

Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 9 2017

Larry Krystkowiak

David Collette

Kyle Kuzma

Utah

Cal - 78, Utah - 75

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

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: It wasn't as much about the end as it was the first half. I thought that it was far more physical coming out of the gate. And had an advantage, had eight offensive rebounds in the first half, we had none. Still tie score at halftime.

I felt like we did a good job moving the basketball. We got some open looks. At the end of the day, some of those open looks need to go down. We caught a bit more fire in the second half and woke up. But ran into both Bird and Moore having tremendous games. Had dang near 50 points between them, and we didn't seem to have an answer for a couple of those guys in the back court. So, disappointing, obviously.

Q. In that Cal possession with 29 seconds left, were you guys trying to foul Jabari Bird before he took that shot?

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: No, we felt like we could get -- defend him. It wasn't an intent at all to foul. We could play without fouling in that final possession. You know, I haven't seen the clip, but certainly it wasn't our intent.

Q. Actually the possession started with 29.6 seconds, so the shot clock was off.

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: We didn't want to foul Bird. We had a couple guys that we had identified that we wanted to foul. Obviously try to get a turnover, same kind of thing we were thinking about. We knew we were going to have to foul at some point, but it certainly wasn't the guy we wanted to foul.

Q. What did you see on that play where Lorenzo got, I guess, poked in the eye early in the second half?

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Yeah, I mean, I don't want to



critique any officiating. I thought that there were some, you know, there were some plays, some bang-bang plays. I don't know what Dave was supposed to do on his first foul. Got called for a blocking foul at the rim by just staying in his cylinder. That's the fancy word now, is there is a cylinder. And Dave didn't go into his cylinder, but he was -- his cylinder was encroached. And for whatever reason, that was a foul.

Those guys have a tough job. This isn't an easy game. Players, coaches, everybody makes mistakes, but I think those are turning points in the game.

So what I saw was Lorenzo getting popped in the head pretty good, and I would have liked to have had a foul call, obviously. Two different plays. But it's hard when you've got your big guy on the bench. He got in back-to-back foul trouble in the first half, with two fouls. I've always said that's the silliest rule on the planet in college basketball to have five fouls. It's something that I'm advocating getting changed. It's not just for us and the benefit of this game, but it's the benefit of all teams with good players. What other sport do you put people on the bench and tell them they can't play because you have two fouls, if you think about it, and how quickly you can get two fouls, and they're not always actually fouls.

So that's another topic. But, Yep.

Q. You guys have had a good rebounding team all season. They got you by eight boards tonight. Can you just expound on that?

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: I think a lot of those were when the game started, we had a heck of a job containing penetration. From every big on our team at halftime we had one rebound, from four bigs that played in the game. So, unfortunately, we were trying to defend penetration an awful lot. We had some breakdowns in our pick-and-roll early in the first half, and then we were gambling a number of times, trying to steal passes. We didn't stay solid. And on that penetration our bigs have to step up, and our guards weren't in a position to keep their bigs from getting those rebounds. That's where a lot of them were, just our inability to protect the paint.

You know, and they're big bodies. Certainly that's one of Rabb's fortes. I think we did a pretty good job on

him overall, but he got obviously the looks off the rebounds. And their big five men do a heck of a job. They're long guys, and if you don't block them out, you're going to be in trouble.

That was costly. It was a little bit of a surprise for us. We hadn't talked about it a whole lot. We've been doing a good job, and collectively we didn't do a good enough job rebounding.

Q. Kyle, those last couple possessions you guys hit six shots in a row. What was going right on some of those possessions and what was the energy like on the bench?

KYLE KUZMA: You know, we just started hitting shots. Our problem was we just didn't get enough stops on the other end. Like Coach said, Bird and Moore had great games. That's just what it boils down to, getting stops. But we put ourselves in a position, but it killed us on the other end.

Q. Coach, could you talk about the impact that Okoroh had on the game?

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Well, I mean, he did a nice job defending the rim. Certainly had some nice blocked shots. I didn't see exactly how many rebounds he had, but, I mean, the dude's big. I've seen a lot of big guys before. Between him and Rooks, ten rebounds. So that's a stellar performance, I think, on his part. He does a nice job, you know, taking up space and rebounding and doing his thing. So when Dave got a couple fouls, Jayce came in in little spurts, but we really ended up having to play small. That's where we got ourselves in trouble a little bit.

But credit to not just he, but there were a lot of guys that played well on their part, and they bounced back from a game yesterday, which we didn't have to play. Obviously, the disappointment in that. I think it took us a while to wake up. But for them to come out with the kind of energy and get us in that category, the rebounding and the fouls and energy statistics, was disheartening.

Q. Kyle, in a weird way, was it difficult to play a team that you beat by 30 last week, or did that have anything to do with it?

KYLE KUZMA: No, I mean, they're the opponent, so we just had to play them again. It's just what it is.

Q. Dave, what was the biggest difference you saw from Cal tonight as opposed to last week when you beat them by 30?

DAVID COLLETTE: I think the biggest difference was within ourselves. I don't think we played with as much energy as we did that game. You know, it started off slow, and like they've been saying, lost the rebound

battle. Just we didn't have enough energy to begin with.

Q. Can you expand on the fact that everything kind of fell into place to get that bye, and you had the number four or five game's going to be (indiscernible). Do you feel that way, Larry, or is it disheartening that everything fell into place to get that bye and you weren't able to capitalize on it?

COACH KRYSTKOWIAK: Well, sure. That's something that you work for. If our goal was to try to get into the NCAA Tournament. We're not being mentioned in any kind of bubble discussions or anything of that nature. So the only way you can get a surefire ticket to the NCAA dance is to win this tournament. I don't think -- it doesn't take rocket science to figure out that winning three games is a little more attainable than winning four.

I don't sense that there's a letdown coming into this thing. Crazy things happen, you know, and it's not that complicated for our team. When we play really hard, really hard, accident on the defensive end and keep our X-and-O plan on what it is we need to do against another team, we're pretty darn good.

That was the first game a week ago against Cal. We were as good as we've been in a long time, and coming in here tonight, we weren't. I don't think it's that we had a letdown as much as it is important to give credit to Cal. I know if we got our butts whooped by 30 a week ago, we'd probably have a little different edge to us. You can't control human nature. But I don't think our guys were thinking about having a feather in our cap because we beat them the last time by 30. We had a good week of practice. We were dialed in. That team from the beginning kind of punched us in the mouth.

Fortunately we made a little bit of drama out of it at the end, but it's not -- yeah, it's tough. There are very few teams that end the season on a high note. So for us to get the fourth seed and play against a really good team and lose, it's not what we had planned. But it's not unexplainable when you look at how we played. We need to play better to advance.