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Florida - 69
Alabama - 61

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

FLORIDA

THE MODERATOR: We'll take an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

COACH DONOVAN: First of all, we're excited for the opportunity to play again tomorrow. Obviously playing Kentucky, it will be our third time, and here twice in less than a week. So on a quick turnaround, I think that's positive for our guys, because there's at least a familiarity for us where you've had a game and you're playing again tomorrow at noon.

There's not a lot of time to prepare. Sometimes a little bit more difficult when you play against a team that you haven't seen since let's say the middle of January. So, these guys will be a little bit familiar with it. The quick turnaround, we're excited we get the opportunity to play.

I thought in the game today I thought Dorian played a great game all the way around. He played, did a lot of really good things. And I really thought from an offensive standpoint, we struggled at times in the first half. I thought a couple of Eli Carter's threes and some of the things he did offensively helped us.

Had the lead going into half and then I thought we played pretty well in the second half. Our defense was pretty good. We were able to get some stops and did some good things. So, as I said earlier, just happy to be able to move on.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll take questions for either of the student-athletes.

Q. Talk about why you were able to be so effective, especially on the offensive

rebounding part of it. I think you had six in the game.

DORIAN FINNEY-SMITH: Just coming out playing with a lot of energy. I knew if we get in a scramble offensively that gives me a chance to offensive rebound.

Q. For both you guys, even though Mike had a 1-10 night, just having him out on the floor, how that spaced things up against that zone.

DORIAN FINNEY-SMITH: Michael Frazier on the court, it just opened up the floor. It gives us driving lanes. Tonight wasn't knocking them down, but I'm confident he's going to knock down the next one.

ELI CARTER: When he's on the floor, he just gives us a great piece in our offense. Someone we can kick the ball out to every single time. Someone that we have trust in making those shots.

Q. For both you guys, when you guys see another team out in zone, is it just kind of like a green light for you guys to shoot over it?

DORIAN FINNEY-SMITH: If we're open, I just want to shoot the ball with confidence. I hope that the players on my team do the same. We move the ball, you get a good shot, just shoot it with confidence.

ELI CARTER: Usually when we see teams in zone, we want to get the ball in the teeth of the defense, kick outs, we have some pretty good shooters on our team, so guys will take those shots when they're open.

Q. Dorian, talk about since you've come back from your suspension, has there been a renewed desire to want to really finish strong this season?

DORIAN FINNEY-SMITH: I guess you could say that. I just wanted to come out, since the suspension, pick up my energy. I got the players

on the team, they did a good job of supporting me through tough times, and that's why I just want to come out and play with that energy for these guys, play for these guys.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you. You can return to the locker room.

We'll take questions for coach.

Q. What would you say to any Alabama fans or neutral observers who suggest that Anthony Grant should not be retained?

COACH DONOVAN: Well, listen, I don't think I'm biased. I've been around the game for a long time. I don't think that people have any idea how great of a Coach Anthony Grant is, and I saw it firsthand.

I would say that the one thing that I respect about Anthony is he took over a very challenging and difficult situation. He had a couple of very talented players that really kind of went through some disciplinary problems. He's obviously battling with some injuries right now. He had a really good player that transferred out.

I think Anthony's been playing catch up a lot. I think that in terms of X's and O's, coaching, recruiting, all those kind of things, he's phenomenal. He's one of the best coaches I've been around.

I heard his remarks there at the end and I think that I understand where he's coming from from the perspective that I think he wants to digest and take everything in himself personally to evaluate everything. Anthony's always been a very, very well thought-out guy as it relates to that.

I do know that there's a lot of support internally in their athletic department for Anthony. I think that those people understand the man that they have and I think that -- listen, we all want to win and I get that point. But I think one of the things that sometimes bothers me in coaching more than anything else is there's never, ever anything that's ever talked about of what coaches do in terms of developing these guys into young men.

I would tell you, as a parent, there's not a coach in the country I would want my son to play for than Anthony Grant. And you know what? Even if they did not have a winning season or he didn't have a successful four years there, him becoming a man, as a father, would be a lot more important than if he won a lot of games, he cut down some nets, but you know what, he absolutely didn't learn anything about growing up and maturing.

