

Asheville Championship

Sunday, November 14, 2021

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Western Kentucky Hilltoppers

Harrah's Cherokee Center

Coach Rick Stansbury

Josh Anderson

Press Conference



South Carolina - 75, Western Kentucky - 64

THE MODERATOR: Coach, we'll toss it over to you for opening comments.

RICK STANSBURY: Give South Carolina a lot of credit. I thought they did something they probably hadn't done so far is made shots. Any time you make shots, that makes your team better. He this came in shooting 17% from the three-point line in the first two games. You know, tonight they shoot 33%. The two guys go 7 for 15 between them, Reese and starting point guard.

Just making some shots can be a difference in the game, so give them credit there.

It's hard when you play against a team like South Carolina because they're going to get up into you and really guard you, and you try to get to the foul line. The first half we got to the foul line, we just didn't make them. We go 3 for 9 the first half, and you miss two one and ones, when you are scrapping, you can't leave those kind of points on the court.

I thought we left way too much down on the court, but our guys, credit, came out of the locker room being down seven. Fought back. Tied the game up. Then we had about a two-minute stretch there, we turned it over twice and give up an offensive put-back. It goes from two points to eight points in about a minute and a half or so. From there on it was kind of an uphill battle for us.

Lots of things we got to get better at. Lots of things we can learn from. We didn't win either game, but I can take some positive things from this to build on moving forward.

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

Q. Hey, Josh. First half of these couple of games here in Asheville have been a struggle for you guys

offensively. 23 and 24 points. You know, what's it going to take to try to get off to a faster start in some of the games, and what did you see from South Carolina tonight that made it tough on you guys?

JOSH ANDERSON: Like Coach said, I felt like it's just a learning experience for us. We're only three and four games in. We got a new team, and I feel like we can just take away those first half starts that we have and just get back to practice and work on those.

Q. With this team, I know you just said learning process. What have you guys actually learned about what you guys have, what you need to get better at and what your strengths are? Up to this point through three games.

JOSH ANDERSON: Right now we feel like we need to start games better. Like I said, scoring in particular. Just bringing more energy in the first half and just starting off games better and more importantly, finishing them better.

Q. As Coach said, a much improved shooting team heading into this year. These last two games, it's obviously been a struggle, especially from three-point range, just not falling. Where is the confidence at with the team at this point in regards it that?

JOSH ANDERSON: As far as the shooting goes, we're not worried. I mean, we're confident in our players. We got Luke and Cam on the wings. Me myself, I was working on my outside game. We have Dayv and J. Ham. As far as shooting goes, we're not worried at all. We're real confident in our players, and we feel like shots are going to fall. We're going to keep taking them.

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

RICK STANSBURY: Good question. He did something that we need from him every night. Besides playing hard. He is always playing hard. He stepped up and made two for three threes. When we get shots from him, just makes everything better. It was good to see Luke step up and make one. Been a long drought. I don't know what that



drought was, but he made one.

So the game, we probably will all overcomplicate it sometimes. Give South Carolina credit. They're a really, really good defensive team. But just jumping up and making some shots changes the outcomes of the games. They hadn't made them very well the first two games. We haven't shot them very well at all, but sounds simple, but just making some shots changes things.

Getting Cam back will help us as we move forward. Whatever he did today, hey, just take it as a plus. I know we had a couple of bad turnovers over in front of our bench, but, again, what he has been through, lack of practice, lack of everything, we were just glad to have him out there, and he will continue to add too moving forward in a positive way.

Q. When you are not shooting it well, I guess kind of the rebounding gets magnified a little bit. They're plus 18 on you guys on the boards and some of those down the stretch get making feud, their offensive boards. What's it going to take to try to be better in that category, and what was wrong in that tonight?

RICK STANSBURY: What was wrong is it was against South Carolina. They're pretty good there. That's their strength. I thought the one thing we did was one of their strengths. We kept them off the offensive boards.

Now, defensive boards, they got 33 of them. That means we missed some shots. They get those rebounds. They're going to get most of those. I thought one of the biggest keys to the game was keeping them off offensive rebounds. I think we did that. I know at halftime they had two points in offensive put-backs. That's a key stat.

First half you can chop it up any way you want to chop it up. Make your free-throws. Chop it up any way you want to chop it up. I can talk about this play and this play and making this shot and missing this shot. Comes down pretty simple sometimes. You go 3 for 9 and two of those are one and ones, that's a lot of points to be left out there. Those are called free for a reason.

Keep asking, Jared. You are by yourself, man.

Q. Dave was coming off the 28-point second half, 34-point game. He is limited to just two points first half tonight. What did you see that they were doing on him that made it tough on him? Especially with the Reese kid out there, who you have seen before.

RICK STANSBURY: Just know this, again, South Carolina is really good defensively. That's who they are. They put

-- we knew they put Reese on him. Reese is a big, long athlete. Reese did a good job keeping him out of that paint. When he did get to the basket, there's a big old body waiting on him. Those are big old guys now. Big -- just not tall, but big.

Give them credit. They did a lot of good things, but with Dayvi, it doesn't affect the way he plays. I've got to continue moving forward figuring out this team, get us to execute better in some areas. Butz, I thought he was better tonight. I thought he got some things done. I thought he took that ball to the big guys some.

Those are all things that we'll keep learning with our team and keep getting better with, and like I said, these games will make us better. We got to get better because they don't get no easier for us.

Q. Kind of going off of that, you talked about what you have learned. What are some of the biggest positives from this weekend, this trip? What are you taking away from this heading into Memphis on Friday?

RICK STANSBURY: The biggest thing you learn is you learn our guys, they didn't lay down. They could have laid down either night. We got down both games, down halftime. Our guys fought. First half we turned them over a bunch.

I thought the difference in the game was the first -- those six minutes of the second half, us making a run, but we had -- we put them in a bonus. 14-minute mark, they're in the bonus. That's a bad stat. If they're on, I think they make, if I'm correct, 12 out of 13 free-throws.

Again, you just can't give them those kind of free-throws that early in the game. That changes the flow of that game a bunch.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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