

Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Jerod Haase

Maxime Raynaud

Spencer Jones

Postgame Press Conference



Stanford - 87, Cal - 76 (OT)

JEROD HAASE: It's been a fun ride with this team, and this game was certainly in a position where things weren't going extremely well. They were really shooting the heck out of it from the 3-point line. To say we had our backs against the wall would be an understatement.

The feeling I have right now more than anything else is pride -- obviously winning the game. But more because the approach of how the guys were steady in the huddles. We made some adjustments. They made the adjustments on the court. And we were able to make a heck of a run that second half. Guys stepped up and made plays.

At some point the Xs and Os aren't going to be enough, and there has to be players like these guys here that are out there competing and making plays. And they did that tonight.

Q. You said adjustments. What changed from 63-45 the rest of the way, strategically, and also sort of on the court?

JEROD HAASE: I think the biggest thing was we increased our defensive pressure. Pressured the basketball a little bit, got into them a little more. More aggressive, more physical.

And we did that strategically. Now having said that, I was hoping throughout the rest of the game that -- earlier in the game, even from an X-O standpoint it may not have been tactically what we were doing, we could still do it with what we were doing. I thought we were deficient in that area.

I think we did become more aggressive on the defensive end. We were able to get into the 3-point shooters a little

bit more. We felt they were hunting 3s or a lot of mid-range shots. We didn't have to get in as many rotation situations.

Attempted to make them shoot from the outside, which for the most part they did. We challenged it.

And then maybe the stat that was really telling in the second half -- I don't know the exact number -- I think we outrebounded them by 14. That was certainly something that was a big part.

Q. Spencer, there was a sequence late in the game where on consecutive possessions you blocked Jaylon Tyson. Could you talk about that match-up late in the game?

SPENCER JONES: He's tough, for sure. He's got a bunch of moves. The one thing Coach was telling me is he loves to go right, so trying to send him left. A guy that good, he's going to find a way to get to his spots, which is about squaring up and staying vertical. I've got a little bit of wing span. That helps.

I knew it was going to be a tough defensive assignment. I was gassed for a little bit. And the guys were able to pick it up while I was gassed until I was able to finish it off. So it was good.

Q. Talk about that sequence where Michael Jones hit the 3. What did you guys see on that kind of crazy sequence there?

MAXIME RAYNAUD: I think for a lot of people it feels like a movie, like, oh, we need a 3. We steal the ball, we make a shot. But I think what Coach always talked about is belief. And I think we believe in our players. We believe in our system. We believe that even down to the very last possession to Cal we could still get a steal and get that 3 up.

I think it was about not giving in and obviously when it gets in it becomes a fairytale. But, yeah, it was great to see it go in.



Q. Coach, what comes to mind for you as you played in this conference, you're coaching in this conference, still are, what comes to mind for you as you get ready to depart this conference?

JEROD HAASE: It's a little bit surreal to think that the Pac-12 is coming to an end. Sad is probably the best description. Times are changing so fast in college athletics. And as we know, the realignment with all the schools, the advent of NIL, the number of transfers, and I think the next few years it will continue to change.

To answer your question, it's sad and disappointing. But the reality is it's part of the carnage that's going on all across the landscape right now. And at the end of the day everybody's going to need to move forward and reinvent themselves a little bit.

But right now, as this tournament winds down over the next few days, I would say my single word to describe it is simply sad.

Q. Beyond the strategic adjustments Coach talked about, what were the emotions, what was the mood like when you're down 18. Obviously if you lose the season is over, lots of questions about the future. What was that feeling like and how did you change that?

SPENCER JONES: No, we were definitely down. I mean, they just felt like they hit 10 3s in a row. We were down 18, everything against us.

We talked at halftime if you want to make insurmountable feats you'll have to go through what seems like insurmountable valleys. That was one of them. We knew we had to stick together and we knew the only way through it was to come together.

So I put it on myself to maybe come out and try to get a defensive stop. And I did. That allowed the next person to get a defensive stop, the next person to get a defensive stop and we did it together throughout that entire half.

Q. One of the big adjustments in the second half was Benny Gealer going on that run. He was plus-26 in this game. Can you talk about what he gave you?

MAXIME RAYNAUD: Clearly he brought a spark of energy. He led us all the way, plus 26, as you said. I think he was very good for us, being steady. Even when we're down like this, oftentimes we can just, again, give in and start being stressed, taking quick shots, quick 3s.

He did a great job getting the calls, getting stops, running

our offense. And obviously we did well with him. So we're really proud of him for that.

Q. Maxime, talk about your match-up with Aimaq. You had the better night of the two. What was the key for you winning that match-up? And, Coach, how big of a match-up was that going in that you guys were able to win the big-man battle tonight?

MAXIME RAYNAUD: Obviously he's, like, top five, top 10 rebounder in the country right now. So we talked a lot about boxing out. He averaged 3.5 offensive rebounds a game. He only got one today. I think that's a win for us.

Pretty early on he got in foul trouble because we attacked the paint a lot. Obviously that helped us because we got him get out of the game. That's the way I see it.

JEROD HAASE: One of the keys to the game, we always give the guys two or three keys to the game. We want to be really good 10 feet and in on both ends of the floor -- get the ball inside, try to attack the paint and defensively.

While they have a variety of ways they can score inside, going through him is certainly a key for them. And so both James and Maxine were really good and physical. And he's a heck of a player, but we kept him in check to a certain extent.

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