

Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 11, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Arizona Wildcats

Tommy Lloyd

Courtney Ramey

Azuolas Tubelis

Postgame Press Conference



listening to his coach and does it more he's going to be even better. So, yeah, that's all I got for you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Courtney, obviously not your best game shooting-wise, though, but late-game crunch time what was going through your mind?

COURTNEY RAMEY: Just to make a play. I kept telling myself the next shot was going in. Zu found me and my job was to make a play. So I was grateful for the shot to go in.

Q. Your first win in the PAC-12 tournament this year, scored 95 points. Tonight you score 61. What does that say about the multiple ways you guys can win?

TOMMY LLOYD: We're built, we're built to play a lot of styles. It's hard to get in an up-and-down game with UCLA because they're perfectly comfortable walking the ball up the floor and dictating the tempo. And then they're just so good defensively it's hard to score on 'em quick.

I think it says that we have a group that's built to play in this tournament we're about to start in. There's no guarantees and you can't make any assumptions, but I like our ability to win game to game. You know what? I'm just locked in to getting home tonight, going to the Union tomorrow in Tucson, for anybody that wants to show up for our Selection Show. I think it's free to the public. So we'll have all these guys there and figuring out what the draw looks like and getting to work.

Q. You brought that up. The community, they showed up, they showed out, 416 miles from the McKale Center, easily two hours difference from UCLA. They drove out an extra two hours. It felt like a home game in there. So what does the community mean to you and what was that impact like when they were cheering for you?

TOMMY LLOYD: I'll let these guys talk about that.

COURTNEY RAMEY: I mean, that's why I came to this

Arizona - 61, UCLA - 59

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from coach and then take questions.

TOMMY LLOYD: Let me look at these stats. I haven't had a chance to do it here. Oh, we won. I mean, knock-down drag-out. Had a feeling it was going to be that way. So much respect for the UCLA program. Obviously they're going through a lot of injury stuff right now. But they're resilient. I knew it was going to be like that. I wasn't delusional and thought with a couple of their top guys out that it was going to be easy.

And those two players, Tyger and Jaquez, they're unbelievable. Mick does a great job of putting 'em in situations that they can take advantage of their abilities and their talent. So it's hard to play against because they really can kind of joystick and can control the game in a lot of ways and we're kind of the opposite of that. We're much more of a free-flowing team where I want to try to have a cumulative effect in impacting the our opponents.

But they're much more possession by possession and hard to play against. So super proud of our guys, and I had a feeling we were going to win today and -- that doesn't matter, but I was watching some of the other games on TV and there was a few blowouts and I was like, man, don't even think that because there's no chance this game's going to be a blowout. This game is going to be a knock-down drag-out to the last possession and thankfully Courtney stepped up and I think that was plan A, right?

COURTNEY RAMEY: Yeah, that was my plan.

TOMMY LLOYD: No, but the foot work. I tell you, when he hops into his shot he's unbelievable. When he starts



university. It was kind of different at Texas. I think this fan base is the best fan base in the country. For them to drive so far and support us in the tournament why not play your hardest and give your all. So it means everything to us.

AZUOLAS TUBELIS: Yeah, it means a lot. I'm happy that they can come here.

Q. The last-second shot that they took what was going through your mind? They had a lot of time left and you just went through another one earlier in the season. Just your thoughts on that.

TOMMY LLOYD: You had a couple plans. You're up two, shooting a free throw. The first plan was for Zu to make the free throw, and then we were going to sub and set our defense and then try to foul before they got to half court and kind of win the game that way.

And then he missed the free throw and we told our guys, We're up two, now we just got to guard, we got to guard. And they ended up somehow with a throw-ahead three and they're hard-nosed scramble situations for whatever reason to make sure everybody's accounted for. And they threw it ahead to a kid who I think he made a couple threes, Dylan Andrews. I think he had made two threes earlier in the game. And, I mean, that's a down, down two, shooting a three for a freshman is a big shot and he let it rip and fortunately he hit the rim and missed and we were able to come out on top.

Q. We saw Adama and Henri get in the game. What led to that decision?

TOMMY LLOYD: Well, you know, just foul issues and three games in three days. They're both good players and I just, you know, they're good enough to be playing at Arizona, but I just had to make a few decisions to kind of tighten up the rotation because I think tightening up the rotation has helped Cedric get better. It's helped Pelle get better. It's just, it's helped Kylan get better, just because there's a little more certainty in their roles.

So coaching, unfortunately, there's a little bit of give and take, and I love Adama and Henri and they're going to be great players at Arizona, but we're just unfortunately not able to use 'em quite enough now.

But I love our seven guys. I feel really good about our seven guys, about what we can do on the offensive end, what we can do at the defensive end, the versatility we can play with, the different lineups we can play with. I think it's a pretty impressive seven dudes.

