

Asheville Championship

Friday, November 12, 2021

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

South Carolina Gamecocks

Harrah's Cherokee Center

Coach Frank Martin

Jermaine Cousnard

Press Conference



Princeton - 66, South Carolina - 62

FRANK MARTIN: Much credit to Princeton. Every time we made a defensive mistake, they made us pay, and we battled and battled. Guys I got coming off the bench right now are really young and struggled defensively today, which you can't struggle defensively against them because, if not, you get put on skates.

We had a chance. We had control of the game in the first half and had opportunity to make some shots and have a bigger lead. You know they're coming. They're a real good basketball team. They're an experienced team, and we just couldn't make a jump shot.

We made maybe our last -- Jermaine made three there late, but before that we were probably 1 for 21 or 1 for 22 from the three, and without a presence at the rim from our bigs, other than Wildens Leveque and not being able to make a jump shot and not getting to the foul line, it's a bad recipe for -- to win a game against a team like Princeton.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach. Questions for Jermaine?

Q. Jermaine, you guys were up ten early in the game, and then I think they ended the first half on this 21-6 run. What changed there, and how did you guys kind of -- what did you see offensively that was kind of making you guys struggle some?

JERMAINE COUSNARD: I feel like we wasn't disciplined enough on defense. I feel like once we start -- we start making bad decisions, just lunging and wanted to play, and they just started making us pay.

Q. Jermaine, in that final minute when you are making all those threes, what's kind of, I guess, going through your mind, and do you kind of -- it looked like you picked up your game another level in that moment, and

when you guys are struggling as a team shooting, just how do you combat that? How do you get through that as well?

JERMAINE COUSNARD: We just have to find different ways for us to win the game, and that's either get stops or just get to the rim.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jermaine. Appreciate your time. Questions for Coach?

Q. Frank, what did you think of your team's shot selection tonight?

FRANK MARTIN: I thought in the first half it was pretty good, and we missed. Then in the second half we pressed a little bit to make shots, but, you know, we have to have a presence from our bigs, and it became more of a half court game in the second half.

I think they shot 20 free-throws in the second half, if I'm not mistaken, so that's ten walk-up-the-floor possessions, and we had opportunities off -- we had opportunities -- here's like a stat that I'm -- we got 18 offensive rebounds. We created 18 turnovers. We shot 14 free-throws. How do we not convert 18 offensive rebounds and 18 turnovers into more free-throw opportunities?

Our half court offense was not what it needed to be today. We made an adjustment in the second half to try to create more movement because we weren't getting the presence from our bigs that I wanted inside. But we'll learn from this.

Q. Frank, you were talking about just some of the defensive struggles today. What specifically did you see from a defensive standpoint that you guys were struggling with today?

FRANK MARTIN: They play five guys out. Do you understand what I mean by five out? All five guys play on the perimeter, and it puts a lot of pressure on your bigs to defend cuts and the bounce. And they're all freshmen, other than Wildens Leveque, and those guys have not had to defend guys in high school. They all defended centers, and they just kind of plotted themselves behind people and

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

just stood there.

They're learning, and we ended up playing the team that's got seniors, and they all play facing and driving and kicking, and they put a lot of pressure on you to be disciplined, and we weren't quite good enough on a day where we got nothing from our bigs, other than Wildens, and we shot 4 for 28 from the three. You have to find other ways to win the game.

So that means that you have to be very, very good defensively, and we made mistakes. And, for example, any time we were a step late on a rotation, they stuck the three, and, you know, credit them. We weren't -- it's not like we didn't play hard. The guys that played the majority of the minutes, they played really hard.

Our subs have to grow up, for lack of a better -- because they're just all -- I mean, Josh Gray is a freshman. He played 30 total minutes of college basketball last year. He has no idea what he is doing, even though he is a starter right now. Jacobi, Devin, Ta'Quan, they're all freshmen, and we played a team that made it really difficult on them.

THE MODERATOR: Last question.

Q. Erik started -- has started the season 1 of 17 from three. Where do you balance letting a guy shoot out of a slump or letting a guy get going versus maybe, hey, rein them back in and tell them to take some shorter shots? Where do you fall in that?

FRANK MARTIN: We come to the gym every morning and every night shooting balls. He better shoot number 18 when it's open. What we have to do is we got to get our bigs to help us a little bit to try and create a little space on the perimeter, you know, and we have to figure out if our bigs are not going to -- like in a game like today, where our bigs were not giving us the inside presence offensively, then we have to create opportunities to drive the ball so we can -- the ball has to get in the paint, and that was the biggest problem we had today. We couldn't get the ball in the paint, and that is more credit to them than a failure to us.

But it's guys that work on -- I had a guy named Bill Walker. I don't know if any of you guys remember him. He started the season at K-State 0 for 18. He was a highlight dunking machine in high school. Tore up his knee when he got to K-State, so played two games his freshman year. So now he redshirts. He spends the whole summer shooting threes, shooting threes, because it was second in ACL. He started the year 0 for 18 from the three. He ended up shooting, like, 34% for the year. I told him: If you are open on No. 19 and you don't shoot it, you're coming out of the

game. You have worked too hard at this.

Guys that work, I'll continue to let them shoot it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach. See everyone on Sunday.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports