

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday March 9, 2018

Mark Fox Yante Maten Juwan Parker Georgia

Kentucky - 62, Georgia - 49

MARK FOX: My congratulations to Kentucky. They have a very good basketball team and a very good defensive team.

I just didn't feel like we could ever get in a rhythm offensively today, and we didn't finish enough plays to give ourselves a rhythm offensively. I did think that we defended pretty well. We held them to 62. But we just couldn't offensively find the same rhythm that we had the first couple days of the tournament, and a lot of that should be credited to Kentucky's defense because John's done a terrific job with his team.

Q. Yante, looked like you got banged up there in the first half. How much do you think that affected you going for the rest of the game?

YANTE MATEN: You know, I was just trying to play through a physical defense like I do every night. I missed a couple of my shots and couldn't find my rhythm. It played a part, but we couldn't finish some plays.

Q. Yante, was it a knee that was bothering you? And what was Kentucky doing defensively? I guess typical double-team and stuff like that.

YANTE MATEN: No, it wasn't my knee. It was just a little bruise.

They were just clogging the paint. It was also help side there. So just made it kind of hard to get looks at the rim.

Q. Yante, what do you think Sacha Killeya-Jones, number 1, did defensively that maybe you weren't expecting or didn't game plan for?

YANTE MATEN: I think it was just the whole defense. Generally, it was the whole defense. There was always someone there that was in the help side. It wasn't just one person. So all the moves that I would usually



make to get to the rim couldn't be done because there was help side there.

Q. Obviously, this was your third game in three days. Kentucky's had several days. Did you feel that with their intensity that they were maybe a little fresher than you all?

JUWAN PARKER: That's what you have coming into this tournament. You get to rest a little longer. But fatigue definitely isn't an excuse. We both lace our shoes up and come ready to play.

YANTE MATEN: Pretty much to piggy-back off what Juwan said. There's no excuses. You've just got to get it done.

Q. Juwan, the backcourt, looked like Kentucky was a little fresher, so they were a lot more aggressive, and that resulted in some turnovers. Did you see that they were maybe forcing it, or was it just careless passes?

JUWAN PARKER: You've definitely got to credit their defense. They got longer guards. Could have been a little bit of carelessness, but they're definitely aggressive, and that's a credit to them.

Q. Juwan and Yante, obviously, you guys knew he needed to make a deep run here to have a chance to get in the NCAAs. The disappointment of that, and do you want to have an opportunity to play in the NIT?

YANTE MATEN: I love playing for my school. So as long as I get to wear a Georgia shirt, I'm good with it.

JUWAN PARKER: Same. I mean, it's a blessing to be here. It's a blessing to be able to play the game of basketball. So as long as we've got games, we're down to play them.

Q. Mark, they were doubling the post and making it difficult for Yante. Was there an adjustment there that you were hoping Yante would go to to alleviate that? How big of a handicap was it not having him be Yante?

MARK FOX: Had we had just practice today, probably neither one of those kids I just sat up here would have practiced. Both of them have a couple -- Yante has a deep bruise in his leg, and Juwan's Achilles has acted

up about the last ten days. So I respect that they gave us a great effort.

I don't want to take anything away from Kentucky's defense because it's very good. But I don't think the post traps today were a big issue for us. They did have great length.

We just didn't play with a lot of authority in the low post today. Part of that is certainly because of Kentucky's defense.

Q. Mark, I'm curious if you have any sense of job security moving forward with the administration, and also kind of just where your head is with that.

MARK FOX: My entire focus, as I said before the tournament, was on trying to get these kids some wins and trying to make sure that they have the most incredible season they could have. We felt like we could come in the tournament and win it, and we knew that the fatigue eventually would be something we'd have to overcome. And we've been 100 percent focused on that and solely that.

So I haven't really thought much about the rest of it.

Q. Mark, do you expect any clarity on that, on your future, prior to next week if there are more games to be played?

MARK FOX: I'm sure that Greg and I will meet at some point and have conversations about how to continue to improve and grow our program. I'm not sure when those conversations will occur. We'll let you know.

Q. Coach, when you guys were down, offense is sputtering, it seemed like Tyree was trying to do everything he could to get some points. What can you say about his resiliency in that?

MARK FOX: Tyree had not shot the ball well the first two games. He really hadn't shot the ball well. We knew that today we would need some three-point shooting. I told him, even when we walked in the arena, that I need you to stay aggressive. We wanted Turtle to stay aggressive today because we've ridden Yante really hard, and we needed some perimeter scoring today, and Tyree certainly gave us some of that.

Q. Mark, obviously, your team never had to play against him, but how do you think UK covered for the loss of Jarred Vanderbilt today?

MARK FOX: I have no idea. I mean, we didn't play against him the first time. He's obviously a very good rebounder, and I think that we outrebounded them today slightly. So perhaps that was an advantage for us.

But I hope that he gets healthy. You don't want any kids to experience injury and have to battle through that and miss games. So I hope that he gets healthy soon and can help his team.

Q. Mark, Coach Calipari had some really kind words for you up on the podium about you as a coach and you as a person. In your tenure as coach at Georgia, how has the camaraderie of SEC coaches been in your mind?

MARK FOX: Coach Cal and I played each other at our previous schools in the NCAA Tournament. I think he took the Kentucky job a day or two before I took this job. We have maintained a mutual respect. He's taken the reins of a program that has unbelievable tradition and pressure and managed it in an era of one-and-dones. The job he's done is really remarkable.

I think the camaraderie amongst coaches in the league, there's terrific coaches in this conference. I think there's a lot of mutual respect for how guys coach the game. I think everybody has a real high respect for each other because the jobs are hard, the league is great, and it's a challenging time in college hoops.