

Maui Jim's Maui Invitational

Monday, November 22, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Mike Brey

Cormac Ryan

Paul Atkinson Jr

Postgame Press Conference



St. Mary's - 62, Notre Dame - 59

MIKE BREY: That was a great college basketball game. I feel for our guys because we gave ourselves every opportunity. They're really, really good and they're tough and they're old and we can steal a page from their book as far as their poise, how they played.

But I love what our group did. We had a chance. I thought our defense overall was pretty good to keep them in the 60s and I think they just probably are, they're further ahead than us. They have been together longer and they did it for 40 minutes. But can't dwell on it long. We got to bounce back and try and win a game out here tomorrow as we're figuring out our team.

Q. Cormac, I think you hit three 3-pointers, including one towards the end of the game. What kind of gave you that confidence today to build that team up, especially in the second half?

CORMAC RYAN: I think my teammates did a good job finding me. We're a confident group. We know we have guys who can really shoot the ball. We have guys who can play and we're confident in each other, so that gives me confidence, obviously. And, yeah, continue to encourage each other to shoot it no matter what.

Q. A defeat like this obviously can be deflating, but if there were two things that you, growth periods that you think the Irish made in this game, what would those things be?

PAUL ATKINSON JR.: Yeah. No, I think we had a good day defensively. I think we learned a lot from that and just things that we know we need to take to get better in defensively we're going to do that coming up.

I think offensively we had some lax today, a lot of iso ball

and stuff like that that we're going to work on and get better at and come together more as a unit and come together soon.

CORMAC RYAN: Yeah, I would go with that, playing against a high-level team, continuing to trust ourselves and our teammates, everyone across the board, just knowing how good we can be offensively and defensively and just trusting each other and continuing to be ourselves and stay within ourselves I think is a big key for us.

Q. Paul, I've seen you've play in big games in the past and not having a season last year with the cancellation, what were the emotions like playing a team like this on a stage like this?

PAUL ATKINSON JR.: It was awesome. First big game back, on a big stage to play in for the first time in a long time, so I think it's really awesome to be out here, a bunch of guys that want to win, want to compete this season.

So I think it's been really awesome to be back out here and on a center stage like this.

Q. Is there anything particularly they do defensively that makes it really hard to execute? The players referred to some of the isolation. Is there something they do that makes them difficult?

MIKE BREY: I thought they ended up switching a lot of stuff and it was hard for us to get -- we got to the bonus quick because we were driving it, and some of those drives are forced but you are trying to make something happen.

But I thought they did a really good job switching and staying in front of us. For Paul to do what he did after not, someone asked him, he hadn't played basketball against a high-level team on this stage. I'm just so proud of him and I feel for Cormac because he gave us every chance to win the game and I know he's beside himself about the free throw because he usually doesn't miss free throws.

But they, they're just old and good and they have been together awhile. And I told our team, I said, We could really try and steal a page from their poise book. They got a great poise about 'em of an older team.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

Q. (Question about Prentiss Hubb and the slow start this year.)

MIKE BREY: He's going to be a key for us, no question. But it was interesting tonight as I'm still learning about, we have more guards, you know, especially with Blake Wesley. And I thought on this stage he was very good. To be thrown in playing against 22-year-old guys, I was very impressed with him and he made some big plays for us.

I'm trying to find where to Hubb, get him off the ball some and get his feet set ready to shoot it. But I think he at least knows he doesn't have to hunt it and he doesn't have to force plays. I think we have enough guys that can go do something. And that's new for him and we're trying to grow him there in that area. But we're going to need him to score and make some shots and I think he's going to get some open looks because this group does pass it pretty well and find each other.

Q. Are there one or two things that you really liked that you saw the team sort of grow or maybe one or two specifically that you feel like you need to address right away?

MIKE BREY: Well I love that it looked a little dim twice when they punched us and we fought back, first half and second half at a key time. I mean, an old, veteran team was grinding us a little bit and, I mean, I like that about us. So I think we're going to have to -- I like our, I like how we're moving and wanting to work defensively. We made great strides there. We needed to improve immensely. I'm still trying to figure out how to help us offensively. We know we got something down low with Paul, but then what are we doing with our ball screening and who is driving and Blake Wesley's starting to become a really important guy for us and got to figure out how to weaponize him more.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports....