

Maui Jim's Maui Invitational

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Texas A&M Aggies

Buzz Williams

Hassan Diarra

Wade Taylor IV

Postgame Press Conference



Texas A&M - 72, Notre Dame - 67

BUZZ WILLIAMS: We had 11 guys played double-digit minutes. I thought the response of everybody that played in the second half was incredible. I don't think it was one person. I think it was Texas A&M. I think it was Texas A&M that led to where we were at in the first half at halftime and I think it was their response collectively that allowed the game to change.

22 points in the first half. 51 points in the second half. I don't think I can talk about one person. I think I have to talk about everybody. I thought our intensity, our energy, our pace, our togetherness, the symmetry, the synergy in which we played was easily the best that it has been at any point this season. I thought it was a ginormous step for our program relative to where we were at at halftime. Seven games since two weeks ago today and for us to have the response with 11 guys playing double-digit minutes, I thought it was incredible.

Q. Hassan, this weekend, the first two games, it seemed like you really, tonight you had two big threes in the first half when the team was struggling offensively and you were part of that run in the second half. Talk about your game and your ability to play tonight.

HASSAN DIARRA: I can talk about a lot of things but I just want to bring energy to the team. Whatever the team needs at the time, that's what I bring to the game. So whatever I can do, whether it's 10 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, it doesn't matter. I just want to win games and bringing that energy off the bench is no problem for me.

Q. Wade, it seemed like that in the second half they were a lot more aggressive offensively, taking it the basket with purpose. Was that kind of the talk at halftime? What about attacking the rim in the second

half?

WADE TAYLOR IV: It actually was. We came into halftime, we shot a lot of threes in the first half. We didn't get as aggressive. We didn't get to the bonus. So when we came into halftime we talked about going down hill, picking the pace up, and just trying to get to the free throw line.

And that's what we came out and did. We got a lot of fast-break points, a lot of paint touches, a lot of paint baskets that changed the momentum of the game.

Q. Coach, wanted to ask you about what Wade was talking about at halftime. It certainly seemed like the team came out with a different attitude, different intensity level, in the second half. What were your thoughts going into halftime and coming out in the second half?

BUZZ WILLIAMS: 4 was the head coach at halftime. He started the conversation. Our guys received what he had to say. What he said was the truth, and they responded. All I did was echo what 4 was saying. I didn't scream. I didn't yell. I think our chance is to play incredibly hard. Our chance is to try to play off of two feet, get teams in rotation. We do need to play with some pace.

And then defensively our pressure needs to bother the ball. We don't need to be to get beat off the bounce. If we are in rotation, it has to be executed at a very high clip, particularly against a team that shoots 25 threes a game the way Notre Dame does. I thought in the first half we didn't have the energy to do any of those things. I didn't think we were together, I didn't think that we were playing hard, I didn't think we were doing the things that you have to do to beat a Notre Dame-type team. And I thought in the second half all of the things that we talked about before the game, all the things that we talked about at halftime, I thought all 11 players that played in the second half were critical to changing the tale of two halves.

Q. (Question about the pace of the game.)

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Yes, I think that's part of it. They played seven guys in their five games leading into tonight, they

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played seven guys tonight, I believe. Yeah. We played 11 every game into tonight and I think that we don't need to play uncharacteristically fast and not take quality shots, but we need to have really good movement off dribble penetration. We did that in the second half. There's a distinct difference in 24 free throws in one half and five in one half. There's a distinct difference in what we were doing defensively relative to the pressure that we applied and not getting into rotation. I just thought our energy in the second half, over time, as you said, I do think that that was a part of it. And that was our game plan going in. We did not execute it in the first half, but we were really, really good in the second half, obviously.

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