

Camping World Maui Invitational

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

UNLV Runnin' Rebels Coach T.J. Otzelberger Caleb Grill Postgame Press Conference



Alabama - 86, UNLV - 74

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

TJ OTZELBERGER: I thought today's game, for long stretches, our guys played really well, but we had some key stretches where maybe our focus and our effort wasn't quite as good as it needed to be. Overall, I thought there was 30 or 32 minutes of really good basketball and that's something to build on.

But for us to get where we need to be as a team and to be successful in a game like that, we can't have those lapses in stretches where we let them get going. I thought there was one to start the game, one to start the second half, and then another one in the balance there just around that eight minute media.

So those three stretches kind of got the best of us and we just got to continue to work and build and put together a 40-minute game.

Q. What do you think led to David Jenkins slow start to the season?

TJ OTZELBERGER: David has been a guy who is always had a chip on his shoulder, a guy who is always kind of been doubted and that was his MO before he came here. And we need to get David back to that guy, where he's -- I got to take on that pressure for him. With some of the accolades and recognitions and things that have come his way, I need to wear that. I need to take that on and he needs to just relax and be that guy from Tacoma who fell in love with this game with that chip on his shoulder and play hard and, to me, that's how things kind of come back to you.

There's a couple moments tonight we saw glimpses, but I know what he can do and he's got to stay the course, embracing the things that are difficult out there in terms of defensively rebounding and take that focus away from his offense and then I think his offense will come back to him.

Q. Caleb Grill had 27 points tonight. What did you see from him and is that the kind of guy you thought you were getting when he transferred in?

TJ OTZELBERGER: Yeah, I was fortunate to recruit Caleb when he was in high school and I know, I have a tremendous belief in him because of his work ethic, because of how much he wants to win, how competitive he is.

He just needs somebody to believe in him and keep challenging him every day and I can assure you that's what we're going to do and I know he's going to continue to flourish.

So I think there's many great games, great days ahead for Caleb Grill in our program and fortunate to have him and excited to see his continued development.

THE MODERATOR: We can take questions for Caleb.

Q. 0-3 to start the season. What does this team have to do to get a win either tomorrow or just to get a win in general, what are you guys going to have to do?

CALEB GRILL: We just got to do the little things like coach has been asking us, but with all this COVID stuff I think we're at a disadvantage because we have eight newcomers and then plus David and Moses being red shirts, we basically have 10 new players on our team this year.

We were supposed to go to Canada this summer, play three games there and then we also were supposed to have two exhibition games before the season. So there's pretty much five games to get us going that we didn't get the opportunity to have. Then we had games leading up to this tournament that ended up not happening.

So I think for us it's just getting in a rhythm playing together because there's only three returners from last year and I think once we all get working together we're going to be really successful down the stretch.

Q. You had 27, you looked pretty comfortable. Do you feel like you're up to speed and locked in with this team at this point?

CALEB GRILL: Yeah, I thought I've had a good feel with all the guys and everything. Coach TJ always gives me confidence to play my game and everything, so I feel like it's just kind of a weird situation and coming in, playing with Bryce and David, so I knew that coming into the year I would probably have a little mismatch on me because I figured they would put all their attention on those two, so I've just been trying to take advantage of that the best I could.

Q. How tough a cover are those guards, they have a pretty experienced back court there at Alabama.

CALEB GRILL: They're tough. I played against them last year when I was at Iowa State. I know John Petty hasn't had the year to start, shooting-wise, like how he was capable of last year and that kind of worried me coming into the game because I know last year he had 34 and 12 against us.

So I knew about him and then their guards are really quick -- I don't remember what the point guard's name was -- but he's really quick and then Shackelford, played against him last year, really good shooter from deep. So we knew they were going to get up a lot of shots from three and that's we tried to take that away from them, but they just got hot and had a little stretch like coach mentioned earlier and that was probably the reason why we lost the game.

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