

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday March 10, 2018

Mike Anderson Daryl Macon Anton Beard Arkansas

Tennessee - 84, Arkansas - 66

MIKE ANDERSON: First of all, congratulations to Tennessee as they play for a championship. That's what we all came here to do, to have an opportunity to play on tomorrow. I thought they were a little bit better than we were today. I thought they were fresher. I thought they were crisper. I thought they had more energy than we did.

I thought the toll of three days might have caught up with us, but I love what took place in the second half. I thought our team, I thought our guys came out, and they showed a lot of fight, a lot of heart. They dug real, real deep after being down 19 at halftime. They shot 75 percent. Somebody told me they had four or five misses. You could see in the second half it was totally different. But when you get a deficit that big, it's hard to kind of overcome that, but it wasn't because of lack of effort.

I'm real, real proud of these guys and what they've done up until this point. That ends this season. So now we move on to the next season.

Q. This is for both you guys. I thought your defense was okay in the first half. Tennessee had 19 of 25. What did you think of their shooting? Bone hits that jump seconds in, and it just seems it got contagious. What was it like facing that?

DARYL MACON: It was tough for us tonight, obviously. They couldn't miss tonight. They were feeling it. On our side, we just didn't step up defensively as a team, and they continued to hit open shots, and they continued to knock them down.

ANTON BEARD: They came out with the mindset that they wanted it more than us. We didn't give them no resistance in the first half until halftime, when we tried to change the narrative.



Q. For both of you, I was just curious, what time did you guys get to sleep last night? How was the energy today compared to, I guess, in games past during the regular season, even the first two days?

ANTON BEARD: I got to bed about 12:00. No, I'm just playing, about 1:00. But you could tell in the first half that we really didn't have our legs, but like Coach said, we really dug down deep in the second half with our heart and just had to fight through it.

DARYL MACON: I'm not going to tell you what time I went to sleep.

Q. What time did you go to sleep?

DARYL MACON: We didn't have any energy today. I think what cost us today. We usually play with a lot of energy out there. Like he said, Tennessee just came with it on their mind that they just wanted it more.

Q. This is for both guys. I'll go back to the locker room. I know it's a tough loss, but in 24 hours you're going to get exciting news that you're in the NCAA Tournament and you're going to play wherever. How good is it that you're going to get some good news in an hour or 24 hours, and how does it help temper a loss like this?

DARYL MACON: Bill, you make me smile when I want to be mad. I forgot his question. Go ahead.

ANTON BEARD: It's real big. Like we called the last time-out. The same thing I told the younger guys, just keep your heads up and stay focused. We've got a big day tomorrow. That's real big for those guys that never had the chance to get the feel of the NCAA. So it's going to be a big day tomorrow.

DARYL MACON: I don't think it's hit me yet that we're going to the tournament because I wanted this one so much. I wanted this tournament. Maybe when I see our name called tomorrow, I might be a little excited. It's not hitting me yet.

Q. Mike, as far as the NAAs, like you guys are going to get good news here in 24 hours, and I don't know if they're right, but CBS and ESPN are projecting you to be in Dallas or Wichita, which is close to home. Do you have a preference? How do you feel about the NCAA announcement coming

up?

MIKE ANDERSON: I just want to be in it. That's all. I always keep it pretty simple. Obviously, it would be nice to get to an area where our fans could really get there because I think our fans, they love this team, they follow this team, and we saw it here with the people that came out here to watch us play. And they're going to see this team continue to play good basketball.

So, again, we just want to be in it. It's one of the greatest sporting events there is, and we look forward to hopefully our name being called and being a part of it.

Q. I thought Darious played pretty well in all three games after he had some struggles coming in. How do you feel like he played? What did you think was the key to him maybe regaining how he was playing earlier?

MIKE ANDERSON: I think Darious is playing a lot more instinctive. I think he's playing with a lot more confidence. And Darious is one of those guys his defense is really -- his defense, his toughness, his athletic ability is what stands out about him, and just his mindset. He plays to win. I think over the course of the year, ups and downs, I think you get more ups now as he's not a freshman anymore and knowing that we're counting on him.

We started him the first half, and you could see the impact with a guy like he out there as well as Anton Beard. It's amazing because they start trickling throughout our basketball team. And a lead that was up to 19, 20 -- I don't know what it went up to, but we cut it to 11 because of those kind of players. I think Darious is playing really good for us, playing really good basketball.

Q. Mike, I don't know if you heard, but Georgia let Mark Fox go today. You were in the league with him for a long time. Just your reaction to that. What kind of job do you think Georgia is?

MIKE ANDERSON: Sorry to hear that. Mark is a very good friend, he and his wife. I wish him the best. He's a great coach, and he'll still be coaching somewhere. Georgia, obviously, in the SEC, in the state that's loaded with players year in and year out, it's a good job. But sorry to hear that news on Mark, though.

Q. In this day and age, it seems like with everything going on in college basketball, it's a very, very difficult time to be a college basketball coach. Yesterday John Calipari and Mark Fox were up on the podium saying very, very nice things about each other. I think earlier this month Frank Martin had reached out to Bruce Pearl on social media. Do you sense a trend for more collegiality between

coaches? And how would you assess the relationship of coaches within the Southeastern Conference?

MIKE ANDERSON: I think it's a good relationship. I think we're in a fraternity. Obviously, we got difficult jobs. Can you imagine having a job where your life is dependent upon 18, 19, 20-year-old kids making good decisions on and off the floor? And there are so many influences out there.

So I think it makes sense for us to collaborate and get together and share ideas and support each other, as you alluded. This day and time, with all the things that are taking place, I think you learn from each other. Some guys have been in this league longer than I have. I'm always trying to learn. And we've got some guys that are just getting in here, learning the lay of the land.

But I think that was a good -- I think -- and I've got to give the commissioner credit for promoting that, and we meet a lot, and we have meetings in October. We meet in Destin. We kind of, like I said, we share ideas. Commissioner Sankey. I think I just saw him.