

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday March 9, 2018

Frank Martin
Chris Silva
Maik Kotsar
South Carolina

Arkansas - 69, South Carolina - 64

FRANK MARTIN: Congratulations to Arkansas. They've got a dynamic team, high powered. They got hard shot makers. Congratulations to them.

Q. Chris and Maik, for both of you, what did you guys do well, you think, to get back to -- with 15, 16 minutes left, got that down to one. What was going right in that stretch?

THE MODERATOR: Maik, would you take that first.

MAIK KOTSAR: Yeah, I mean, we fought to get back. The whole team fought, but in the end it came down to a few final possessions that we messed up, didn't execute well, didn't -- weren't strong enough to grab the rebound to get the loose ball, and then they get the win.

CHRIS SILVA: During that run, I think we got the ball inside. We made simple plays, and we tried to execute and make open shots. The open shots we had, that's what got us back in the game.

Q. Guys, for both of you, this may be the end of the line for this season. What do you take from this year towards next year? What did you guys feel like you've learned this year?

CHRIS SILVA: I learned to be a leader. I stepped into a new role. So I learned a lot of stuff. I learned how to talk to my teammates. I learned all the -- I mean, come to the game and try to be ready every day.

MAIK KOTSAR: Pretty much the same as Chris. Just got to be better every day. I've learned that I've got to contribute way more than I have this season to the team. And that's about it.

Q. Along the same lines, for the two of you, how much would a postseason tournament of any kind you think would benefit you two and this team?



CHRIS SILVA: I mean, more playing with the team, get to know each other more times. A lot of reps, more get to know how each of us play, tendencies. I mean, it's always great to step on the floor together and get to play.

MAIK KOTSAR: It would mean a lot to get a few more games in, especially for Wes and Book. They've helped us out a lot this year, and I know that they want to get a few more games in.

Q. For both you guys, with about 3:30 left, you guys were down two, and Barford hit that three where it felt like the ball almost scraped the ceiling, huge three, and then he had the steal and the layup. How critical was that knowing where the game was at that point? I know you guys got it back to two eventually a little bit later, but that was kind of a back breaker there, that three from Barford and then the layup.

MAIK KOTSAR: I mean, yeah, of course it hurt us. Like every basket they scored, it hurt us. We were able to climb back in, then the last minute or so, again, we didn't execute properly and we didn't get the 50-50 ball or the rebound, and that's what hurt us.

CHRIS SILVA: Yeah, the last position was critical. I had the opportunity to get my hand on a few rebounds, and I didn't. That's where the game mattered, and I didn't come up with any rebounds or came up clutch when my team needed it.

Q. Frank, they kind of referenced it about execution down the stretch. This has happened a few times this season where little things like that, not getting the offensive rebound with 40 seconds left, and it just goes to the other team.

FRANK MARTIN: It's been a problem all year. It's not a new book. It's not a different chapter. We've been stuck in that chapter. Come out of a time-out, can't execute what's called. Next possession we make a different call, can't execute that either. It's been the story all year.

Q. Frank, you guys were blown out by Arkansas just last month, and then now coming, making it a lot closer of a game. How has the team matured and I guess grown over that time?

FRANK MARTIN: I don't know if I agree with you. We got blown out. We're in a six-point game with eight minutes to play. We ended up giving up some baskets there at the end that made it a 14-point difference or something like that. I think we're down one at the half. So I don't know if I agree with us getting blown out. Florida blew us out. Missouri blew us out.

have gotten in the NIT. We fit the criteria, but it's not my decision.

I don't want to speak for Coach Tanner, who's sitting back here. If the NIT invites us, we've signed the paperwork, we'll go. Outside of that, we'll stay home. We're good.

We've gotten better. We're a better team. We've played well coming down the stretch. At this time of year -- when you play in March, if you want to have a chance to win, every game's going to be like that. It's going to come down to making the simple play, being able to execute, being able to be on the same page. There was a two-point game, and there's a loose ball underneath our basket. There's a big scramble. Underneath their basket, excuse me. The ball's right there.

All Wes Myers has to do is get on the ball, go down and get a chance to tie it, take the lead, whatever. We don't come up with it. He just stands there and looks at it. They come up with it. Now they get two, we foul, and it makes it a four-point game.

We're a much better team, to your question. We're a much better team than we were a month ago, but we weren't good enough to win tonight.

Q. Tonight, Coach, you had Gravett on the bench for the first 15 minutes. How much, if at all, did the foul issues take you out of anything you were trying to do?

FRANK MARTIN: It's hard. It's hard. You got to manage that. Get no consistency. I don't think our guards -- did our guards attempt a free throw? Wes, zero. Hassani, zero. Justin, zero. It's hard. Their guards shot combined probably 20 free throws. Ours didn't shoot any. We need them to be more aggressive. They're just a little passive.

But at the end of the day, they all got their minutes. We just, we didn't produce. Had 19 turnovers, 10 of them steals. Against Arkansas, that's a big problem. That's the difference in the game.

Q. This is your decision, but obviously postseason play, would you guys accept an NIT bid if it comes your way?

FRANK MARTIN: You know, our RPI, we're above .500. RPI -- Arkansas's RPI was like 30 or something like that. Neutral court, so our RPI was in the high 60s, if I'm not mistaken. RPI may get better even though we lost today. That's crazy. You lose a game, your RPI gets better. From an RPI standpoint, strength of schedule, good wins, quadrant wins, we're above .500. I know teams with bad RPIs in the 80s with bad losses