

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal: Oregon St. vs Loyola Chicago

Saturday, March 27, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Bankers Life Fieldhouse

Loyola Chicago Ramblers Porter Moser

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Oregon State - 65, Loyola Chicago - 58

COACH MOSER: I want to give Coach Tinkle and his staff and his team credit for victory, advancing. He did such a nice job. Those kids played hard, they play the right way. I want to give congratulations to them to open up.

Very hard scene in our locker room. Kids cared so much, invested so much. So very tough when it comes to an end.

Q. You said it was a tough scene in the locker room. What do you tell your guys after an uncharacteristic game like this ends their season earlier than they anticipated?

COACH MOSER: Well, one, I told them to have their heads up. I told them to take all the towels off their head, look up, raise your head. The way they represented -- I sit them, every year I talk about it, to start in the offseason, with the new guys and the old guys, I said you're representing the name on the front of that jersey. We've established a culture that there's a lot that goes into representing that. They did everything on and off the floor you could ask for representing that.

The senior group, I talked about the senior group of 2018 changing the direction of the program. This senior group changed it again to another level. You have to -- you talk about leaving a wake of influence behind you. Those seniors, Lucas and Krutwig, the wake they leave for Loyola basketball -- and we'll have conversations coming out here in the near future for them. But when you say uncharacteristic, I thought we played our tails off. I thought we did a lot of things. We didn't shoot the ball well.

At one point we were 1-for-13 from 3. We missed some layups early. We missed some really good 3 looks that I



think if one or two of them changed it would have been the direction of it. So uncharacteristic, we had low turnovers. We would have had a lot more assists. I thought we had some had some good looks. We just didn't shoot the 3 well. To me that was a big part of it.

And they're big. Everyone you talk to said the exact same thing, they're bigger in person than they are on film. And it is so true. They get that zone going and they are huge. And it was tough to see on it at times, but I thought we did some better things in the second half. But that's what I thought.

Q. You mentioned the zone defense. How difficult was that besides their size that was getting your guys out of their game?

COACH MOSER: Well, they're very big. And they were up top. They had some big guards up top. Their point guard is 6'5". Their center is 7'1". And they're long. They're playing a 6'8" long 4 man. I thought we got in the middle. I could think of a handful of 3s that we looked that are kind of go in.

We made a couple in that flurry, but at one point we were 1-for-13 and then maybe we were 2-for-18 or something like that. And if you make a couple of those 3s, a lot of things loosen up. And we just we didn't. We caught the ball a couple times down there. But anytime with a zone, if you can knock down some shots, I thought we were getting in the middle. We got down to the baseline a couple times. We got in the baseline in the first half a number of times. And then they closed the wall. When they wall you up it's a big wall.

So I thought they did a nice job controlling the pace with their press in the first half. I thought we were a little more aggressive the second, which we needed to be. And I thought our guys came out. I thought we guarded. They made some tough shots at times. Made some -- they made a really nice shot off that flare. They do a nice job.

Q. Can you put into words just what Luke and Cameron have meant to you and to the program?

COACH MOSER: Very hard to put into words when you love two people like that and they gave everything



unselfishly. I mean, you talk about the quintessential student-athlete, The Mount Rushmores in our program. They're both like A students. They're both like A citizens. They're both, you know, unbelievable players.

I mean, just some of the toughest -- that Lucas, that one where he ripped the ball, like, out of three people's hands, then kicked it out for a 3. I mean, Kruts, those kids are winners, toughness. They have the intangible of a winner. That's what you want to recruit. That's what you want to coach and that's what you want to be friends for life.

And I don't know what the future holds with them. Like I've said many times, everyone asks me about the extra year. I haven't spoken with them. There was an urgency about this year. And we made a heck of a run. And fell short today. But these young men, who they are and what they mean to me and this program, no words, no words as of now. They're unbelievable human beings.

Q. I've seen your name pop up a lot with job openings around the country. And I know it's fresh off the loss and the season. But have you given any thought to staying at Loyola or looking elsewhere?

COACH MOSER: You hit the nail on the head. It's fresh off the loss. And this one stings. All my thoughts are with these guys and this program. So, no, I haven't. And I just need to take a breath with these guys. And it's been very, very tough, when you build relationships with these guys and you see the season end. So you hit the nail on the head. It's fresh of a loss. And I'm going to digest it with these guys.

