

Camping World Maui Invitational

Tuesday, December 1, 2020
Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide Coach Nate Oats Postgame Press Conference

Stanford - 82, Alabama - 64

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

NATE OATS: Yeah, obviously disappointing first game here at the Maui Classic. I thought they played harder than we did. That's on us to get our guys to come out and play better. They out-rebounded us by 16, which does not bode well. They shot 53 percent from three versus our 24 percent. They got better shots than we did. They're a good team, but we got to play better than that. We got to bring more effort at the beginning of the game. I thought that we were in the game for the first 16 minutes, they closed the first half on a run. I didn't think we had a bad lineup in at the end of the first half. Came out in the second half, cut it to seven, and then right after that under 16, media timeout, it went from 7 to 12 within about 30 seconds, it felt like, and we just never got it back. So I'm really disappointed with our play. We got to come back, try to salvage this thing, play a lot better tomorrow night, and see if we can't figure out some guys that mesh, play a little bit better together and rebound the basketball. I mean, to me, the most disappointing thing was our rebounding. This is not a team that prides themselves on rebounding in Stanford a whole lot. They don't really crash. They get back on defense. It's what they choose to do. They take away your transition. They had more offensive boards than we did and they shot 53 percent, 52 percent from the field, and we shot 36 percent, so we had way more offensive rebounds and they still out-rebounded us on the offensive end. So the effort wasn't where it needed to be tonight and that's on the coaching staff as much as it is the kids and we got to get it fixed.

Q. What do you think was behind that level, that intensity level? Was it just coming out flat? What was it about tonight?



NATE OATS: I don't know, to be honest with you. I didn't think we had great practices after Jacksonville State. I don't know if we were happy with the win against Jacksonville State and thought stuff was just going to happen, but you play as you practice. We tried to warn them at the practices, and it wasn't where it needed to be, but we're not going to have any practices before the next game. They're just going to have to decide how bad they want to win the games here in the next 24 hours here.

Q. Obviously two back-to-back slow starts from three. Is that just a some preseason rust or early season rust or how do you explain that?

NATE OATS: I don't know why. We can shoot a lot better than this game. I think sometimes our shot selection hasn't been great, to be honest with you, though. I think we got some guys forcing some contested things up trying to make something happen instead of just playing how we need to play. I don't think -- we missed some open ones, which it's going to happen, but they doubled us up, they had 53 percent, and we were 24 percent. So it's hard to win games when you rely on a lot of three-point shooting and you're not making shots. We got to get better shots and we got to have guys start to knock some shots down.

Q. I'm curious what your thoughts are on Ziaire Williams. He hadn't played a college game before tonight, but obviously everyone had seen footage of him as a recruit. What did you sort of prepare for him and what did you see from him as an opponent?

NATE OATS: We knew he was really skilled. I didn't know he was going to shoot it as well as he did. He hit those three threes. If he's shooting the ball like he shot it tonight he's going to be a handful. I thought we had a good matchup for him, to be honest with you, with Irv because Irv's one of the better defenders. Him picking up early foul trouble probably didn't help. But Ziaire's good. You can tell why everybody's projecting him to be Top-5 pick after you see him live. He's smooth, he's long, he shoots it well, he gets by you, he gets to the rim. I mean, what did he end up with, 19? He was their leading rebounder with 8 rebounds. He had 19 points and 8 rebounds, shot 60 percent from three and over 50 percent from the field. He turned it over a little bit too much, but, shoot, for a

freshman's first game, hey, you couldn't probably ask for much better on their end.

Q. How much do you think was -- I know you mentioned the effort, the intensity, but how much do you think it's just a credit to just figuring out, hey, the best five on the court, so many newcomers, meshing them together, how much is it a credit to trying to figure that out as well?

NATE OATS: Yeah, we've kind of got nine guys heavy in the rotation right now. We obviously haven't figured out the right guys based on this game, so we're going to have to figure it out. Maybe some guys that are playing more minutes are going to have to get less and switch some minutes around, but we're not going to keep coming out with an effort like we gave tonight. I can guarantee that. We're going to have to figure this thing out a little bit better. We only have four guys returning, so we have got, usually you got an exhibition and a scrimmage or two scrimmages or two exhibitions, so this is our second game, and not to make an excuse because Stanford hasn't played anything yet, so they, this is their first game. At least we had one under our belt, but I, as a coach, I obviously haven't done a great job figuring the rotation out very well right now because it wasn't very good tonight.

Q. You mentioned the rebounding being an issue tonight. Was that more of an effort thing, the ball's not bouncing your way? What do you attribute that to tonight?

NATE OATS: I don't ever want to say the ball didn't bounce our way. To me that's kind of a loser's statement. Yeah, I think it's an effort thing. We had zero offensive rebounds up until maybe the last minute of the first half, which is absurd. So Petty had one offensive rebound in the first half and the rest of team combined for zero. We had seven as a team. Kendall Watt had two of them in the last minute and some change that he was in. So take away Kendall's two, we had five. Petty had three, Irv and Schack had one each. So all of our bigs combined for none. So it's a problem. Like, we have got to get much better effort on the offensive boards. We got to get better effort on the defensive glass. To get out-rebounded by 16, I think that's one of your big effort stats, like, we got to get better effort. That's the bottom line. Like, if we don't get better effort tomorrow night we're not going to win tomorrow night. So they're going to have to decide how bad they want to start winning and how much it means to them and if they do, we're going to rebound the ball a little bit better.

Q. Obviously the three-point shooting hasn't been good. Is that just that the offense isn't being run right?

What do you attribute that to, because you said through the preseason that you got shooters?

NATE OATS: I think we do have shooters and we have been making shots in practice. I think some guys get into the games and start to do things a little bit, you know, revert back to some bad habits. I think our shot selection needs to improve. Some of it's guys getting comfortable in the offense, but we have had a lot of practice. This is not like -- Stanford hasn't been able to practice nearly as much as we have, so whatever excuses anybody wants to use for not practicing and not playing games lately, to me, those are excuses. They're not valid reasons. We have had enough practice where guys should know what a quality shot is and what one isn't. I don't think we're getting enough quality shots right now, to be honest with you. So some, we are just missing some open shots and guys got to be ready to shoot and knock them in, but if we had 29 great shots I think we'd made a lot more than seven. It would be closer to 12, 13, 14, I would think if they were all quality shots. So we're going to have to get better shots. Part of our probably too is we didn't finish our layups at the rim. I mean, if we could convert at the rim, I don't know how many layups we missed, I don't have those stats sitting in front of me, but our at the rim finishing was bad tonight. Some of those maybe should have got sprayed out for some open kickout threes and then maybe your 3-point percentage goes up because you're taking better shots, but sometimes we just got to make a shot, show a little toughness and put our shoulder into a guy. They didn't have any problem finishing at the rim tonight, they did a pretty good job. So we got some work to do here, I think we have got the players to where we can be good, but obviously not a good opening night here in Maui.

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