

Crossroads Classic: Butler vs Indiana

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Coach Archie Miller Indiana Hoosiers Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 68, Butler 60

ARCHIE MILLER: Well, really hard-fought game. I've been really impressed with Butler. I know those guys have been under a tremendous amount of adversity here early in the season, which is unfortunate. The COVID virus has obviously hit them at a tough time, and they've had to work through it.

As I watched them play the other night against Villanova, very impressed with their team. I think their young guys are really doing a great job and they're physical. And as they played today, I mean, to start the game we weren't ready for the physicality.

I thought they brought it a lot more regularly inside. They were a much tougher team than us in the first half. We just had to really come together at halftime. Not a whole lot of X's and O's but it's one of those things where you have to find a way to dig yourself out of it.

I thought we challenged ourselves and I thought our guys really were disappointed in the way that we played, and I thought in the second half we came out with a much better approach. Our attitude was much different. It started on the defensive end.

We were able to get stops throughout the course of the game. That helped us get some easy ones. And thought in general Race Thompson answered the bell in the second half and gave us another presence inside and around the basket along with Trayce. So that was important.

Our guards did a good job. I thought the assist totals in the game, to have 19 assists, realistically if you look at Al being 4-1 today and Rob 3-0, and I believe Galloway was 5-0, those guys can some really good things to help Armaan get going, and he was the beneficiary of some of those.

Make no mistakes those were big shots that Armaan made, and his confidence level is at a really good place as this non-conference finishes up. But we're proud of our group and what we've been able to do. Non-conference schedule is over. This was an important game for us.

Got a lot of respect for Butler, and as they get healthy, especially with Thompson being out, he's such an important piece of their puzzle, they're going to be in good shape heading into the Big East.

Q. Archie, you mentioned the difference in the second half defensively. What specifically do you think changed and what was kind of -- what did you emphasize maybe at halftime that you guys weren't doing well enough that you noticed in the first half?

ARCHIE MILLER: They kind of maneuvered and manhandled us inside. They really did. They controlled the game. They were able to perimeter post us from the perimeter, they were able to post one-on-one, and really they just had a lot of success playing one-on-one in the post. They took advantage of our lack of help and they took advantage of our lack of physicality.

I thought that was pretty much the main part of the game. They were able to do what they wanted, move where they wanted. They rebounded the ball physically. We couldn't post the ball. We couldn't get it inside. At the end of the day that's why the game felt funny for us.

I thought we changed that in the second half. We were able to do a much better job of being tougher inside, and we also did a much better job of giving correct help when we needed to.

The bottom line is they didn't shoot any uncontested lay-ups in the second half. First half they shot a lot of uncontested lay-ups. Made a lot of hard plays. Guys were coming up with loose balls, and I thought very early in the first four minutes of the second half we got our confidence going because we were able to get some stops.

Q. Now that the non-conference schedule is over, how would you assess where you are right now heading into Big Ten play?

ARCHIE MILLER: Probably like a lot of teams, still really



trying to get better. We're still trying to create more of an opportunity for our bench to play. I think as we head in here, we know what is a disaster if it doesn't happen in the games in terms of us being able to compete in the Big Ten. I think it's been very evident.

We have to rebound the ball by committee and we have to do a much better job of it. We're going to have to do a great job of not giving up easy baskets inside. We have to do a better job of continuing to be creative there. And I think on offense our turnovers. We continue to have five or six plays right now in our last two or three games that are just way too many turnovers. We can't play with 15 turnovers and win in our league.

We've got to do a better job of executing, a better job of taking care of it. But all in all we're as battle tested as probably any team in league in terms of understanding what it's going to take for us to be successful.

So I think we have that information, and we've got to keep getting better. We got to keep getting more guys involved in the game. It's been tough because I think early on we're playing some really high-level, intense games against good teams and we aren't able to just massage guys in and out.

But I'm here to tell you, I just don't know how we'll go through a Big Ten season without everybody on our team being able to contribute every game.

Q. Archie, this was back to back games for Armaan hitting five three-pointers. How much different does it make to your overall offensive play when you've got a guy willing to not only take the shots but knock them down?

ARCHIE MILLER: Well, I mean, the ball going in the basket makes things easy. Sometimes good offense beats good defense, and I think Armaan has given us an outside weapon here in the last few games clearly that's opened up some things inside. You've got to worry about him.

I think we're going to be a better consistently shooting team as we continue to embrace sharing the ball, and I think you saw some guys make some really great passes in transition, and I think we had some great drives today where we were unselfish and had the ability to deliver a pass on time where we got rhythm shots.

So that's very important for our team. And Armaan, he's playing with great confidence. He's earned that right. He's working hard at it. And like I've said before, he's really developed into a player I think is one of the most improved players in our league this year.

Q. At different times this season you've talked about the high expectations you have as a team. You talked about it after Florida State. Is that maybe also reflective in that halftime you talked about where your guys were able to challenge themselves, where you said it's not X's and O's, it's being willing to meet the physical challenge? Is that reflective of the same kind of quality of the expectation these guys are holding themselves to?

ARCHIE MILLER: No question about it. I think you have a reference as you look at the Florida State game and our inability to be able to finish that game and be tough enough. I think our team kind of knows we're hanging our hat right now on being able to finish games, finish plays, make more hard plays in the game, be a scrappier, tougher team.

At halftime when you're down by five or whatever and you look at the rebounding total, you're down, they're shooting at an unprecedented percentage in the game, you're not competing hard enough, and we weren't.

I thought our guys were able to pick ourselves up off the ground and get going. Like I said before, it was really important that Race Thompson really gave us an unbelievable boost in the second half. I thought Trayce was ready to play. We missed him a bunch in this game in the first half, and I thought in the second half he commanded more attention.

We were better inside in the second half, which helped us change this game. But just in general our group was disappointed at halftime. We knew how to answer the bell. There wasn't a whole lot of hooting and hollering and what not. It is what it is. We were getting outworked.

I thought our guys did a much better job of responding. We cut the lead fast and then were able to grab a lead, and I think momentum shifted our way.

Q. Do you feel a little bit better about this team with all the threes and the open looks you created these last two games?

ARCHIE MILLER: Yes. I mean, I think we've had a lot of these looks throughout the course of the season, but when the ball is not hitting a shooter's hands on time, on target, in rhythm, and we know where we get them from, you're going to have inconsistent percentages. You're going to have jumbled offense.

And I think here in the last few games, I'm not sure how many assists we had in the North Alabama game, but most of our threes, if you watch us play, they're coming off of

unselfish driving, passing, one mores, extra passes inside out of the post. They know where they are supposed to be getting them and they're hitting them on time.

The more we can stop our team from taking tough challenged two-point shots where we land on the ground and the more we can spray the ball and move it and share it, the better our team is going to be.

You're going to see that we have guys that are going to be able to step up and make more shots. I'm happy with our team. We've just got to keep getting better. We have a coachable group. They're in it for the right reasons. We've worked hard. Haven't had Joe all non-conference and guys have stepped up, and we're going to need more guys to continue to step up and develop.

I count on all these guys as we keep going that we are going to need them. As you guys know, we play in the fiercest league in college basketball this year. It's going to start up very quickly, and the mental challenge it's going to take to get through it with real -- no real time off is going to be something that we're going to have to be ready for.

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