

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Colorado Buffaloes

JR Payne

Postgame Press Conference

Washington 68, Colorado 54

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Colorado head coach JR Payne.

Coach, if you would please start with an opening statement, then we'll open it up for questions.

JR PAYNE: Yeah, an opening statement? Well, I'm disappointed with the outcome of the ballgame clearly. I thought Washington outplayed us today. Our preparation had been really strong. Our team had been very focused. We were ready to play.

But I think Washington came in with really sort of nothing to lose. They played very loose. I thought we played very tight. The looser they got, the tighter we got. That kind of snowballed in the wrong direction for us.

We never stopped competing or fighting, things like that. I'm proud of our resiliency in that way. But Washington beat us today, so...

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. This team had its best season in a number of years. Do you feel your players put some pressure on themselves because they knew what was at stake, a great opportunity in front of them?

JR PAYNE: Yep, absolutely. I've been a part of several programs that have sort of gone from the bottom and risen. There is a maturation process that happens as your program is built. Unfortunately today we felt another step in that process. So now it's up to us in how we respond to the adversity.

Toriano shared a story with the team about the first time we wore whites at Gonzaga, we had taken over that program, they hadn't won in ever. The first time we wore whites, meaning we were the higher seed, we had a really



good season, similar story to where we are right now, we're kind of coming into our own, had a great season, have some good upperclassmen, things like that. It was sort of the same scenario. The pressure got to us.

I definitely think we felt that. There's been a lot of talk about we can make a run. As a group we really felt like we could. What that would mean if we did make a run, things like that. Of course, as coaches we try to just focus on the one game. Haven't said a single word about our potential next opponent, things like that.

I do think so, I think we felt the pressure of what these next few days could mean for ourselves and our program.

Q. You add that to Washington has always been a tough matchup for you. They hit all their threes. That was uncharacteristic of them. How difficult was it when they started getting some confidence?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, I mean, I thought they came in confident. They shot the lights out from jump, it felt like.

I think we're going to turn on the film and see a lot of things that were very uncharacteristic. I'm not sure where all of that came from. We're going to see things that when we turn on the film we'll see things that we've never worked on, we've never been coached to do. That's the biggest thing that is frustrating because we're such a better basketball team than what we showed today.

If we just kind of play within ourselves, just sort of did our job, kept it simple, and I'm talking from myself all the way down through players that didn't even get on the floor, I think we would have played more effectively.

Q. Will you take an opportunity to try to get another game before potential post-season?

JR PAYNE: I don't think that's permissible. Not in Vegas, no. I don't think there's any teams rescheduling extra games at this point.

Q. As far as tonight, it seemed like every time you tried to make a run, Washington was right there hitting



a couple threes. How difficult was it the way they played tonight?

JR PAYNE: The way that they were shooting the three and the way that we were not guarding the three particularly well made it very difficult to get back in. We'd make a run. Like you said, they'd hit a three, do something well, hit another three. That's pretty tough to trade twos for threes when you're down.

Q. You have had a lot of interruptions this year. We all hope your season is not done, but if you could an early reflection on the interruptions and how your team has been able to handle that this year.

JR PAYNE: Yeah, they've handled it remarkably well. I can't imagine going through all of the disruptions and all of the challenges with any other group of young women.

We have high character, high class, great young ladies that appreciate the opportunity to compete every single day. Our administration, our trainers, our support staff, our coaches, everyone has just done an incredible job of sacrificing to give them an opportunity to play, and our team understands that, values that.

They made great choices all year long to be able to continue to play basketball. I mean, I'm just incredibly proud of them for that. It's been very difficult emotionally and physically for everyone that's played this year.

I'm proud to be their coach and hopefully we'll continue to keep playing.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Have a safe trip home.

JR PAYNE: Thanks, you guys.

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