Q. Those two guys off the bench provided eight

assists for you, more than anybody else on the team. Can you talk about what that extra play-making over the bench means?

TOMMY LLOYD: Well, it's nice. We're a team that's built on making assists and it's hard to get 'em against UCLA. They don't come easy. I thought Pelle, for the most part -- I'm trying to look at these stats here. He might have played his best game at Arizona. He might have had one or two passes tipped or a travel that I wish we could have back, but he was able to hit the role late in the game, which a lot of our offensive system's built on passing.

So he has the size to do it and he did it and, I mean, and I think that helped kind of get Oumar going a little bit and helped them get in massive foul trouble with their bigs.

COURTNEY RAMEY: I think Pelle made the biggest play of the game by tipping the ball out to Zu and that allowed me to get the shot. So credit to Pelle.

Q. You personally made more free throws than the team did the night before and there were some questions about if that could be an issue. How do you not let misses affect you when you're at the line?

AZUOLAS TUBELIS: Nothing really affects me. I don't know. I miss a free throw, I miss a free throw. It's normal. I'm a basketball player. I'm a human.

Q. You talked about UCLA going through their injuries. You had a couple. Kerr got hurt mid-game, whatever that was. Could you explain that? And when Ballo appeared to have a brace on his hand, that affected him maybe a little. I don't know. Can you talk on that?

TOMMY LLOYD: Yeah, I mean, hey, everybody's banged up this time of year. It's the time of year it is. It's really, really, really hard to play three games in three days. And I think all us coaches if we had our druthers we would get together and find a way to lighten the load on our players in these tournaments.

In college basketball at the highest level, it's hard to have great depth anymore because there's so much parity. To ask six or seven guys or eight guys, whatever it is, to go play high-level basketball three straight nights is a lot, and so I think you're going to see more and more of these teams across the country getting guys banged up.

So hopefully there's a way we can kind of all rally around and get together and figure out a way to kind of lessen the impact on the players so teams can be closer to a hundred percent come tournament time.



Q. Courtney, fifth year in college basketball, first year at Arizona. Talk about what the decision was to come here and how you feel with the decision made, especially after hitting a big shot tonight.

COURTNEY RAMEY: I mean, I'm happy with the decision. It's the most wins I've ever had in a season. Tommy hit me up early in my recruitment and he stuck with me, even when I didn't want to answer the phone. I was thinking about other things. I think him and Kerr made it impossible for me not to come to this university. Come here playing with guys like Zu and Oumar it's something that I can't like take back and use it in the future.

Q. Two seasons, two conference championships. That's pretty significant. I know you're not a bragger, so I'll ask the players. What does it mean to play for a coach like Tommy Lloyd, considering all that's been accomplished in these two years?

TOMMY LLOYD: I don't think they were listening. (Laughing.) That's what I deal with on daily basis.

Q. I was trying to get your coach out of bragging about himself. So what does it mean to play for Tommy Lloyd?

COURTNEY RAMEY: He does a good of just taking attention off himself. He cares about us a lot. He's always going to put us in the best position to win. I think that's number one thing that stuck out for me when I committed here is just how much he cares about us and our development.

He's a player coach. He listens to us, first off, and I mean, I think he's the best coach in the world right now for college basketball, so he deserves everything that he's getting so far. Zu played with him longer than me, but for, I think he's the best coach for me in my final year of college.

AZUOLAS TUBELIS: I agree with him.

TOMMY LLOYD: That's why I love Zu.

Q. You mentioned about the toll on the players. After the Mountain West championship today, one of the Utah State players said he would be in favor of a day off. Would that be a consideration?

TOMMY LLOYD: Well, I just think that, you know, I think we got to step back and, I mean, research is so much better now than it was back in the day, just how often are high-level athletes playing three basketball games in three days, whether it's at the pro level or the college level.

You do it in your MTE tournaments, your pre-season tournaments, sometimes and you do it here. But I think we could all, you know, it would be more beneficial to the players. I don't care if it's two games and a day off and then a final or a quarter final day off, you know, something like that. I think it would be beneficial and it's worth looking at.

But again, hey, it's one of those things. There's costs involved. You have to rent a facility for another day and fans have to travel for another day. And so there's a lot of things that go into it and I know these conference tournaments are important for each conference. I mean, look what Arizona does for the PAC-12 tournament. I mean, they bring fans, which generates revenue, which helps pay bills.

And so I think we just need to take a step back and think about the players' perspective on that. And I would definitely be an advocate for a day off in a quarter final, semifinal, final scenario, however it works out.

COURTNEY RAMEY: I think we deserve a day off tomorrow, so...

TOMMY LLOYD: No, no. We got film, we got practice, and you were 1-5 from three, so we got shooting too. Lift with rounds. Let's go.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you guys.

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