

# Allstate Maui Invitational

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

SimpliFi Arena

## Chaminade Silverswords

**Eric Bovaird**

**Scott Ator**

**Jamir Thomas**

Postgame Press Conference

UCLA - 76, Chaminade - 48

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by head coach, Eric Bovaird, Scott Ator, and Jamir Thomas. We'll start by taking some opening comments from Coach.

ERIC BOVAIRD: Yeah, I thought the first eight minutes and the last eight minutes are what killed us tonight. We had, obviously, a very rough start. I think I called timeout and looked up and it was 28-4. It was looking pretty rough.

But give a lot of credit to our guys. They battled back and cut it to a 10-point game where it very easily could have gone the other way. They decided, hey, enough of this and we're going to start making some things happen. But the first eight and the last eight are -- but everything in between there I thought we played really well.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. We'll open it up for questions for the players first. Questions for the players.

**Q. Coach Cronin, for UCLA, a moment ago said they thought of this and treated this as a trap game with that noon start coming off a loss for them last night. How much of that did you feel in their aggression to start this game to get off the big lead?**

SCOTT ATOR: We felt it a lot. We knew coming in. Our coach was emphasizing it pregame that he's had experience in the past with these type of second games where they come off a loss, they want to come battle hungry, want to take off our head, so we were kind of expecting that. We didn't show it in the first eight, but luckily we were able to find our energy and bring it into the rest of the game, so, yeah.

**Q. What do these two -- your game last night and the**



**game today and the game coming up tomorrow, what are they going to do for you guys kind of as the season progresses and kind of what will this experience kind of mean to you guys down the road?**

JAMIR THOMAS: I think for us as a team it's really helping us compete at our level. Playing against Kansas and UCLA, it's been a great experience for all of us competing and playing the best teams in the country. So moving forward this is definitely going to mold us and our camaraderie is going to come together as a team, so this is definitely going to help us down the road in our conference later on in the season.

**Q. The final stat for points in the paint, I think, was pretty lopsided. How difficult was it for you guys to get anything going to the rim tonight and scoring in there?**

SCOTT ATOR: Yeah, physicality at this level is a lot different from what we're used to. It's something that we had to adapt to on the fly, throw some different actions at them, some double-teams, but it's definitely a new experience for us, but it's just going to prepare us more in the season.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, Scott and Jamir. You can go back. We'll take questions for Coach.

**Q. Just your thoughts on just the game tonight and just the 10-0 run, just how exciting was that just for the team? It just kind of shows you that this team doesn't give up.**

ERIC BOVAIRD: Yeah, exactly. It shows that they're not going to quit when things go wrong. Like I mentioned before, that was a really rough start. I think one of the worst starts that we've ever had. So I was anxious to see what direction that they would go from that time period because, like I said, they could have easily gone and been a very, very lopsided game.

But they decided at that point that they're going to lock in. We had some things that we really wanted to try to take away. We wanted to try to take away them offensively, getting the ball into the post. They started off the game



and that's exactly what they did. Through that stretch, we finally got into the position, defensive positions, that we wanted to be in in order to help take that stuff away and with aggressiveness and activity.

But, no, it was a very rough start, but I'll give our guys credit. Now I know that they have it within them when things go wrong that they can turn and they can flip it and we can get things headed in the right direction.

**Q. To that point, how proud are you of this group, knowing that they had that run after what you just characterized as the worst start that you've seen, and just the tournament in general, how they don't kind of shy away from the competition, and even last night, went head first against No. 1 Kansas. How proud are you of this group and the grit that they have shown so far?**

ERIC BOVAIRD: Yeah, yeah, I'm very proud of 'em. I talked to 'em in the locker room and at film session today, if you put things in perspective, you played Kansas last night, you're playing UCLA today, they're probably two of three of the most elite college basketball programs in the country. I said, When you were a little kid, could you imagine dreaming of playing Kansas and UCLA on back-to-back nights.

So I was disappointed with the way we started, because I thought that they were going to come out and really -- but you never know with 18 to 23-year-olds what they're thinking. You never know how they're going to react whenever the lights come on. And they know they're on ESPN, they know that they have all the people watching. So, you know, I was glad that they were able to flip from the terrible start that we had and just really focus. We tried to get 'em to just focus on the plays that we're running next, the defense that we're in for the next couple plays. Just focus on that rather than everything else. And they did that and they started to have fine success.

**Q. Last game, a chance for you guys against Syracuse, a team that has shown in this tournament they have got a couple of quick shifty guards who like to freelance and run a lot of their offense through them, so what kind of opportunity on day three is this for you guys?**

ERIC BOVAIRD: Yeah, we know Syracuse is a really good team. I think they were 3-0 before they came into this tournament. I watched them, they hung with their last two opponents through good stretches. They're good. They're another historic program. I tried, I told our guys in the locker room, maybe not as of recent years, the past few years, but before that, you watch, you look up Syracuse in

the Big East and you'll see that, man, they got an amazing basketball history. As I was trying to tell 'em that, Hey, you're getting another chance to play an incredible program.

But them in general, I know that, being a new coach, that they're still trying to figure things out. I know that they're going to come out and play hard tomorrow. We cannot have a start like we did today, otherwise that's a team that could jump right on you, too. So hopefully we come out ready to go, but, you know, I always believe we have a chance because we've won games in this tournament before, so I believe we do tomorrow too.

**Q. We would love to see a little bit of Kameron Ng. Are you able to disclose what's going on with him? Since he's a local boy it would have been great to see him on this stage and on this level.**

ERIC BOVAIRD: Yeah, yeah, I would have loved to have seen him too (laughing). We have a few guys that would have been in our playing rotation today, Kelton Samore and Kameron, they would have, you know, before their injuries they were both going to see valuable playing time. So Kam's just been suffering through a little bit of lower back issues. I anticipate that he's going to be back with us soon. So, but I think he would definitely, having those two guys would have definitely helped us. One of the things about playing the high major Division I, they come at you in waves. If one guy isn't playing well, they just go to the next and go to the next, and unfortunately we don't have that luxury all the time, especially if you have a couple key injuries. But we're anxious to get him back.

**Q. On a side note, you're playing a New York team. Obviously you're from Brockway, Pennsylvania, so just your thoughts on that?**

ERIC BOVAIRD: Well, I grew up watching the Big East. The Big East was, you know, watching Pitt and Georgetown and Syracuse and all those guys. I loved watching the Big East. I can remember my brother even having a Syracuse Orange jacket, and I had a Georgetown jacket, but also loved Pitt. So, to me it's going to be fun. I've never played against them and I know the history of their program. Being from Pennsylvania and close to New York, it would be awesome to play really well, because I know there's going to be a lot of people from our area that will be watching the game, so hoping that we have a good showing.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach, that will do it.

ERIC BOVAIRD: Thanks.

