

Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 8 2017

Ernie Kent

Josh Hawkinson

Charles Callison

Washington State

COLORADO - 73, WASHINGTON STATE - 63

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement and then questions.

COACH KENT: I thought the first half was probably the best basketball that we've played in this program in a pressure-packed situation since I've been here. I thought we were outstanding defensively and offensively. As we went on towards the end of the half, I thought the momentum of the game changed drastically with a couple of traveling situations. There were five fouls that we committed. So there were like seven straight calls in a row, I thought, against us, and our own fault, that took the momentum that we had going into that halftime and really swung the game for their favor in terms of the momentum of the game.

They are a very good team and very experienced team. They hunted us down well in the second half. We had a very difficult time with White again. We've had a hard time with him in all three games. To Colorado's credit, their experienced just stepped up and showed.

But I'm proud of my guys, particularly these two and my other two seniors because they certainly moved the bar, raised the needle, whatever you want to call it, for Washington State basketball.

Q. Did you feel like Colorado changed the defense in the second half, or what did they do to change your shooting percentage in that second half?

JOSH HAWKINSON: I think they did a good job of running us off the line and not allowing open three pointers. Also they kind of doubled down in the post and made it a little harder for posts to get touches and easy looks, which kind of lowered the shooting percentage.

Q. Coach, what was it that you tried to do to slow Derrick White down in that second half?

COACH KENT: You know, he's a very difficult player to



guard, particularly when Xavier's on the floor and King's on the floor with him, because they all shoot the ball so well. And we tried to do a really good job on the ball screens of kind of doubling him a little bit.

I thought Conor was outstanding in the first half. As we got fatigued, we didn't do as good a job in the second half, and he got rolling on us. The first half I thought we were excellent at keeping them under wraps. Second half we got a little bit fatigued and he really made us pay.

Q. Ernie, do you think this resembled a number of your games this year where you played really well for half and for whatever reason there are a few lapses in the second half that kind of changed the game?

COACH KENT: It does resemble our games, and I'll say again, against the upper echelon of the conference. Colorado was one of those teams that was picked to probably finish in the top 5, and for whatever reason they got off to 0-7. I think they're 9 out of 12 now, and they're on a roll and playing really well.

And with all of those teams, we've played well for about 30 minutes in the game, and then we hit that stretch. We get a little bit fatigued, a little bit worn down. That might be because we don't have as deep of a bench as Colorado. They've got five guys that they can put on the floor and play some backup minutes for them. We don't have that on our bench. Malachi, especially, probably wore down from starting playing in June over in Italy until now, he's lost his legs, because he had a lot of looks in the game and probably could have made the bigger difference if he's shooting the ball the way he's capable of shooting it.

Q. Josh and Charles, how would you sum up the last four years, and what this program means to you guys personally?

CHARLES CALLISON: Well, for the last two years this program means a lot to me. I've grown in the last two years. And thanks to Ernie Kent and the staff. I'm grateful for being here, and I just hope the best for them. I'm just very thankful and blessed that I was here.

JOSH HAWKINSON: I would say I just love being a

Cougar. I love everything there is about Washington State University. Just being in Pullman is a special place to attend college. I think I've definitely grown over these four years as well, like Charles, and appreciate everything that Washington State has done for me in giving me an opportunity to play at the highest level in the Pac-12. Thank you to Coach Kent for giving me a chance and allowing me to show what I can do.

Q. Ernie, despite Josh and the other seniors not getting the results in this tournament, you've kind of talked about laying the foundation. You have to remind them that they've meant a lot to the program despite not getting the results at this point in the year?

COACH KENT: I don't know if I need to do that, because this is probably one of the better chemistry teams that I've coached, and I think their teammates have done a great job with them in letting them know how much they mean to our program. What I continue to do with them and with the fans in Pullman is to remind them again that any success this program will have is built on their backs.

Really, Ike and Josh have been here four years, and it's pretty remarkable what Conor and Charles have accomplished in two years. I think all four of these guys are a great indication that it's not about McDonald All-Americans who are one and done. It's about good character guys that want to play at this level, want to work.

Probably the thing I'm most proud about, Josh is sitting here with all those numbers with his master's degree in hand here in about another month. Charles will graduate, Ike will graduate, Conor will graduate. They've done a wonderful job. And they've certainly set the bar for what it takes to be successful, not just on the floor, but off the floor as well.

Q. Coach Kent, you started to answer my question, but I wanted to talk about Josh winning the Pac-12 Scholar-Athlete of the Year award for the conference in this league. Can you talk a little bit more about the student aspect of him. And, Josh, could you also talk about what that award means to you, and what it means to succeed in the classroom, not just on the court?

COACH KENT: I think in this day it's changed so much. I mean, 20 years ago athletes were degree first, NBA second. And so many of the greater players are NBA first, degree second.

When you look at the numbers that he's put up, number one, that is very difficult to do, to be in the club that he's in with the rebounding and the scoring. And

to do it all the while graduating and getting your master's degree, that tells you about good parenting. It tells you about his character as well.

This team, in the last two days we've been on the road, taking 17 exams. And I'm looking at his exam last night thinking I'm glad it's him and it's not me, because I had no clue what he was working on. He's just special, and I'm happy he had the opportunity to wear the uniform, and more so having the opportunity to coach him and show those younger players what that character will do for you.

JOSH HAWKINSON: For me it definitely means a lot. Coach Kent and Washington State University does a good job preaching school first and then comes your sport of basketball. So the support staff has done an amazing job helping me out. They've scheduled my classes, getting extra study hall in, and just helped me achieve my dreams. Because, you know, basketball ends at some point for everyone, and so it's just about being prepared and preparing yourself for the future and succeeding in whatever you want to achieve.