

Camping World Maui Invitational

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

Providence Friars
Coach Ed Cooley
Nate Watson
Postgame Press Conference

Providence - 63, Davidson - 62

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

ED COOLEY: Y'all don't give us a lot of time to process all this with all this virtual stuff here. It's tough. This is hard. Deep breath. Deep breath here. Opening statement.

Happy about the win. I was really proud of how our guys came out of the locker room. I thought we got a little winded. I thought this was one of the more tougher preps in a two-hour period that we had with our guys, or three-hour prep for a team that that's system-based. Very, very well coached. Very physical team.

Very proud of our guys because we could have easily gave in, blowing a 18-point lead. I don't know if they ever tied the score or ever got over the hump and that's always something that we look at, you know, when you have leads like that or if you're trying to come back.

But I'm proud of how we finished. We were able to get a stop when we needed to, we were able to make a key basket, Bynum making a key basket when we needed it. And I thought Nate, Nate continues to get better and better by the day. I thought we got, I thought we were fatigued. I definitely didn't want to play as many guys today. And I was very happy about the team win.

I think anytime you can get a win in this tournament, which is the, the best tournament in all of America, it's the only tournament that is stayed true to what we try to do. The teams were healthy. So you got to give the tournament committee a lot of credit for getting us here, having it well organized, having testing every day. I don't think that can go without being written about because many of the other



tournaments folded, and I just wanted to make sure I said that because they deserve a lot of credit in what they're doing for our players here and the coaches, and the referees who are important.

I'm just really, really excited about the win. It was a nail-biter, but you got to give Davidson a lot of credit. They hang right in it to the very end. I'm really proud of how we grew up today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Nate.

Q. Tell me how badly you wanted the ball in the post throughout the game. It seemed as if you were looking for it pretty much all night.

NATE WATSON: Yeah, I was looking for it, but at the end of the day, we're all a team, so I was happy that we were open. I was happy that David was attacking the basket, Drew was attacking the basket.

So I know I wanted the ball, but we have to share the ball with our team and I'm glad we got this win.

Q. I know last year you started off and you were rehabbing. You had a knee injury in the off-season and you weren't a hundred percent when the year started. How much of a difference has it made being healthy to start this year and sort of having preseason prep that you needed and just hitting the ground running at a hundred percent?

NATE WATSON: It's definitely made a big difference. Last year I had that MCL sprain. I missed 70-some practices and I was definitely out of shape, gained 20 pounds.

This year I'm at a good weight right now. I feel much better. I'm quicker on my feet. I'm still kind of out of breath because of COVID, but we're still in the gym, we're still getting extra conditioning in. I just feel way better this year.

Q. We saw a little, some jump shots from you tonight. Just how much have you worked on that part of your game in the off-season?

NATE WATSON: Every morning. Every night. I just go in



the gym on the shooting gun and shoot as many shots as I can. That's what I do.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for coach.

Q. Tell me about the execution down the stretch and that big shot by Jared. Is that what you were looking for or he just found a way to get to the rim?

ED COOLEY: Well, we have a set where we want to touch the paint. No, it's a complete iso. It's a complete iso and it was great execution. He completed a really, really good layup. He opened the floor up. You have one of your better shooters. I'm surprised we missed as many open shots. I mean, coming the last four minutes we probably had five or six shots that they're still open. We just got to be able to convert those. If we convert those the game's a little easier.

But, again, give credit to them. They forced us to miss. We were just fortunate to hold on.

Q. What did you see late in the first half where obviously they got back in the game like that?

ED COOLEY: Number one, my technical foul changed the game. I thought it changed the whole flow of it. Whether I deserved it or not, that's something different.

I felt we got a little fatigued. Again, Jarrod, he was out for awhile, and we played him, we wanted to shrink our rotation. We thought we played too many guys yesterday, so there was no synergy and no chemistry, so we tried to correct that.

I thought we came out with a purpose. It's no question we came out with a purpose. We just couldn't sustain it. And then the game really changed with the technical foul. That changed the whole complexity of the game.

Q. Wanted to ask about the importance of David's offensive rebound there. 52 seconds left, tracked it down in the corner, and that's how Jarrod got the hoop there.

ED COOLEY: Yeah, you know, we talk about extra possessions, and a lot of people forget, David is a physical, athletic guard. I mean, he's all of 6'-4", 6'-5", super athletic. I mean, that's something that we expect him to do. He's a first team all-conference player. He's been in some really, really big games. I'm not surprised he did that. I'm just glad we were able to come up with the ball and execute a play coming down the stretch.

Q. Just four turnovers today. The way you guys

capitalized on your different possessions in a game that came down to a one-possession game against a team like Davidson, how proud were you of the mental toughness of the guys to bend but never break mentality?

ED COOLEY: You know what, coming off of our performance yesterday, you got to be proud of our young men today. We could have easily tanked it there. And again, I said this yesterday, really we had four guys that played in a game for me last year. Four guys on the entire roster. David, A.J. Greg, in minimal minutes, and Nate. So I mean I'm super happy.

You look at they're, Davidson's last two games against the teams that they're playing, and they had a shot to win the game in both games. They are going to be a brutal game in their league. Give them credit. Give them credit. Coach McKillop is one of the best coaches in the country. They run great stuff. They're brutal to prepare for. I'm just glad we're fortunate to win by a point.

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