

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021
Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Miami Hurricanes

Jim Larrañaga

Postgame Press Conference



how do you sum up the season in its totality with everything that went on? Obviously having a little bit of an inspired run here in the ACC Tournament.

Georgia Tech 70, Miami 66

JIM LARRAÑAGA: Well, that was a heck of a fight. I thought we gave it all we had right up until the final buzzer. What killed us were the turnovers in the second half. We struggled to complete passes against their defense, and those turnovers led to easy baskets. Our half-court defense was pretty good, but their ability to convert -- we had 18 turnovers and they scored 16 points off of those turnovers.

Nysier Brooks, I thought played a fabulous game. They started doubling him, which really took his scoring away, but he ended up with 19 points and six rebounds. We couldn't get Isaiah going. He ended up with just 12 points. Kam had 25, which was a great game for him. But we needed just more offense and fewer turnovers, more shots, fewer turnovers.

Q. As far as Isaiah goes, do you think it was more what they were doing on him or do you think he was just tired, off, ran out of gas? What do you think happened with him today?

JIM LARRAÑAGA: I would say there were at least three things, if not more. One, he was being guarded by Jose Alvarado, the Defensive Player of the Year who puts a lot of pressure on you.

Two, he got a lot of help on any of Isaiah's drive. That's why -- Isaiah normally can get to the rim, but their zone really protects the lane, so Isaiah couldn't get into the lane to get it.

Third, I'd have to say the third game in three days, him missing free throws was kind of an indication to me that he was a little bit fatigued.

Q. What did you tell your players after this game, and

JIM LARRAÑAGA: Yeah, I just talked to the guys about how proud I was about the effort that they continued to give. These last four games have been the best basketball we've played. We've gotten contributions from a lot of different guys. Nysier Brooks in particular has really shown that he can score the ball when we get it to him in some good locations. His scoring in the first half really gave us the four-point lead. But when they started doubling him, that option was no longer available, and then it's up to the other guys to step up.

I was very, very proud of them. These last four games, the best basketball we've played all season.

Q. I'm wondering how much does the last few days ease the sting of what has been a very frustrating and difficult season?

JIM LARRAÑAGA: You know, I look at things maybe differently than the media does for sure, at least I hope I do. I look at it one day at a time, one game at a time. We win a game, I put that behind me and start preparing for the next one. Every game is different in its entirety, different defenses we face, different offenses we have to use, different players who play well, different players who don't play quite as well. And when that game is over, we put it behind us and move to the next game.

In this case, this is the last game of this season for us, so we'll put this game behind us. We'll look back and feel like, hey, we ended this season in the ACC Tournament, playing our best basketball. And hopefully we can move forward looking forward to next year with hopefully a healthy team for the first time in a number of years, and if we do that, I think the results can be better.

But our league is very, very good from top to bottom. You can see teams get better (inaudible) twisted an ankle. If he goes out of the game, this game changes completely. Just like us losing Sam Waardenburg early, Chris Lykes,



Rodney Miller. All of a sudden, you're playing a game with less ammunition. And to fight in this league, you need every player healthy and playing well.

And if you do -- I think Florida State and Virginia, just look at their rosters. How many guys have been hurt in missed games? I think M.J. Walker missed one. I don't know about Virginia, maybe Woldetensae missed a couple because of COVID or something. Don't quote me on that. But when you can keep your starting five intact and you can keep your rotation for the most part healthy and playing together, you can build throughout a season.

I mean, look at Kam McGusty. He played the point today, scored 25 points. He hasn't played the point that many minutes in his entire career. He's always played along -- even when he was at Oklahoma, he played with Trae Young. He comes to Miami, he plays with Chris Lykes. Those guys handle the ball and make a majority of the decisions.

To think of the job he did tonight and think of the job that Nysier Brooks did in these last four games, the season that Isaiah Wong had were -- in my mind, he was as good as any player in the conference. You can look at any player. Moses Wright, great player; Jose Alvarado, great player; Michael DeVoe, great player. All those guys that we just played against. Isaiah Wong had a sub-par game for him, but I wouldn't trade him for anybody.

Q. I want to know what's next for you and these players now? What are these next couple weeks going to look like? I know you mentioned it'll take a couple weeks before some players make any decisions on coming back, but do you have any indication whether guys want to come back with this team next season?

JIM LARRAÑAGA: Well, normally after a game, the last game of the season, I might sit down with all the seniors. But after a season like this with the circumstances being so different where guys could actually come back for a fifth or even a sixth year, we want to give them that option. And it's going to take them some weeks to investigate their own circumstances.

Like for a fourth-year senior, let's say, like a Chris Lykes, would he want to come back and get his Master's Degree because he'll earn his undergraduate degree in May? All right. Would he want to explore the possibility of playing professional basketball? There are probably going to be plenty of agents that would love to represent him.

So he and all the other seniors on our team have to do their due diligence, research their own circumstances, and then determine what they want their journey to be next. Is

it come back to college? Is it turn pro? Is it do something different?

I look at Rodney Miller. He just got his real estate license. He might want to forget basketball and go make a ton of money in real estate because I think the real estate market is going to boom.

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