

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday March 10, 2017

Kim Anderson Kevin Puryear Terrence Phillips Missouri

Ole Miss - 86, Missouri - 74

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with Missouri. We'll ask Coach Anderson for some general comments on the game. Then we'll take your questions just for the two student-athletes. And then we'll finish up with Coach Anderson. Would you begin?

COACH KIM ANDERSON: Yeah. First of all, you know, I thought Ole Miss tonight just had maybe a little bit more energy. Not that our guys weren't giving it all they had, but I thought they came out and played extremely hard.

We really, really struggled on the boards especially early on. But we hung in. We hung in. We fouled too much, you know. They shot 47 free throws, we shot 13. So, obviously we -- you can't foul that many times and expect to win a game. But I was proud of the way we hung. I've been proud all year. And we never could get it back below 10. We never -- we get around 10 and they get it back up. We never could get it back down.

So, I was again proud of these guys and proud of their effort last night and tonight. I'm just not sure we had a full tank of gas. I think we struggled a little bit. So, with that I'll let you guys go ahead.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take your questions for Kevin or Terrence, if you'll raise your hand and get a floor mike to you.

Q. This one for either one. What was the locker room like and what did Coach say to you guys immediately after the game?

KEVIN PURYEAR: Just that he's proud of us and, of course, you know, happy that he had the opportunity to live out his dream and coach us. And, you know, of course it was emotional and we have a great deal of love for him and, you know, he always has and always



will have our best interests. But, you know, that's all I can say. It was emotional and, you know, it's never easy saying goodbye.

Q. Kevin or Terrence, with all the fouls, almost looked like it was just grit, scrap, whatever you guys could do to kind of prolong the game and fight. Did it feel like that was just -- you guys kind of trying to stave off the end of the year, all those fouls and the chipiness there.

TERRENCE PHILLIPS: We went down fighting. That's how we've been all year. This is a team that just never gives up no matter how much we're down, whether we're down 30, 40, we just never give up. I mean, fouls go that way with the officials. At the end of the day, we kept fighting for this man right here.

Q. It seemed like there were times you guys got frustrated with some of the calls that went against you. Did the emotion of knowing any game could be Coach's last feed into any of that at all?

KEVIN PURYEAR: I mean, regarding the officiating, I don't really have anything to say about that. What was the second part of the question?

Q. Did knowing it could be Coach's last game feed into any frustration you guys might have felt at times?

KEVIN PURYEAR: I wouldn't say so. We always fight. You know, our effort is always there. I mean, it just so happens to be his last game coaching us and of course it's sad and we're all really upset about it, and, you know, of course we got to scratch and claw and do everything we can to get ourselves back in the game.

Q. Can both of you guys just kind of address what the next -- the uncertainty of the next few weeks are like? Obviously, I mean you came here to play for Coach and you haven't been through something like this before.

THE MODERATOR: Kevin.

KEVIN PURYEAR: This is all fresh for all of us. The best thing we can do is just kind of stay away for a little bit and sweat out these next few weeks and stay together, honestly. And, you know, I wish I could tell you what the future holds, but unfortunately I can't. But, you know, all we're going to do is just wait and see

what happens.

THE MODERATOR: Same for Terrence.

TERRENCE PHILLIPS: I didn't hear what Kevin said. We're going to take some time off, rest our bodies, and then just kind of see what the future holds for us as far as the coach and everything, and then once we figure out, we'll get going again.

THE MODERATOR: One more question for either. Anybody have a question, one last question?

Q. For both of you guys, just what you know is coming back on this team, everybody but Russell. How confident are you about the future program?

THE MODERATOR: Terrence.

TERRENCE PHILLIPS: I'm very confident. I think Coach is leaving this program in great shape with some great guys, you know. We had a rough season, man. This isn't where we want to be. From the start of the season, we thought we were going to have a really good year and we just didn't. Went through a 13-game losing streak and we just kept fighting. And there was never any locker room problems or any fighting amongst each other. We stayed together as a family. Anybody that watches us knows we're right there.

This is a young team. I think a lot of games we lost was due to being young and not having to make shots down the stretch. With the great off-season and more bonding, adding a player or two, who knows what the future can really hold for this program.

THE MODERATOR: Same for Kevin.

KEVIN PURYEAR: I think we can do some things if everyone sticks together. I'm confident we will stick together. We have a great group of guys. We spend almost everyday together outside the court, just going to eat and just doing things that teams do, and I genuinely enjoy being around them everyday. I'm pretty confident about that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. We'll excuse you. You can return to the locker room. We'll continue questions for Coach Anderson.

