about our guys' resolve. They showed good resolve. I thought when they got up early our guys hung in there pretty good, did a nice job getting in the paint, didn't shoot the ball great from three-point range, getting on the glass got us some extra shots. We needed them.

Q. Matt played 39 minutes tonight. How do you feel about his game today and the decision to give him these minutes?

SHAKA SMART: I mean, Matt, Courtney, and Andrew, those are our guys and we want to have at least two of them in the game most of the time, sometimes three. Andrew was in foul trouble for quite awhile there. He picked up his fourth foul before I could get him out when he had three, so that meant that Matt and Courtney really needed to play the majority of the second half, and Courtney was in foul trouble the first half, so Matt needed to play the majority of the first half. So fortunately he's



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played a lot of minutes before. We'll get him to the hotel, get him off his feet, get some rest, some treatment, and try to get ready for tomorrow.

Q. Was playing Andrew Jones the entire first half the plan coming in, after he sat out the first game?

SHAKA SMART: He's one of our best players, Andrew, so I mean we're going to have him in there as much as we can. And he sat out the first game just out of a precaution, but he's really the best scorer on our team overall and a guy that is really, really someone the defense has to account for, so... don't really go into the game plan to play anyone for the whole half, but again, Courtney had foul trouble and it made sense to keep him in there.

Q. What do you need to see as far as improvement for either Indiana or Providence?

SHAKA SMART: It starts on the defensive end. We've got a lot of improving to do there. The good thing is our guys know that. We'll get back to the hotel, get something to eat, get a little bit of rest, but then we'll start talking about where we need to be better. And it starts with guarding the basketball on the floor and in post defense. We can be better. We certainly have it in us, but I guess today, I have to go back and look at the tape but I think our guys were so focused on guarding those actions that when they put their head down and drive. We didn't do as good a job as we normally do, so that's definitely the biggest area where we need to grow.

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