

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday March 10, 2017

Mike White
Kasey Hill
KeVaughn Allen
Florida

Vanderbilt - 72, Florida - 62

THE MODERATOR: We'll ask Coach White for some general comments on the game and take your questions for the two student-athletes. And then we will finish up with Coach White. Coach, would you begin.

COACH WHITE: Really hard-fought game. I thought both teams left it all out there on the floor. We had our opportunities that we just didn't take advantage of. Struggled offensively against a Vanderbilt team that's really defending at a high level, and I thought that we defended them at a pretty high level ourselves.

I thought it was the best that we defended them this year outside of a handful of mistakes. We've got to find a way to be more disciplined, and that's on me. But hats off to those guys. They were terrific. I thought that they hit -- they stymied two, three of our runs with just some big, timely shots and they were the better team.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take your questions for Kasey or KeVaughn, please.

Q. Yeah, question for Kasey. How did you feel about the shot you had at the end of regulation and it looked like you had a good look at the basket?

KASEY HILL: Like you said, it was a good look. I just missed it.

Q. For both guys, can you just talk -- is there any concern that back-to-back losses heading into the NCAA Tournament next week that you've lost a little momentum that you built up before?

THE MODERATOR: KeVaughn, take that first.

KEVAUGHN ALLEN: Say it again.

Q. Any concern that you may have lost some



momentum because of the two straight losses to Vanderbilt going ahead?

KEVAUGHN ALLEN: We just got to be -- got to be more focused on defense, got to pay attention to the scouting report and just do better on the court.

KASEY HILL: I don't, I don't think we lost momentum, either. We got to get back to practicing and get better in practice.

Q. For KeVaughn, is it especially -- is it harder to lose when your team battles back to tie the game? You guys are down by 8 with three minutes left, is it harder to lose when you've already come back to tie the game?

KEVAUGHN ALLEN: Yes, it is hard knowing that all the hard work you put in through off-season and through -- during the season and just painful to lose.

THE MODERATOR: Hands up. Other questions for either? Any others?

Q. For either KeVaughn or Kasey, I know you guys had a run here yesterday. Was there any particular thing in the background that made it tough shooting-wise today? You were 6 of 23.

KASEY HILL: The ball wasn't going in. That's just how it went like that. The ball didn't go in.

KEVAUGHN ALLEN: I feel like other shots we took were great shots, but they just didn't go in. We can't worry about the offense, got to worry about playing defense.

THE MODERATOR: One more question. Anyone? All right. We'll excuse you fellas. You can return to the locker room. Thank you.

We'll continue on with Coach White. Raise your hand.

Q. Mike, I know it's been a challenge without John, but is it showing up in that you don't have anybody you can go to down there to get an easy 2 points?

COACH WHITE: Pat, I just think -- you know, John has had his share of scoring with his back to the basket, but Kevarrus has as well. I think the last two games with our lack of interior production has a lot more to do with Luke Kornet than my bigs. I just do.

The credit goes to that guy. He is something else defensively and obviously offensively as well when your entire scouting report resolves around how to defend a 7-1 guy that shoots it like a 2 guard.

I don't know him as a person. Seems like a great kid. But as a player, wow, he is terrific. And obviously we have more reason to say that than anybody else.

Q. Coach, for a casual fan who just looks at the SEC standings and sees where Vanderbilt is, they don't seem like too tough of a team on paper, but obviously they're very tough to beat. How do you explain how they are just so competitive?

COACH WHITE: They're very different than any other team in our league and they present both offensive and defensive challenges. Each team in our league is good, and we talked to our guys all the time about your RPI says that, your BPI, whatever, your computer number, synergy, but there are a handful of games in our league we went 14-4 that could have gone the other way. We're not just this dominant team that is just rolling through people.

In these one, two, three possession games, sometimes a poor decision or lack of discipline or what have you, the ball bouncing, going halfway down and coming back out, sometimes that's a factor. We had a few of those today as well. Sometimes it just comes down to that.