Q. Coach, can you just describe what it was like going to that locker room and talking to the guys after that game.

COACH KIM ANDERSON: It wasn't the highlight of my career, I can tell you that. You know, my point to them -- it's always hard. The end of the season is always hard because you never want to prepare your speech for the end of the season, but now not only that, you're

preparing it for the end of your career or career here at Missouri.

I'm not going away dead, just here at Missouri, okay. But really, we -- I just told them hey, how much, you know, I enjoyed coaching them, how proud I was of them. You know, we didn't win enough games. Obviously when that happens, the coach gets asked to take his ball and go home and that's what's happened.

But I think these guys, if they'll stick together, I know they'll get a good coach. I think they can continue to improve and be a good basketball team. They grew a lot this year, they really did. You couldn't always see it. I know, you know, y'all that are here, most of you watched all the games so maybe you could see a little bit of improvement. I saw a lot of good things and just wasn't enough. Just wasn't enough.

Q. Kim, it got pretty chippy there for four, five minutes in the second half with the flagrant and technical. Did you see anything different out of the team? Was there frustration or kind of the emotion of the game?

COACH KIM ANDERSON: You know, these guys, these guys, they've got -- they've always played hard. They haven't always played smart, you know, and I really didn't. I saw a game that got a little bit physical, you know, little bit rough and, you know, we made some fouls maybe that weren't very smart. But I didn't -- might have been a little frustration, I think, you know, at times. The amazing thing is despite all that, it's still -- it was a 10 or 12-point game. They get it up. We got it down. We never could get it much under 10. That was my only technical foul of the year. It wasn't a very good one, got to be honest with you. But obviously I thought our guys played hard the whole time.

Q. (Inaudible)

COACH KIM ANDERSON: I'm not sure what they can do to me, but I probably better not comment on some things.

Q. Kim, did all the emotion of last night and just that whole experience, did it kind of change today and what this week was like for you?

COACH KIM ANDERSON: Oh, I do think this, I think all the emotion of last night and the game and how we won the game and nobody expected us to win the game and we came back, I think it was an emotional drain on everybody, on the guys. I think they were probably not -- I don't want to take anything away from Ole Miss, probably weren't quite as sharp physically.

Like I said earlier, I think there was some gas -- we didn't have a full tank. But, you know, it was an emotional game. It's been an emotional week. I'm not

going to sit here and tell you it hadn't been, you know. Certainly to be able to win a game here was great. I think it was great for our guys and hopefully it will serve as a springboard for them in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Couple more.

Q. Kim, just on that game, do you think maybe down the road be able to appreciate how that all unfolded, the end, the emotion, everything that it kind of led to?

COACH KIM ANDERSON: Yeah. I think as I -- I need to get away and kind of reflect a little about it. I'm sure that I'll have a deeper appreciation -- it's like when we won a National Championship in Division II, I appreciated that a lot more after two, three weeks down the road.

We certainly didn't do that here. I'm not trying to make that analogy. Being able to, you know, two, three weeks down the road step back and take a look at it, you know. I think that will probably mean more. It's not like we did anything great. But, you know, we did come in here and win a game and be a good team.

THE MODERATOR: Last question.

Q. Kim, you've been associated with this place for so long. Obviously still will be. But the last three years, will it change anything about the way you watch this program, view this school or anything like that?

COACH KIM ANDERSON: Well, I think -- you know, as -- I certainly hope that whoever the coach is that we have provided a little bit of a building block for them or whatever. I maintain -- when I was hired, you know, I was pretty much asked to kind of stabilize this program. It took awhile and, you know, it took -- obviously, it took too long, you know. But I'm proud of what we've done, and I know there's a lot of people out there that aren't. But there's no one out there who sat in my shoes for the last three years and no one out there knows the challenges that we had. You guys don't know it, nobody knows it but me. So -- I'm not trying to be a martyr or anything like that.

But, you know, I think when I walk out of here or when I leave, which will be tomorrow, I think that -- I think we did some good things. But obviously we didn't win enough games. We didn't generate enough money. And when you don't do that in college athletics, you don't get to keep your job. I'm not bitter. I certainly understand that. I understand that.

You know, if you would have asked me when did you know you were going to get fired, I would have said probably the first day I took the job because there was

a lot of challenges that had to be met and we met them and we did a pretty good job, but we just didn't win enough games.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Kim.

COACH KIM ANDERSON: All right. Thank you. Thank you guys. I appreciate you.