

# Asheville Championship

Sunday, November 12, 2023

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Harrah's Cherokee Center

## Davidson Wildcats

### Matt McKillop

#### Press Conference

Clemson - 68, Davidson - 65

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

MATT McKILLOP: Obviously incredibly disappointed in the outcome of a game that I felt that we could have and maybe should have won with the way we played at times tonight.

Clemson is incredibly well-coached. They have some incredible players, they're experienced, they have got fifth year guys, and I think we got their best shot in that second half. I've seen enough, and everybody's seen enough basketball to know that that early lead, that was great, but against a team like Clemson, an ACC program, it never felt good. You knew that they were going to battle and they were going to fight, and I think that the defense that they had after we got up by 18, I think the switch flipped and that was the breaking point obviously in our lead, but our run.

Credit to our guys. I mentioned them being a veteran team. We've got a lot of young players and the message in the locker room was, we competed like a veteran team at times and a young team maybe doesn't fight back in those closing minutes the way we did to have, I think, three shots to tie it in the closing seconds. I think it's a statement about the direction we're headed and, you know, one day in the journey and not pleased with the outcome, but I think we grew a lot this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Grant Huffman really seemed composed, didn't lose his composure at all. Could you speak to his leadership and what he means to the team?**

MATT McKILLOP: Oh, it's incredible. He played 38 minutes and our goal is not to obviously play him that much, but he was so in command at all times. Those



numbers are pretty staggering, 12, 5 and 7. I think he had 7, 7, 7 the other day.

He's assigned to typically defend the best perimeter player on the other team. We had a terrific point guard last year named Foster Loyer, and Foster was a coach on the court, and I think the biggest growth Grant had to make in the off-season and development that we were hoping that he would show was his ability to command our team and for these two games, he commanded us against teams at the highest level and couldn't be more proud of him.

**Q. Very impressed with your team, ball movement, shooting. I mean, it's early in the year and it just seemed like you guys were at midseason form as far as your ball movement, offensively and cutting and shooting. Talk about that and also about in conference play, your schedule.**

MATT McKILLOP: Sure. I'll answer that first question. Our guys are bought in. They're unselfish. Our leading scorer had 12 points and we had one, two, three, four, five, six, we had nine guys in the scoring column, is that right, nine guys? I think that's been the case in each of our three games. That's who we are. We need our depth, we need the balance of talent we have for us to be successful, but that's only successful if you buy in and move the ball and you cut and you screen and you play inside out.

It wasn't really difficult to get our guys to want to play this way. It's been very successful in practice against ourselves and it was successful in our close scrimmages, but now it's, okay, we got to go play Maryland and then ultimately Clemson, how is it going to look against them. We are looking at 39 percent from the field, but I did think there was great offensive moments tonight. I think there was great offense against Maryland on Friday.

Pleased if that's what someone walks away noticing, the way that we play unselfishly, move the ball, cut and move our bodies. That's what we want our players to do all the time and that will allow us to continue to get better at that.

Then your second question was about schedule, non-conference schedule?



**Q. That and your in conference.**

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MATT McKILLOP: We signed up for this event and the purpose of it -- I say we signed up. We were offered the opportunity to play in it and we thankfully were allowed to and given that opportunity. These neutral events, these MTEs, it's the only real opportunity that we can feel pretty confident against at having a chance to play against a Quad 1, Quad 2, Power Five team, whatever you want to call it. It's great. We knew we had these games on our schedule for over a year now. But then it was, as we prepare, we're a young team, and now we got to go up against the Big Ten and ultimately go up against the ACC with a young team.

So I think we've grown a lot. Every game is going to be a battle for us. We have a young team so how could we respond. I don't know, this is our first time that we've lost, so let's see how we respond individually, collectively. I think if you were to circle another game that's in the same realm as what we just saw this weekend it would be that St. Mary's game, and I think we could go on this journey feeling like we could step on the court with anybody, knowing that we were able to beat Maryland and have a couple shots in the final seconds to send this game to overtime.

**Q. You mentioned how the game kind of shifted after you developed that big, early lead. What specifically changed for them defensively? Was it effort, was it something that they did schematically?**

MATT McKILLOP: Yeah, it, I don't know, I feel like we came out and we were really aggressive, and a couple of shots fell. I think we were really, I think actually it was really our defense. I think we were great defensively. Then they chipped away a little bit at scoring, which led to them having a little bit of more energy and intensity.

I don't think their game plan changed on us. I don't think we were doing anything magnificent from a taking advantage of one guy or taking advantage of one scheme. But I think they just didn't get much confidence in playing hard and defending hard, because they weren't scoring.

Then they started scoring and it kind of flipped, we weren't feeling good, and then it didn't help our defense. So that would be my assessment. I'll have to watch film to know for sure, but having been involved in basketball to some extent for awhile I think that that's what I'm going to see.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

MATT McKILLOP: Thank you.