I told Bryce, I think they're the most improved team during the season in the league. They've come a long, long way. As much as I thought they improved offensively during the season, I think they've made that same improvement defensively. I caught the tail end of Bryce's comments and, you know, I would imagine they have had some good defensive practices because they just -- they really, really are defending at a high level right now.

Q. Mike, with nine seconds in regulation, the final shot, what was the game plan, just to drive it and take it strong and how do you feel about the look that you got?

COACH WHITE: Space the floor. We've got one of the fastest guys in college basketball getting downhill. They actually picked him up a little bit higher than I thought, which was good for us. We were actually hoping we could set a high ball screen and space and pull Kornet out as far away from the basket as possible. He still turned those hips and got those feet moving and still was able to contest it. If I'm not mistaken, I know it was very much contested at the rim. I would assume it's Kornet, and similar to a couple looks we had last game, that he's got an ability to alter and we're hoping obviously that we could get to the rim, finish or

get fouled with a couple shooters in the corners and just didn't work out for us.

Q. Mike, Luke Kornet when he was up here, he said that they're a confident team in every single moment on the court. I'm wondering as a coach what you see that tells you the opponent or any team is a very confident team?

COACH WHITE: I think that's a good point, and I think we've been in that place at times this year. We're not in that place right now.

Back to Pat's question earlier, I disagree with my guys. We obviously have lot of momentum. I think they did a good job and they're young and they're prideful and these guys, by the way, played really, really hard. Just not -- we just didn't play well enough.

Circling back, Jerry, I think that you can see it with body language. I think just in my opinion as an evaluator of their team over the course of this year and how they've developed and when you compare it to last year, I think that a great microcosm of their overall confidence level and poise level is Riley LaChance. This guy, I've seen Riley LaChance rattled before. I've seen him not handle pressure before. And his growth and development as a player in those regards to me has probably rubbed off on other guys, I would think, but you see it in Jeff Roberson. He's the same guy every time he plays. You see in it Luke Kornet. Other good pieces, too. Nolan Cressler is a tough kid and makes big plays. I do think they're a very confident group that's in a really good rhythm right now.

Q. Coach, little bit of the small line upset tonight that seemed to work well on Saturday. How much of that was due to the fact that Kornet was scoring on the block and post tonight?

COACH WHITE: You go back after everyone of them, especially when you go 0-3 against somebody, you wrack your brain. I'll be wracking my brain here until Sunday night. Should we have done this? Could we have tried this or that? I thought we did some good things. Again, I thought Matthew Fisher-Davis hit a couple back breakers on us. We saw a lot of him in transition early in the game, just a huge miss at that time off a free throw, and we're just walking around, feeling a little bit good about ourselves.

Other than those things, I thought we defended them at a high level. With him getting it going and him getting it going last week, especially late in the game as long as Kevarrus was doing a pretty good job on the perimeter and some of our switching, we wanted to keep him out there for defensive posts purposes but also for offensive rebounding purposes, of which they did another very good job on us. And that's one of the

areas that has decreased the most with John being out.

You know, we were -- our offensive rebounding numbers all season have been great and they've really decreased, and John is just one factor. We've got to get our 3s, 4s and 5s flying in there with more aggression as we were the first three-quarters of the season.

THE MODERATOR: One more question.

Q. Mike, touching on defense, you kind of went full court press in the second half. What went into the decision-making and how do you think it helped you get back in the game?

COACH WHITE: It definitely changed the game. Our matchup zone we put in on Tuesday was pretty good to us as well, other than the lob in the first half. We've got to communicate a little bit better on a back screen, of course.

But again, proud of those guys that they can carryover and have some focus and execute a matchup zone that literally we spent two days in practice just kind of tinkering with and then we hadn't pressed in a long time. We hadn't man-to-man pressed much this season at all. And I thought our speed guys led by Kasey and Chris, KeVaughn, they really put forth a lot of effort and energy.

I know our guys are tired right now. I thought it sped them up a little bit. I thought it gave us a little bit of confidence in just creating, if I'm not mistaken, maybe a couple turnovers. You know, I don't know how much we can do it moving forward, but I thought it was pretty good to us tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

COACH WHITE: Thanks guys.