

# Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 8 2017

## Wayne Tinkle

## Kendal Manuel

## Stephen Thompson

Oregon State

Cal - 67, Oregon State - 62

### **Q. Coach, an opening statement, and then we'll take questions.**

COACH TINKLE: Just, all I want to say is how proud I am of this group. Absolutely love each and every one of them. We went through quite a storm this year with a lot of curveballs that were thrown at us, and these guys never brought the -- how am I trying to say this? I don't want to get emotional here. I have a lot of thoughts in my head.

They brought it every day. Great attitude, great effort, great energy, and super proud of them for hanging on, and a big part of that has to go to Beaver Nation because the majority of them stayed behind us.

This is just an incredible group that's going to grow by leaps and bounds for all that we've faced, which is a direct parallel to life, isn't it? We have some crap not go our way, and you learn how to deal with it and be a better person for it and move on. Or you can let it, you know, take you the other direction, and these guys never did that.

So that's what I want to say in my statement. I'll take questions.

### **Q. The last curveball kind of becomes Eubanks, your one guy that's been there all year. What happened to him and how frustrating is it, kind of a winnable game, not to be able to have him go out there?**

COACH TINKLE: It's tough, it's tough. But, boy, is that a microcosm of our season. We're playing our tails off right there and we lose one of our leaders. We don't know exactly what happened, what the diagnosis is. You know what? But, boy, Koné, Matty Dahlen gave us some great minutes in his absence. Some other guys stepped up and took that game into the last minute. It says a lot about the group.

So really tough deal for Drew. He's been a warrior for



us all year long. Obviously he was my nomination for most improved player, and he's really matured. So what a tough setback. Hopefully it's nothing too serious, and as we move forward, we can get that fixed and get him back on the court.

### **Q. Was his knee (off microphone)?**

COACH TINKLE: Yes.

### **Q. Several moments, missed free throws, an opportunity to tie or take the lead late in the game, and then a call that could have gone either way with an and one or just a foul on the floor. The way that this game went so close and yet so far, could you describe sort of that emotion and what those moments were like for you?**

COACH TINKLE: For sure. Yeah, we're so excited the way the guys were battling and hanging in there. I thought their defensive effort was really good. We were small there, and I think we didn't rebound as well as we should have.

But we missed some free throws when we were struggling to score in the end of the second half, and then a couple times we got off page defensively, gambled, and they made us pay with back-to-back threes. So they hit back-to-back threes there, and we had a stretch where we missed six out of eight free throws. You know, it's a 5-2 possession game. You can't let that happen.

That's kind of what bit us a little bit throughout the year. You know what? You've got to learn from those things moving forward. And even though this is the last game of the year for us, we'll put together quite a collection of highlights of things that we need to improve upon with this young group moving forward.

But in the past our guys would have let one or two of those plays blow the game open, and I thought they showed great resiliency tonight when we did make those mistakes to get right back on the horse and get right back in the game. So that tells me a lot about this group. Could have easily just mailed it in at some point this year.

We talked in the locker room, without sharing too much, about how there was never a day where our staff didn't look forward to coming to practice, and that's

because of our guys. Their effort, their attitude, their energy. And I've had a team in the past, I won't say which one, but I've had a team in the past where the last month or so -- and a team that had a lot more wins than this team had, it wasn't really enjoyable to go to practice, but that wasn't the case with this group.

**Q. What are your guys' overwhelming feelings now that you know the season has finally come to a close?**

STEPHEN THOMPSON: We've had a lot thrown at us this year. I think the main thing that we can take away from this year is we kept battling throughout the year and we didn't let it get to us. We never put our heads down. We kept battling, and I think we learned a lot from this year, and we should be able to carry it on into next year.

KENDAL MANUEL: Playing off that, I think that this is just going to help us have something that we can go into the off-season and have that mindset that we don't ever want something like this to happen again. Just help it drive us to try to be playing later in this week instead of playing on Wednesday. Just becoming a better team overall.

**Q. Wayne was talking about how Drew's kind of a microcosm. This year you missed the first few games, and then Tres goes down, and in the end it's Drew. Did it feel like a season where once one bad thing happened, it kept piling up?**

STEPHEN THOMPSON: Yeah, like I said, we've had a lot of stuff thrown at us, and injuries are the main thing. Just hopefully we got it all out of the way and we can come back next year. If everybody stays healthy, I think we'll be a pretty special team.

**Q. I'm wondering how much you feel like you two individually and the players as a team have grown and have sort evolved and changed as the season from when the season started until now?**

KENDAL MANUEL: I feel like we've grown a lot, especially the way we ended tonight. We showed that we're going to stick through everything together, and no matter what is coming at us, someone else is going to step up and make that next play. So I think that just shows the character that we have in our locker room. We're just going to keep building on this.

STEPHEN THOMPSON: I think we have a lot of young players, and I think that being able to play a lot of minutes playing in the games is how you learn the most out of anything. So a lot of young guys got to get a lot of minutes. That should be really helpful moving forward.

**Q. A lot of talk this year about -- everyone talking**

**about along this season, Tres' absence, but Malcolm's absence this year was also big. I was just wondering, have you kept up with him over the year and do you anticipate him returning next year?**

COACH TINKLE: No, for sure. Malcolm came back to Oregon State after Christmas, so he's in classes. He's really working hard to finish his degree and to get healthy. Those are the two main concerns. Get healthy, finish off his degree, and then we'll see after that where basketball fits in.

But really that's where our focus is. We haven't talked about all of that, quite frankly. You lose him a week before school starts, we lose Stevie, I think, for six games, we lose Tres for the rest of the season. We had to remove a player that we thought was going to have a substantial role with Cheikh N'diaye, season-ending shoulder surgery, and that's why we're in the situation we're in.

But the neat thing is, nobody threw the towel in. We didn't ask for sympathy, and we didn't hang our heads. We just kept chipping away and going to work. So that's what makes us very proud. That's what makes us Beavers, and that's what has us very confident moving forward that this is going to be a quick turnaround, because we've got guys that will get healthy. We've got players coming in, and we've got players that will get better. So we'll be back, and that's why we're not going to hang our heads. We know this is a short-term deal that we're learning life lessons from, and they're really going to pay dividends for us.