

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday March 9, 2017

Rick Barnes Admiral Schofield Tennessee

Georgia - 59, Tennessee - 57

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to continue on for Tennessee. We'll ask Coach Barnes for some general thoughts on the team. We'll take questions for Admiral and excuse him back to the locker room.

COACH BARNES: I'm really proud of our team. I thought they played their hearts out today and didn't have a great day shooting the ball but had to fight through some foul trouble. But in the end I just thought our guys, wasn't a time I didn't think they competed.

And Georgia, I've said before, I think they're an NCAA worthy team. I think that they're experienced, that they've been around, they played. At the end of the game, we knew what they were going to do in terms of they were going to play through. Overall I thought our guys defended well enough. And we finally got Grant in the game early where we wanted to establish something inside. We were searching offensively, but just with our determination.

And again, I just thought we played hard enough. And look at it at the end, believe me, we could get that same look, we would do it every single time. There's nobody on our team that works any harder in the gym. He's a shooter, he's proven he's not afraid to take that shot. We came down to the last possession so we can drive it and get a 2. Keep probing and take the best shot we can get. We probably turned down one or two before that, but we ended up with him with a great look. And I hate it for him because nobody works any harder than him. He'll get another chance next situation and he'll knock it down for us.

THE MODERATOR: If you have a question for Admiral, raise your hand.

Q Admiral, if you could just describe that last sequence where you got the shot, just what was kind of happening there? Looked like it was a little scramble there, little disorganization.



ADMIRAL SCHOFIELD: Well, basically Coach drew up in the timeout that, you know, we run a side ball screen where we spread the floor. And we got a couple looks to go to the basket, but Georgia was great on defense and covering that up. So, you know, we tried to work the ball around a little bit. We had a lot of time on the clock. We had a couple looks that we turned down. The ball got back to Jordan Bone.

Jordan Bone drew about three defenders, my defender included, and he was great recognizing that and kicked it out to me and got to knock that shot down. Like Coach said, I work on it often and it was a great look. We were looking to go for the win. It was a great look.

Q Admiral, you obviously went 2-9 from the field. What do you feel like as a team, why wasn't the ball falling are you guys today?

ADMIRAL SCHOFIELD: You know, just how basketball goes. Sometimes the shots are falling and sometimes they're not, and you know you got to keep competing at a high level and keep going out and believing in each other, trying to get easy looks. And tonight, you know, just even layups wouldn't go for both teams. Just tough shooting night for us.

We usually a high volume shooting team, make a lot of shots. And the main thing for us, I believe that we competed as hard as we could. The ball just didn't go in. We're not going to change how we compete on a defensive end or offensive end. We got to keep shooting and it will fall. I just didn't fall.

THE MODERATOR: Other questions for Admiral? Hands up? Anyone. Admiral, you can return to the locker room. Thank you for coming. We'll continue with Coach Barnes. Hands up, questions for Coach Barnes.

Q Coach, the end of the game Robert was on the bench. Was that just health, the knees?

COACH BARNES: You guys watched it. He was struggling. He has these -- I've said before the last three weeks, four weeks, he's had to nurse the knee and he just -- he didn't have it. And so we felt like that's what we needed to go with. And Robert has

meant a lot to our program. He's been as unselfish as any player I've coached. Believe me, he's had a tough night to end the season, but he stayed with it for us.

Q You talked about handling expectations. Probably more to start next season based on what you guys did this year, how do you handle it better from the jump next year?

COACH BARNES: I hope there's a whole lot more expectations starting next year. We needed a game -- we threw a freshman and sophomore on the court, and it was from the fact you could have been in the locker room, you would see how heartbroken they were that that didn't happen. That's how quickly this ends.

We'll get together again and go back and evaluate everything that we've done this year. But we want expectations around our program. We should -- again, that's what we want and -- but the fact is, so much for this group this year was a learning experience and they created some of those expectations. And like I said before, we didn't handle them. But I can tell you this, the last three halves that we've played we played like a team that knew what it takes to play at this level.

And, you know, you got to give Georgia credit. They've got their seniors. Maten came back today and was a factor, Frazier. Look at those guys. That's who they played through. That's what you expect from a senior team with guys that have been around.

