

Southwest Maui Invitational

Wednesday, November 26, 2025

Lahaina, Hawaii, USA

Lahaina Civic Center

Washington State Cougars

Coach David Riley

Rihards Vavers

Postgame Press Conference



RIHARDS VAVERS: Just learning from them. It was a short period of time of just playing all those games in a row, and now we have some time to watch film and reflect on them. I think these three games are going to show what we've got to work on, and we're just going to get better from it.

Q. Obviously Arizona State and USC played for the title. You guys were in the semifinals. Three of the four semifinalists, former Pac-12 teams. Talk about what that was kind of like for you this week?

DAVID RILEY: You know, I just tried to soak it all up all week. We got here Friday night, got to spend five days here, and just every event, every game, the way the staff treats everybody, the locker rooms and just the whole process of this tournament was unbelievable to be a part of.

To see the Pac-12 teams out there, and I grew up watching this when Bill Walton was announcing, and I know he'd be happy and proud that we've got some Pac-12 love up here.

Q. At the beginning of the tournament, I asked a number of coaches just about where you want your team to be on Thursday when you wake up. It's a tough week and stuff, but it's a great learning opportunity. What are the things that you saw that were bright spots, and what are the things you say, okay, over the next week these are things we want to continue to get better at?

DAVID RILEY: I felt like the first three, four games of the season we were overthinking and we weren't ready for the fight because we were kind of -- yeah, overthinking.

So I am proud. Starting the second half of the Chaminade game, going through all these games, like we're playing looser, we're playing more aggressive, we're playing true to our identity. That's how we play offense and how we play defense.

I am proud that we took that step as a team. Obviously we want to get there quicker, but I think that's a huge push for us.

At the end of the day, there's three games in three days.

Seton Hall 75, Washington State 61

DAVID RILEY: I thought we tried to battle back and just couldn't overcome that start. The physicality and aggressiveness of Seton Hall was impressive. It's something we hadn't seen. I kind of sound like a broken record right now but when you have a new team and you face unique opponents that you haven't seen like that, it takes some time to adjust.

So like Chaminade we hadn't seen a pressing team. It took us a whole half to adjust. We hadn't seen a team with that kind of physicality and aggression. Took us about eight minutes to adjust. I think we had eight or nine turnovers in the first eight minutes and finished with seven in the last 30 minutes, 32 minutes.

We've got to figure out how to make adjustments a little bit quicker and adjust to the game, but part of that's getting experience.

Q. Can you talk about what it was like to be here this week, and have you watched this tournament growing up, and if so, what was the experience like to actually be here?

RIHARDS VAVERS: Yeah, I watched it when I came to the U.S. I really didn't know about the tournament because I'm from Europe. But yeah, it was great playing back to back, just getting the experience before the end of the regular season tournament, just getting all those days in, just getting all the games, experience.

As Coach said, we're a new team experiencing new situations, so it was a great experience in general.

Q. How much did three games in three days like this help you guys going forward?



You can learn a lot. You can talk. You can make adjustments, but it's hard to really reflect and really grow from those mistakes. We're going to have some time now, we have a few days to really soak that in and make sure we make the proper adjustments and get better from those, and I think now we've just got to figure out how to play a little bit more disciplined while also playing hard. And we've got to guard the freaking ball. We're giving up way too many drives and way too many paint touches.

Q. I know as a former small college basketball player, as well, some people use that term, it is something to be able to go against a Goliath. I know you started this tournament playing the host, but just talk about how important that is for the game of basketball in college and aspiring basketball players who are not going to be able to be 6'7" or 6'8" and play at the highest level?

DAVID RILEY: Yeah, I think the thing that makes basketball great and what I've always enjoyed this game is, like, you can make the big time where you are. I think I've always had that approach, whether it was in college or high school or now that I'm coaching right now. That's something my grandpa was big on.

He was a football coach. Started off at Wallace, Idaho, in a tiny little high school and ended up being a head coach in the CFL. And my uncle, as well. He was a head coach at Oregon State and Nebraska, the San Diego Chargers.

They always talk about their early days whether it was Linfield College or some of those small high schools where they were able to grow and learn and some of their best experiences. This game means a lot. It's not about the lights and all that. It's about going and attacking it the right way, and I just think our team continues to approach it that way.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports