

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday March 7, 2018

Bryce Drew Riley LaChance Jeff Roberson Vanderbilt

Georgia - 78, Vanderbilt - 62

BRYCE DREW: Really proud of our team, how we battled all year, especially Jeff and Riley. They were sensational all year. I wish we had a little more fire power to go with these two. We talked about the foundation they had laid at Vanderbilt and how this is going to be a home for them for years and years to come. Again, this game and in the locker room is about thanking those guys for all they've done for us.

Q. Jeff and Riley, both of you guys. You kind of had your way offensively with them a month ago when you played them. What do they do defensively differently tonight?

THE MODERATOR: Jeff, would you take that first.

JEFF ROBERSON: Defensively, they were really tough on us when we got to the lane. They were packing it in and blocking shots. They kept us out of transition for the most part. They played a great defense. They got shots, but just transition on the defense as well. Credit to them. We didn't shoot as well as we're capable of, but they really made it difficult for us.

RILEY LaCHANCE: I agree with what Jeff said. They were really tough at the rim and missed some shots, we missed some shots that we normally don't. Yeah, credit them.

Q. Because of the way you struggled in the first half, you did rebound and get 40 points in the second half. What adjustments were made at halftime? For either or both players.

RILEY LaCHANCE: Yeah, we opened up the floor and started to hit some shots. When we hit some, they had to respect us a lit bit more, able to get some drives to the lane. Kind of started getting a little better flow.

JEFF ROBERSON: Just a sense of urgency was even higher. Guys were knocking down shots. We were



moving the ball and got in a pretty good rhythm. But we dug ourselves a pretty big hole to come out of in the first place. If we would have played like that in the first half, it would have been a different story.

Q. Jeff, you guys, when Matt went down, obviously, with his injury, you and Riley kind of had to shoulder a lot more, it seemed like, the second half of the SEC season. How much of that is yourself knowing, hey, we're leaders, and how much of it was the team and Bryce saying you guys are going to have to step up?

JEFF ROBERSON: It was a little bit of both obviously. Matt is our brother as well, and it would be great to have him out there. It sucks not having him out there. He'd love to be out there.

As seniors, it's our responsibility to pick the team up and next man up, but we had a larger responsibility. It was just being more aggressive, taking -- still not going out of the system but just taking a few more shots and trying to get guys more involved. Really just not thinking about it and leaving no regrets because, at the end of the day, we have what we have. So we just tried to make the most of it.

Q. Coach talked about you guys laying a foundation here over the last two years under him. You guys came to play for Coach Stallings. What have you guys taken away from Bryce the last two years that you'll carry with you the rest of your lives?

RILEY LaCHANCE: Yeah, just that there's a lot more life than basketball. Coach and his staff came in and just really helped us grow as men and obviously taught us a lot on the basketball court, but just the stuff outside of basketball is the stuff that I'll definitely carry with me throughout the rest of my life.

JEFF ROBERSON: Yeah, I'd definitely say that as well. Obviously, like any coach can teach basketball, but they really focused on teaching us how to be young men and helping us develop as being brothers, a part of the family, developing our faith, stuff like that you can't teach. I'll really appreciate that as something I'll always remember.

THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse the student-athletes.

Q. Where do you feel like kind of the wheels fell off in that first half? Down 10-0 five minutes in, or did it get worse from there for you?

BRYCE DREW: With our team, we've started out games well. We've played much better. We had a couple of games we started out like we did tonight, and we just never caught rhythm to play as well as what we could have. After that start, things just didn't look great for us. We were battling uphill three minutes into the game. We didn't make shots. They were coming out really aggressive. They were making shots.

As far as the defense, we just obviously watched all their film. And we knew how they were going to guard us. They pretty much guard us the same way. I think they were a little quicker tonight, and we were a little tentative, especially after we missed shots early.

Q. Coach, you talk about defensively losing Matt back in January. How much do you think him being out affected you guys long term as far as defense this season?

BRYCE DREW: He had some length. We're not very long as a team across the board. He had some length at that three position. So gave us a little more size. I believe he was our second leading rebounder when he went down. So I think we did miss some of his rebounding with his size.

Q. What type of challenge did Yante pose for you guys trying to defend him tonight?

BRYCE DREW: He was the AP Player of the Year in our league for a reason because he's really good down on the block and on the outside. He pretty much scored any way that you can score the basketball. I thought near the end we finally started to play some better defense on him, he just made good posts over the top of us. You've got to credit him for going 9 for 12, 5 of 6 from the free-throw line. If he plays that well and their guards can make shots, they're going to be a really tough out in this tournament.

Q. Bryce, you've obviously been in charge of teams with seniors before, but this maybe is a little unique just because you have a season not going the way you want and then one of your three seniors goes down. Understanding that, how big was what kind of was left on Riley and Jeff's shoulders in that last stretch?

BRYCE DREW: I think more so than even that, just where we were in the standings this year. Any time you're not competing for a championship, sometimes it's easy to become selfish or not work as hard, and I thought they were the exact opposite of that. They tried to help other guys get better even more, and they played their best basketball in this last two months of their careers.

Again, we talk about character. That's the crux of our character. Even though we're going through adversity for them to continue to fight through.

Q. Coach, obviously, the off-season is coming quickly here. How excited are you for the futures with the recruits they're bringing but also pieces like Saben coming back as well?

BRYCE DREW: We're obviously really excited about the future with the recruiting class we have coming in. We also have two players sitting out that would have been starters for this year for us. Like I said, I'm glad our names are on the back of our jerseys because next year our fans are going to have a whole different group of names they're going to be looking at and learning who they are.

Q. Going back to what Jeff and Riley did for you this past year, basically carrying the load the last two months of the season, do you feel like moving forward that those guys have been able to lay enough -- you talk about laying a foundation. Lay enough of a foundation towards guys like Saben that next year you'll be able to get off to the kind of start you want to have and post the kind of season you had this year?

BRYCE DREW: Definitely. They've been able to fight through the end of every season, through the end of every game, and also their basketball knowledge, being on the floor with them. They're very cerebral. They pick things up very quickly. They pass the ball. They move the ball well. And it's really helped Saben become cerebral with his game. We can see a big difference from the beginning of the year to the end of the year with his decision-making, and a lot of that is because he's on the floor with those two guys.