

March 12, 2015



Tennessee - 67
Vanderbilt - 61

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

VANDERBILT

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

COACH STALLINGS: Yeah, we played pretty well for 33 minutes and then just couldn't buy a shot at the end. Last seven minutes, we thought we had the game where we wanted it and had some really good open looks and we missed. They started making theirs and they became very aggressive and we got tentative and they got the game flipped in their favor.

So we're obviously disappointed. We congratulate them. They played well, particularly the last few minutes. We just allowed them to become the aggressor there at the end last five or six minutes of the game and that was our undoing.

THE MODERATOR: Take your questions for either of the student-athletes.

Q. There's been a lot of talk of you guys how young you are this year, inexperience. Do you think you guys got a little tight there in the last few minutes? Do you think inexperience was a factor at all?

WADE BALDWIN: I don't think that was the case at all. We got really good looks, Riley, myself, Matthew and the bigs, they made great passes out. Today we just weren't hitting our shots - myself especially. Matthew and Riley and Luke, who have been great shooters for the last 10 games, we just didn't execute on those shots.

Q. Damian, you obviously had a really good night. Was the ball not coming to you

those last six, seven minutes? Did they make any type of adjustment late on you?

DAMIAN JONES: No, it was just that we were just going through the offense. We got good shots in and that's what matters. But we just didn't get the stops on the other end.

Q. Either player, you guys know you're kind of in contention for a NIT bid. Do you feel like this is the end of your season or do you want to play a little longer?

WADE BALDWIN: I never want to stop playing. I was real emotional after this loss and I don't want to think that this is the last game I play my freshman year. I don't want our seniors to go out, especially James Siakam, who has played a hell of a season, for this to be his last game...

We're crossing our fingers trying to go to the NIT and make the Vanderbilt fans and ourselves happy.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll excuse you fellows. You can return to the locker room.

Take questions for coach.

Q. All three of the games against Tennessee this year have been hard fought and sort of bizarre. Is there a reason you can point to for sort of the strangeness of some of these games?

COACH STALLINGS: No, not really. You would think the law of averages would kind of take hold at some point and it would just be a normal sort of game. But all three of them were, as you said, pretty odd.

So, again, it's frustrating when you control the game for most of the day and then don't do enough to win it. But we got tentative offensively. The question, I think we got tentative and I think that was apparent. I think that that is a sign of youth.

I'm sure Wade doesn't want to think of it that way, but that's certainly the way it appeared.

Q. As far as Wade's foul trouble, looked like he was guarding Josh Richardson a lot in the first half. How did maybe his foul trouble make it more difficult on the team defensively?

COACH STALLINGS: Well, we had to put some other guys on Richardson and we, in the first half, did a very good job on him. Then he started getting loose in the second half.

But he's a good player and that's what experience does, I think, for you in a tournament setting, is someone that can kind of take over the game a little bit like he did there.

But the game really came down to the last five or six minutes. They would get an open shot and make it and we would get an open shot and we missed. Riley had looks, Matt had looks, Luke was wide open twice. Wade was wide open twice. Those are all guys that have been just making them and making them and making them. But when we didn't make them, our defense wasn't good enough to keep us where we needed to be.

So, I guess that's just the way it goes.

Q. Can you kind of see the potential in this team of how well they played in the first 33 minutes and then kind of the limitations and how they finished off there?

COACH STALLINGS: Well, I don't know about the limitations. I think that as I've said all season long, I've felt and I feel very positive about the future of this team and the future of our program. We have got some really good young players.

Obviously, we hope that we get to keep playing. But in terms of the limitations, the only limitation we have right now in my opinion is that of what you really can't do anything about until you earn it and that's experience.

We just need to continue to grow and mature. We have done a lot of growing and a lot of maturing over the course of this season. I'm really proud of our basketball team. It's been awhile since we have tasted defeat, to be honest with you. I told them after the game I appreciated that.

So they have done all that we have asked them to do and I'm proud of them and very, very optimistic about their future.

Q. You guys had four fouls on three of their post players with 10 to play. What happened from there that either you guys

didn't take advantage of it or they adjusted? Seemed like you kind of had them on the ropes with what Jones was doing at that point.

COACH STALLINGS: Well, again, we were on our offense, and depending upon what lineup is in the game, and each guy has shots that they know they can take and know they can make. I'm sure they did a little bit more to try to keep the ball out of his hands at that point so they didn't have to deal with the fouls. We may have not done as good a job of getting it into him.

So, again, I don't have any complaints about the quality of the looks that we had in the last seven minutes of the game. We got good looks at the basket and we just didn't capitalize.

Q. When you say your guys played tentative down the stretch, what can you as a coach do or did you try to sort of loosen them up when you noticed that?

COACH STALLINGS: Well, you just tell them, Hey listen, you know, this part of the game's just like the first part of the game was. You just got to step into your shot and keep trying to make the plays that we know we make. You have to play to win. You can't play not to lose.

But again, it really came down to them seemingly making every open shot there in the last few minutes of the game. So you got to give credit to them.

Q. Why the decision not to foul down five a little bit sooner when UT got possession with about 40 seconds left?

COACH STALLINGS: Well, the guys that had the ball were really good foul shooters. We should have had a steal. The ball went right by our finger. We were trying to trap the ball out of Richardson's hand and when we did, we could have had a steal.

We were trying to get a turnover without putting them on the line again at least momentarily.

Q. Tennessee had 17 points off of turnovers tonight. Did you think that maybe your team's turnovers put your defense in a particularly bad situation?

COACH STALLINGS: When I look down and we have 12 for a game, we want that number as close to 10 as we can get it. 12's not a terrible number. You're going to turn it over some against them, that's what they do. They play for steals.

And again, the 13th different way of saying the same thing, but we ran good enough offense and we just didn't make the shots that this team normally makes and we have grown accustomed to making. That's nobody's fault, because some nights you're going to shoot it well and some nights you're not.

We took the right shots, we had the right guys taking the right shots and so we just didn't make them tonight. Tennessee did. So you have to give them credit.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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