

PAC-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 9 2016

Ernie Kent Josh Hawkinson Ike Iroegbu

Colorado - 80, Washington State - 56

THE MODERATOR: Coach, some opening comments, please?

COACH KENT: It's been a long stretch for this team, and several occasions they've had the energy, they've had the character to bounce back and give effort, give intensity in the midst of a tough, tough stretch of losing games for this group.

There's a part of me that's real proud of them because in this day and age I think it's very difficult for young people to continue to bounce back when they're not having any success without making excuses and pointing fingers, and they never did that. They continued to come back and battle.

I just didn't feel like we had any energy or any juice in the game. I felt like Colorado had a lot of energy and lot of juice, with obviously something they're playing for, solidifying, if they're not already in, which they should be, a victory to get themselves into the tournament.

Q. Coach, you played Colorado tough twice and took them to double overtime in Boulder. What do you feel like was the biggest difference in this game from those two?

COACH KENT: The biggest difference is, again, it's the mental part of the game, and this is a mental-fatigued basketball team. When you work as hard as we work, not only on the floor but weight room, in the classroom, and you do it again and again and again, and you do not have an opportunity to feel that euphoria of having success, that's hard to do mentally and continue to do that.

Now, to their credit, they've done an excellent job of bouncing back and they've played some terrific basketball, maybe only being out of whack in stretches of games. Whereas I felt like this game was a whole half we really couldn't get ourselves going. So the biggest difference, I thought: They were the same team; we were a different team coming into the game.



Q. You guys had a lot of success limiting Josh Scott's effectiveness in the paint. Can you talk about the game plan that you guys had for him and what you felt like it was able to help you guys with that?

COACH KENT: We've got good size on this team. I think we did a good job of banging them a little bit. We double teamed him a couple times early just to kind of keep him off rhythm. But understanding and limiting him, we gave up ten threes in the game.

So you kind of pick your poison when they're shooting the ball like that. We didn't double team him every single time. I just think our size matches up with Colorado's size inside, which gives us an opportunity to neutralize some of the things that Josh does. I thought we were really good at paying attention to detail in terms of where he was at on the floor and limiting his touches and really not letting him get into a rhythm, particularly early into the game.

Q. Ike and Josh, coming in this season, obviously, you don't expect anything like this to happen. You have a lot of new players. What went differently this season in terms of how you guys played than you had expected coming in?

IKE IROEGBU: From the start we knew we were going to play fast like how we did last year, and with all the new pieces that we had, we felt like we were going to have a really good team that could push it for ten minutes and then a new crop of guys could come in and do the same. We thought we've got really good players coming off the bench, and just things didn't go our way this season.

JOSH HAWKINSON: When you have seven new guys coming in, it's always a bit of an adjustment period. So I feel like we sometimes struggled meshing together, finding the right lineups to put people in, and no one really jelled at points during the game. And we had a bunch of slow starts as well, so we always felt like we were working our way from behind, which is a hard thing to do for most of the season.