We're going to get to that eventually, but again I'm excited. I'm looking forward to getting started right now because I know we're going to add some more pieces to our program. We're going to have a different look. But we know that we've got it going in the right direction.

Q Rick, today was another case here in February, March where instead of being in the 70s or 80s like y'all were so many times earlier, you're in the 50s. What combination of factors is that?

COACH BARNES: I think two teams really guarding. I think when you get into post-season play, I do think the defense is just take it to another level and when you go back, when we didn't play as well against these guys, they beat us in Knoxville and South Carolina, we weren't as good defensively and they were. They were better.

I think today you saw two teams that were really fighting each other without giving up any ground on the defensive end. And so that has a lot to do with it. And with us early, I did feel like we had some guys that were tentative early, taking shots. And then you turn down a good shot, you think about how we started the

game, we had missed a couple that we wanted. Lot of it happened with Grant. Last game we played through him a lot. He got himself in foul trouble early. And from that point, we were really scrambling to try to get the ball where we wanted it and doing something with it and -- but again, I think both teams, when you look at it, in the second half they shot the ball better than we did.

We got to get more consistent with our offense. There's no question about it. That goes back to at this time of year, you watch Georgia play all their games, they pretty much had -- other than when they had to patch it together, you know what they're going to do every time down the floor and you kind of know what their players are going to do. We never got into that routine with this group. And you guys watched our guard play all year, it was inconsistent.

We've had to work with Robert's situation, Jordan Bowden was there. Ever since the last game last week and a half, we had "Christian Bard" at the point. He didn't get to play today. We haven't been consistent with our offensive rhythm. We have to get that.

Q Rick, were y'all able to see any review on that call where the ball went out of bounds off Bone? It looked like it was a bang-bang call and maybe a reviewable one in that situation. Did y'all ask for a review or anything?

COACH BARNES: I think he said he was out of bounds with it. I mean, I don't think he thought he needed to see it, you know. I would have reviewed the verticality of the call if I could.

Q Rick, Jordan Bone today kind of goes through the ups and downs. Was it a good sign to see him playing and make an impact the way he did?

COACH BARNES: Yeah. You know what, Jordan, you know, I've told him, he's really had a couple good days of practice which that's where it all starts. And his biggest thing he has to understand is, you know, you can't get tired really playing this game. The best players I've been around, they don't get tired. And that's been one of the biggest things he's had to learn to fight through this year, how to fight through fatigue, both mentally and physically. Believe me, he has improved tenfold when you get back to where we started in the fall, in the spring, even the summer.

But I think he showed us all at times he has the ability, and now it's up to us to get him to understand the game. He's got to also let it go, got to let things go on that out-of-bounds play. He wanted to keep rehashing it. At that point in time, you can't. You got to get on to the next play. It's been a learning experience for him.

He missed nine games at the worse possible time you could miss them, but he has showed up enough. And I expect him to come back, and I expect them all to come back and be much better players than they are right now.

Q Coach, Jordan Bone and Lamonte Turner, probably the only two guys who were hot on the floor tonight or shot well. Was there any thought of getting them the ball in the final possession?

COACH BARNES: They had the ball. They had it. We were going to spread the floor and told them if you can come off the screen and go score it and then they each all touched it. But, you know, again, in that situation we didn't have to settle for a 3. We were wanting to spread the floor and get them if we could. Both of them should have been more aggressive. I think they should have got in the crack as opposed to playing vertical. That's one of the reasons we haven't run a lot of ball screens all year. They had refused to create that contact that you need. Even with all that said and done, believe me, we could have ran a play you like to be able to shoot a little bit sooner to maybe have a second chance to rebound it. We got a great look at it. Been a great way to win it, but the fact is, we wanted to be aggressive. And again both of them I know touched the ball the last possession. I thought Jordan should have come off more aggressive, he was looking to pass it. I thought he should have, with his speed, could have gotten down the lane. He actually did one time. He's got to learn to use his speed.

Lamonte is still trying to figure out what's a good shot and when to shoot it, when not. He should know that by now. At least he's not afraid to shoot the ball. I thought a couple guys today were a little bit hesitant.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.