

Asheville Championship

Friday, November 10, 2023

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Harrah's Cherokee Center

Davidson Wildcats

Matt McKillop

Grant Huffman

Bobby Durkin

Press Conference



Q. This is probably in your time as head coach maybe your biggest win to date. Just talk about the emotions of it. Davidson has a long history of success in Asheville and now this.

MATT McKILLOP: Yeah, whenever you play a team like Maryland, you play a team that you don't see very often, you always think -- you always see the tag line that says the last time Davidson played or that last time Davidson beat Maryland, for example. I was thinking about that because we played them when I was a junior in the NIT at Maryland and I think we had a 18-point lead. So earlier today I was, like, man, I remember playing against Maryland when I was a player here at Davidson.

And then I remembered going up to Buffalo to watch Davidson play Maryland when Steph Curry was a freshman and we lost the first round in the NCAA tournament game in 2007. So it's pretty cool to be obviously on the sideline in a different role than when I was a player playing in the NIT and be able to share this moment with such a great group of players.

I don't know, yeah, you could probably say it's the most notorious win we've had. We beat South Carolina, which was great. Davidson beats an SEC school last year. We had some really great wins where we had to fight back and they felt just as good as this one because of the circumstances we were in in those moments.

But it's also great. It's my mother's birthday, so that makes it even more special. Yeah, really I'm trying to soak in the moment because I know we're going to turn around and go outside and watch Clemson play UAB and figure out what we're going to do tomorrow to prepare for Sunday.

Q. I think your concerns at the beginning of the year were defensive rebounds. If you look on your stats, you out-rebounded Maryland tonight. Also, it looked as if you have a real balanced attack out on the court, not one single player that somebody can focus on because you got a lot of people that are actually contributing to it. Do you want to comment on any of that?

Davidson - 64, Maryland - 61

THE MODERATOR: Good evening. Welcome to the Asheville Championship. We'll start with opening comments from Coach and then take questions.

MATT McKILLOP: Thank you. Thanks to the Asheville Championship for having us here. We were here Grant's freshman year and we played in the Maui Invitational here in Asheville and had surf boards and the Hawaiian leis everywhere and it's great to be back because the memories we had then and as a member of the Southern Conference when we competed in championships here.

But an incredibly hard-fought game. That Maryland team is really good. I believe they were picked pre-season No. 3 in the Big Ten and rightfully deserved and Kevin Willard is an incredible coach. The defensive adjustments that they made and stayed with and altered throughout the game was why we really never got in an offensive rhythm and had some turnovers, which is ultimately what led to them -- that ended up allowing them to tie the game late.

But we kind of weathered the storm there in the final minutes, final seconds. I think you saw a great play out of Grant, seven assists, seven points, seven rebounds, and then I think everybody got the chance to see what Bobby Durkin has done for us since he stepped on campus. We are not surprised, Grant's probably not surprised, anybody who's been in our gym is not surprised to see Bobby make shots early, but also make that big shot to finish the game. Incredible team effort. We played 11 guys and a lot of guys did so many different things to make an impact and we're obviously very excited about this win.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

Questions?



MATT McKILLOP: Yeah, I would love to. They got rebounds down the stretch. Those were crucial rebounds. I think an eight-point lead might have been our biggest lead -- a nine-point lead early in the second half. We had a seven- or eight-point lead in that final five-minute stretch, and rebounding is what got 'em back into the game. They got a big rebound on a free throw box situation, which if you watched us play last year, that was a challenge. We were debating whether to foul or not up three, and we have to think about how well can we rebound at the free-throw line in order to do that.

As far as the balance we have, the options that we have, I mean, Reed Bailey only played 18 minutes because of foul trouble, and he was pretty darn good when he was out there. Hunter Adam was terrific playing in the first half, played 15 minutes, and I want to say he played 11 of those in the first half. Sean Logan, I mean, the potential that we have seen in him for two years and he's starting to scratch the surface of, I mean, he made two threes, but he rebounded, he competed defensively, he did so many great things for us.

Yeah, I could say others as well, but I think that's why our staff and these guys are so excited about the group we have because we have the ability to do some special things. I don't know, at halftime against W & L on Monday everybody believed that we could do what we did tonight, but Monday didn't change that. I knew the group we had and very excited for what we can do.

Q. Bobby, you're a freshman. Can you talk about what it's like to come to this tournament for the first time as a freshman?

BOBBY DURKIN: Yeah, it was a great experience. Obviously getting to play Maryland, Big Ten school, and definitely the biggest college game I've played in and I'm thrilled with the way it turned out. So, yeah, I've really enjoyed this tournament so far.

Q. You hit a couple big shots tonight. Kind of take us through that last shot in the corner there basically to seal the win.

BOBBY DURKIN: Yeah, I mean, just the whole game, all the coaches just trying to instill confidence in me. I knew when I saw Grant driving that I was going to have an opportunity, and I just had to be ready for it. So when I saw it come to me I knew it was my chance to take the shot and thankfully it went in.

MATT McKILLOP: And Bobby made a pretty impressive play, just tipping that ball down the court. Can't believe

there was .6 on the clock. That was just an incredibly high-IQ player play by a freshman, which is really impressive.

Q. Grant, you played in some pretty high-intensity, high-level games throughout your career, and did a little bit all over the floor tonight. Where does this sort of stack up with other games you played in your time at Davidson?

GRANT HUFFMAN: This one is extremely special to me just because it's my senior year. I'm sure you're familiar with it. We weren't projected to do very well. I don't think anyone thought we had much of a chance coming into this game. So to see our team step up to what we expected and not what everyone else said was really cool for us. We celebrated hard in the locker room. Like Coach said, those last four minutes we didn't have the best stretch, so I guess our focus going forward is to focus on that and get better as we go.

But back to your question, this is a very special win just because for Coach, it being his biggest high-major win, me being a senior, it really means a lot.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thanks, everyone.

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