

Southwest Maui Invitational

Monday, November 24, 2025

Lahaina, Hawaii, USA

Lahaina Civic Center

Chaminade Silverswords

Eric Bovaird

Roland Banks

Kent King

Postgame Press Conference

Washington State 90, Chaminade 85

ERIC BOVAIRD: I saw 30 minutes of really, really good basketball, but unfortunately there was 10 minutes right after the start of the second half that was not very good.

But I'm really proud of the guys, really proud of their effort. I thought our press was very, very effective tonight. Guys did a really good job for 30 minutes in it. Just that 10-minute span where we gave up a lot of points really quick.

But yeah, I'm really happy with the way they performed, especially for 30 minutes.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the ball pressure early in the game and how you were able to be that effective against them in the early going. Did you feel like you got them kind of taken aback or had a mental edge on them at that point, and then where do you think it flipped in the game?

ROLAND BANKS: I'm going to say that I feel like the ball pressure was effective because as a team we practice like that every single day, so we're used to playing at that speed. A lot of teams don't practice against a press 94 feet for that long.

It might take them a while to get adjusted to it, and like you saw, it might cause some errant passes, some turnovers, which helps us get our offense rolling, get into transition and we get easy shots.

Like Coach said, coming out in the second half we looked a little tentative so our pressure wasn't as high as they



were able to score a lot of points, they got a lot more comfortable, and that's when they obviously came back in the game and took the lead and it was a dogfight from there.

KENT KING: Just to piggyback off what he said, that's just our basketball. We want to speed them up. We play that game. They're athletic, gritty, so that's just our game plan coming into every game.

Like RJ and Coach said, we've just got to find a way to keep it up for 40 minutes.

Q. When you guys were up 20, I think it was maybe 39-19 or thereabouts, what is it like mentally to have that kind of lead on a D-I team in this setting, in this special event? What's going through your head at that point?

KENT KING: A lot. Just being in the moment and just knowing that we got the game right there, it's a lot. But we just -- it's definitely a good feeling, but we just got to stay on it and we've just got to keep that pressure going the whole time.

That 10-minute drop-off hurt us, and we've got to find a way to keep it going for 40 minutes.

ROLAND BANKS: That was for sure a really good feeling. Like he said, we've got to stay locked in, though. Never playing in an environment like this, you've got to not get too high or not get too low even during the swing of the game.

Once we got a little excited, we might have lost our focus a little bit. All the fans cheering and things like that. But it was a really good feeling to be up 20 against a D-I; I'm not going to lie.

Q. Coach, you talked a little bit about things turning. Obviously the ball pressure was hitting them, and then the second half they got on fire from three and started to make them. What was breaking down defensively that was different from the first half?

ERIC BOVAIRD: That's a great question. Our press has layers to it, and it starts with initial presence and activity on the ball, then it starts with denying like crazy, and then it

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starts determining good traps, bad traps, which then in turn fluctuates what positions you're in defensively. And if the ball gets out, we have to scramble to certain places.

The problem came in where the ball got ahead of us, we didn't chase like we did in the first half. We have to sprint if the ball gets ahead of us, sprint out and chase and get -- sometimes it's getting to three-point shooters, sometimes it's taking away three on two for lay-ups and stuff like that. They had a good strategy in putting No. 15 in the corner which makes it even further to chase and find him, a little bit more to run.

We've seen teams do that to us before. It was just a matter of sprinting out immediately when the ball gets ahead.

We made that adjustment then for the final 10 minutes, but the first 10 minutes it was hard to get that message across to them.

Q. You've been with the program a long time. Could you share if you had -- what kind of relationship you might have had with Coach Lopes, and what was it like for you to witness the prayer for him before the game?

ERIC BOVAIRD: Oh, it was awesome. It was awesome. He's a legend. He's a legend at Chaminade, always will be. He was one of the first people I met when I arrived here in Hawai'i.

Just to give you a brief little story, I came on my honeymoon to Hawai'i a year before I moved here, but I stayed at Waikiki the whole time so I had no idea what life was like outside of Waikiki. I remember our athletic director, Bill Villa said, hey, as soon as you arrive, one of the first people I want you to meet is Merv. He's actually going to be in town. Sit down and talk with him a while.

So I had a chance to meet with him right away. Boy, that just helped me feel a lot more comfortable and confident about my move, coming all the way from, at that time, Wheeling, West Virginia.

But he had such an aura and a presence to him. I hear my kids talk about positive aura and negative aura. He had an incredible positive aura to him. Like if you were around him, you just felt that, just, magic. He was an incredible guy. He really was.

He was very eccentric. He did things -- I took a lot of the stuff he said, but some of the stuff seemed a little -- maybe he could do it, but it wasn't natural for me to do it. But he was a special guy, there's no doubt about it. We'll remember him and cherish him forever.

Q. A lot has been changing around the tournaments here, and this is a special place for a lot of us. We've watched this for a long time. What does it mean for your program being here in this tournament, to the community, to your institution, being the host institution?

ERIC BOVAIRD: For sure, it means the world. Even as a little kid, I've always known this tournament is the best college basketball tournament in the world. I know March Madness is probably No. 1, but this is No. 2, which is pretty impressive.

All the memories thinking back as a kid watching it, I was like, man, I'd love to play in that some day. I'd love to play in it. Well, I didn't get a chance, Duke and North Carolina and all those guys didn't recruit me. But when the opportunity came, when the Chaminade job came open, it's immediately the first thing I thought of; oh, my goodness, I could coach in the Maui Invitational? That would be unbelievable.

It continues to be huge. My kids have grown up at this tournament. It's pretty awesome.

Q. Looking at the stat sheet, you guys outscored them in the paint, which is pretty significant. You guys led in terms of like the time with the lead, 24 minutes to 13. But when you look at the bench, their bench scored 67 points, your bench had 23 points. What do you look towards in matters of being able to recruit to have depth with the current place that we're in right now in NCAA Division I and Division II basketball?

ERIC BOVAIRD: Well, there's a difference. I believe Division I can have 15 guys on full scholarship right now and our limit is 10. Unfortunately, I have three guys, three full scholarship players out right now. We're at seven scholarship players and a bunch of gritty walk-ons, too.

The way we want to play, of course it helps to have incredible depth. We're looking -- we would love to sub in guys and keep them fresh and rotate.

But we try to do that as best we can, but it's very important, and that's a huge advantage that Division I has over us, the amount of scholarships, and the ability to practice in the summertime. We don't practice -- we're not allowed to practice at all in the summertime. I feel like I've only had my guys for like two months, and we had very limited time for the first month that they were here, four hours a week with a basketball.

A lot of things are new and fresh. This is an eye-opening

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experience. Yes, we played three games, but this tournament definitely can expose your weaknesses and tell you where you're at and what you need to work on.

Q. They played really well in the first half with their pressure and energy. How do you think you'll be able to bring that back tomorrow with a quick turnover?

ERIC BOVAIRD: I know, it's not going to be easy. That's one of the things I talked about. They've got to try to rest up and hydrate and fuel back up and be ready. Normally as we progress through the season, we always take the day off after a game just to try to heal up. There's no taking days off. We play a great team tomorrow, and we're going to have to be ready.

But the guys, they've been looking forward to these moments all their life. They're going to give it everything they have. But we also need to say a few prayers to make sure that we're healthy and ready to go tomorrow.

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