I think that's one of the things that happens is you go to a game, you go to an event, you watch, you say, win or lose, but you don't see the things that go on behind the scenes to help a young man grow and develop and prepare him for college.

If people are upset with the outcomes, that they should have won more, I get it. But you're not going to tell me that as a guy, that those kids are not better off for playing for Anthony Grant.

So, I think if Anthony stays, doesn't stay, they let him go, I think it's the biggest mistake. Let's put it this way, Alabama better hope he comes back, that's what I would say.

Q. What will the next 20 or so hours look like for you guys?

COACH DONOVAN: Well, I heard there's a really, really good blues music, country music. We're going to go over there, the staff a little bit. Is Brockway here? We should go karaoke with him a little bit later tonight. We'll do that (smiling).

No, as I said earlier, I think one of the things is, because we played them last Saturday, it is less than a week away, so there's not a lot you can prepare for. But we have played them.

I think we're the only team so far that will have played them three times this year. So at least there's some familiarity on a quick turnaround. But we'll try to make some corrections, things that we need to get better at and build on. Try to do some different things. Not so much differently, but try to do things better. Try to concise things for our guys where we're not overwhelming them in such a short period of time.

I like the fact that we play at noon, that our guys, instead of playing a night game, by the time they go to bed, it's 2 or 3 in the morning. At least they can unwind the rest of the afternoon and then get ready to play tomorrow.

Q. Besides the missed threes, is this about what you're looking for on offense from this team?

COACH DONOVAN: Yeah, I thought that we moved the ball pretty well. I felt like that offensively, we had been getting better. I thought we had some really good shots from the 3-point line that didn't go down. Michael Frazier, he had two shots blocked that I thought he should have shot-faked on.

I thought Eli got off to a good start and

thought he could have a good offensive night, but he did knock down some shots for us.

Dorian played well. But I thought offensively we had really good ball movement, player movement, made really good decisions.

Q. So, from 3-point range, you weren't bothered with all the misses?

COACH DONOVAN: Well, I mean, it's hard for me to be bothered with misses there. I wish I could control that. But sometimes it goes in and it doesn't go in. I just try to look at the quality of shots we're getting. I thought we got pretty decent shots.

We have been a team that has struggled and have been very, very streaky shooting the basketball this year. In the last seven or eight games, you take our best 3-point shooter off our team, then it's really been challenging. He obviously didn't shoot the ball particularly well this afternoon.

Q. During the last 20, 30 minutes, Greg Sankey was named the new commissioner of the SEC. Your take on that.

COACH DONOVAN: I love Greg. I think it's a great hire. I think he's really smart. I think he's bright. I think he gets the big picture. He's been involved in a lot of different committees. I think he's got a really, really good pulse on the NCAA. I think he's got a really good pulse on where college athletics is moving. Just.

In my interaction with Greg, I couldn't be any happier for our league because I really believe they hired a great guy.

Q. I know it was at the other end, but did you get a good look at the fifth foul on Rodney Cooper?

COACH DONOVAN: I did not see it. The charge play? I thought in terms of our guy being there early enough, I thought he was there. I couldn't tell if our guy squared up. But it's hard for me to comment on it just because, as you say, it was at the other end of the floor.

Q. Could you just talk about have you seen a better energy out of Dorian since he has come back from the suspension? He's put up some pretty good numbers and obviously today dominated the game.

COACH DONOVAN: I think that's the one thing, I think if I look at our team, really every guy that's come back from our team last year has

gotten better. They have gotten somewhat better statistically. I think Dorian so much last year was up and down. He would have one really good game and four or five games where he kind of disappeared. I think his consistency's been so much better. I think that's just a sign of him growing and maturing as a player.

But when he's playing like that, he's a real matchup problem because what you can do with him is, he's so smart that you can move him around to different positions and he understands what's going on.

We played him tonight at the small forward spot some, played him at the power forward spot. We even played him at the center. He's so smart, he can absorb anything from anywhere. When you try to move him around and kind of put him in different positions, it helps him maintain a level of aggressiveness and puts him in a situation where he's going against a smaller person or a maybe a guy that's not quick enough to keep up with him.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

COACH DONOVAN: Thank you.
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