Q. I know it didn't go how you guys wanted to but been to the Sweet 16 twice in four seasons. What do you think that means for the stature of your program (indiscernible)?

COACH MOSER: It's just your standards and -- your standards and your expectations, where you want to go as a program. People thought -- and we fell short of getting back to where we were and farther. But, man, it wasn't because of a lack of effort or lack of doing a lot of things.

The standards, I think, that we've set, I think people see the Loyola name now and I think they think different things about it than they did six, seven, eight years ago. And so a lot to be proud of. We're going to look back on this. I know we'll look back on this -- it's just tough. It's hard to give up. You invested so much, you believe in so much, some things here and there. But hard to digest right now, put into words, because you're hurting.

These kids are hurting, because you do, you have dreams.

And when they come to an end, it's tough. It's tough.

But I hang my head high. These young men should be so -- probably remembered, will be bonded for life. What they do and what they represent and how they do things and to get back to the Sweet 16 when everyone didn't think so, except us, it's tough to end. It's tough to end. But we will look back.

Q. You know the deal, every opening in the Midwest they're going to look at you. IU has one, if and when they call you are you going to tell them you're interested in talking or not?

COACH MOSER: Like I said, and I'm sorry you get one question and you had to use it on that one, because I need to digest this. I've had my blinders on and given 110 percent of Porter Moser to the Rambler team. I've blocked out the noise. I need time to digest this with these guys.

And, so, that's all I can tell you right now is I have blinders on. I know a lot of things were swirling outside around me. I can't help that. I can't control that. The only thing I was focusing on is giving 110 percent of my preparation, my energy, my love to these players through this time. And now I just need to sit back and digest it for a second.

Q. I was wondering if you could touch on what's to come for this team, the future of the team, whether or not Cameron and Lucas stay or whoever stays, where is the ceiling for this team in the future?

COACH MOSER: That's what's great. Every team can create their new identity. We have some really great young players here, some who have so much value but you couldn't see it in the minutes played because we were a deep older team. We have really good younger players here. We've got really good recruits coming in.

So I just think we're going to -- sustaining it that's been a big thing. We only had two players from our Final Four team on this team. All new guys. And that's the thing is recruiting to this culture, recruiting to this program.

And I think that's something that -- the future is bright. The future is bright, because when you establish the culture and the way things -- that's going to be a benefit of Krut and Lucas and all those guys that four years ago -- Clayton Custer, Donte Ingram, Marques Townes, Ben Richardson, Aundre Jacksons, poured into the younger guys. And now they've they had their chance.

And now it's the same thing with those guys. Like I said, we haven't had those conversations yet about whether they're going to use their option to come back or not. But

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

my advice, it's going to be all about what's best for them. And if they want to, you know, that's a great thing for Loyola basketball; if they don't, it's a great thing because they left their imprint on this program.

Q. Famously hard in this event, it's always sad. But maybe in 2018 you approximated a championship of sorts by getting to the Final Four, cutting down nets and all that. When it ends more suddenly, maybe more, I don't know, if it's -- if you went out there today and said we had a great chance to win today, is it different that it's just the suddenness of it, the harshness of it on a day like today?

COACH MOSER: The pain's real, the pain's the same. We go in there chasing every game. We didn't take our foot off the pedal or anything. We're playing the Pac-12 champions. We have a lot of respect. We knew that -- the same thing when we played Illinois. A lot of people didn't expect us to win that. We believe we can win.

We believed we can win today. We didn't. And hats off to Oregon State. And so that's -- when we lost to Michigan in the Final Four, I had just a pit in my gut that coaching that group's over, that we didn't win the national championship.

I had that same feeling today, but so thankful that these guys, what they invested, especially for this year, what they've had to overcome, the twist and turns through this whole year to get back here, to get here and to do what we did the first two games, beating the ACC champs, the Big Ten champs, fell short against the Pac-12 champs.

So there's always a pit in your stomach right now. I mean, that's why we're in it. We're in it to advance. I don't know how else to answer that question. We gave it our all. I'll look back on the year and dwell on it. But when you lose, the finality of every season, is tough.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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