

Asheville Championship

Friday, November 10, 2023

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Harrah's Cherokee Center

Clemson Tigers

Brad Brownell

Chase Hunter

PJ Hall

Press Conference



Clemson - 77, UAB - 76

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

Coach, over to you for your opening statement.

BRAD BROWNELL: Well, terrific game. Certainly want to give UAB a lot of credit. Andy had his kids ready and they played really well. They're hard to play against. Obviously they changed defenses a lot, probably early in the year just not as comfortable with things like that. So I didn't think we shot it very well in the first half. I thought we got some decent looks.

But I'm proud of our guys for finding a way. These two guys held us together, made a bunch of big individual plays, which is what you got to do, and I'm very happy that we were able to find a way to beat a good competitive team today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. PJ, you played a heck of a game tonight, and I was just wondering, what was going through your head during that second half when you guys started to take the lead?

PJ HALL: First of all, biggest thing was just to stay calm. A couple times I started getting a little sped up. Bad turnover about eight and a half minutes left trying to push up the floor, a couple rushed shots trying to force stuff.

But, I mean, really coming back from a game like this it's not one guy, it two guys, it's the whole team. A huge collective thing. We had guys coming off the bench, coming in fighting, RJ Godfrey giving a bunch of energy off

the bench and guys like that. So it was a complete team effort to come back in the second half. These are the games you remember. It's not the blowouts you remember. These are the kind of games where you fight until end. They hit a three late to go up. You got a guy like Chase to take the lead, too. It's awesome.

Q. Great game. Last game y'all went -- got to the line 12 shots tonight, significantly more. I think you ended up 27 times at the trip. Was that kind of game plan, looking to be more aggressive getting to the line?

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, some of it is just the way they play. They're aggressive and there's some lanes you can drive, and certainly we talked about posting and we talked about penetration. We thought those were ways that we could get to the basket more in this game. I thought Chase and PJ, especially both those guys, did a terrific job of attacking.

They can get you thinking too much about different things and you forget you just got to make some plays every once in awhile. I think both these guys did a really good job of that. A big part of what we were trying to do was play in the paint.

Q. (No microphone.)

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, you hope he's a mature player. He's been here a long time. Early in the game like that there's going to be contact. Davis for them is a big load. They were posting the ball, so there's going to be some physical post play.

Obviously we're trying to play without fouling as much as possible. I thought PJ did a really good job, was a little more disciplined in the second half, and then it helped that Davis was out of the game. So that worked to our favor and advantage down the stretch.

Q. Davidson shot 53 percent from three today. What do you guys going to do to prepare for that on Sunday?

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, I'll have to watch the film.



They had a great win today. I saw just bits and pieces, and I thought their defense was as impressive as their offense today. They spread you out because of their shooting, and then they get into the paint with penetration as well. We're going to try to enjoy this at least for another couple hours, but first thing in the morning we'll be certainly on to Davidson.

Q. You've been in those situations before, you know, a game-winning basket in the final seconds. You seem to like to have the ball in your hands in those situations and to be at the free throw line with a chance to win it.

CHASE HUNTER: Yeah, I think Coach really believes in me. He believes in my ability to create for myself and create for others, so he just gave me an opportunity to go out there and make a play, and that's what I did. I tried to do anything for the team to get a win and that's what we came out with.

Q. A lot of adversity tonight, trailed most of the second half, down nine points late. What did you find out about your team tonight?

BRAD BROWNELL: We've got a good competitive group. I thought we lost our poise for a few minutes. I just kept trying in a couple timeouts just getting 'em to relax. It's like there's plenty of time left to play. You got to just kind of let the game come. We forced a few things and, again, just I think their style can lead to you do that a little bit, especially early in the season. You haven't played many games.

But I was proud of the way our guys just kind of hung in there. I thought we were focused. I thought we were not quite as energetic defensively early in the game, and then I thought UAB made some tough shots. Their kids made a couple big shots. The shot that would go up at the end there was a big-time shot. And then Gaines made a huge shot.

They didn't shoot the ball that well in their other couple games and scrimmages, but they really played and our guys had to dig deep. I'm proud of 'em. We had put some different guys out there and had some different lineups, and we just talked about in the locker room, you just keep trying to find a way. You to know who it's going to be, how it's going to be, but you just keep trying to play the right way and our guys did enough of that tonight to find a way to win.

Q. Foul trouble was an issue for you at times last season, coach was on you last year to improve your defense. Seems like you've taken a big step forward in that regard and especially in the second half tonight.

PJ HALL: Yeah, biggest thing about that is just being in better shape. Last year I never quite got into that game-ready shape. Obviously I had the leg injury, but that's, later in the year that's not the best excuse when you have three months to get that game shape. But the entire off-season was focused on getting that game shape and being able to go longer and harder for better stretches.

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

BRAD BROWNELL: Thank you.

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