

# Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 9 2017

## Steve Alford Isaac Hamilton Lonzo Ball UCLA

UCLA - 76, USC - 74

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement. How do you feel about moving on to tomorrow?

COACH ALFORD: Pretty excited about move it. Really proud of our guys. Thought they did a nice job. Had one of our better shooting nights, probably a game we don't win back in January. We didn't have too many tough shooting nights, and tonight was one of those, and we were able to get enough stops, had held them to 38% shooting, so I thought we did some good things with getting some stops. We outrebounded them. 13 turnovers, really high in the first half, we couldn't get to the free-throw line in the first half. And we turned the ball over 10 times in the first half.

Second half we settled down and didn't turn the ball over, we just didn't make the shots we normally make, and we kind of got out of flow that way. But our guys did a really good job of making the plays they had to make, especially defensively.

**Q. Lonzo and Isaac, you held USC defensively. You guys held USC to less than 39% shooting. What's that say as far as you guys' defensive presence tonight and as well as moving forward?**

LONZO BALL: It's been picking up every game, and we had around that tonight since our shots weren't falling, and just credit to all the guys on the team, staying focused and sticking to it.

ISAAC HAMILTON: Well, piggyback on what Zo said, same thing. We did a lot of -- Coach said contested twos, and that's what we did, and we rebound, and that's kind of what ignites our transition.

**Q. Lonzo, why do you think the shots weren't falling tonight?**

LONZO BALL: It's just one of those days, man. You're not going to shoot good every game. And for the majority of the season we've been shooting well. So it's just one of those nights and we still got the win, so



that's always positive.

**Q. Coach, in the second half, it seemed like your zone was giving USC some fits, and then you switched to man in the second half. What was the reason behind that?**

COACH ALFORD: We played both man and zone both halves. When they switched, we played zone in the first half and the second half, and we played man first half and second half.

**Q. A bit of a scare for a first game. Can that be good for a team, or is that never good because it is a scare?**

COACH ALFORD: Yeah, and it's tough. We're sitting around and watching everybody. They played last night. I've always felt, I've been doing this a long time, and I even told the guys this earlier in the week that the quarterfinal game I think is always the hardest of the team that hadn't played because they've played in here the night before, so they're used to the environment. They just started the tournament. We were the last team to start the tournament. It's just the way the bracket falls.

But before we ever tipped, you know, seven of the teams have been eliminated. There's only five left by the time our ball tipped, and we hadn't played a game yet. So I thought our start was good. I really liked our start, and then I thought we got a little careless with the ball. I mean, we were up 12, 13. We left them back quickly because of our turnovers, and they got the thing back to where it was a one-possession game. The second half was kind of a grind. Neither team really shot it that well, us in particular. But we need games like this because SC is a team that, for the national tournament, this is going to be, I think, a seed that we're going to find and a team that we're going to find that we're going to have to beat to advance. And so as we get into next week and we start the national tournament, this will be a game we bring back up to the guys. Knowing that we led most of the game and then to be able to pull it out in the end, you know, this will be something we'd look at next week.

**Q. Coach, with TJ coming back, what did you think of his performance?**

COACH ALFORD: Tremendous. You know, that was another one. For him, 14 and 6 with five assists, a

block. We got 33 minutes, so we've got to get him some rest and treatment. But great credit to the medical staff. Great credit to Shane, our trainer, and then obviously TJ for doing the work to get back to be able to play as well as he played. A lot of people get a lot of credit for that. So that was big for us.

You know, we've got some good play. Our bench hadn't been outscored like that all year. You know, so it's just one of those games where our bench didn't really get into the flow that we've normally gotten into, and their bench came in and gave them a spark, especially Mathews and Stewart, gave them a big lift off the bench. And I thought that got them back in the game. But we were able to go to TJ in the post a lot, and he's a load down there.

**Q. Lonzo, just your first time being here in a March Madness type of environment. How much do you like this big stage?**

LONZO BALL: Oh, I love it, you know? The bigger the game, I feel the better I play. Obviously tonight I got in foul trouble early and it was tough. But credit to the coaching staff and teammates. Can't win this game one person. They stepped up, Ham here carried us on offense, and we got the stops we needed to win.

**Q. Coach, this seemed in a few ways sort of like the first game against SC back in January with the turnovers in the first half. You guys didn't shoot as well as you normally do. What does it say to you about the way the team's developed that you were able to pull this one out?**

COACH ALFORD: Well, I think defensively. Because I think in early January we may not win this game because our defense is much better than what it was in early December. So hopefully our guys can see that and they can build some confidence.

But we've got no problem with confidence at the other end. But this kind of helps build confidence defensively. I think it's our tenth win in a row. I think we've beaten SC now 7 out of 11 times, and they never led in this game. So even in a game where we were a little bit off, you look at the numbers, and it's still pretty convincing that way. It was only a two-point win, but it was tied for 20 seconds and we led the rest.

So really proud of our guys all night where -- we've had very, very few nights where we haven't shot it well or scored in the 80s-plus, and this was one of those nights, and yet we find a way to get a win. I think hopefully they can build some momentum, because this is a hard team to guard. SC can beat you a lot of different ways. We did a really good job on Metu tonight. He never really got going. We did a good job on Boatwright. McLaughlin got going in the second

half. But really proud of the way we guarded for most of the game.

**Q. Looking ahead to tomorrow night, it's only been two weeks since you played Arizona. Is there some residual stuff you can take from that game? What do you think about the match up?**

COACH ALFORD: Well, it's a tremendous match-up. I think they're two outstanding teams. If you look at it across the board, I think it's two top 5 teams going at it in the semifinal game of a conference tournament. So they've had a very, very good year and we've had a very good year. So they've got great players, we've got great players, so it's a tremendous match-up. We were both able to win on each other's court, which is a little unusual.

Now we face on a mutual court. So obviously it's going to be a very difficult game, and we have an awful lot of respect for them. We know we're going to have to be better tomorrow night than what we were tonight.

**Q. The coach's son (indiscernible) fouled and throw the ball, I think looks to Isaac, and to run the clock out at that point?**

COACH ALFORD: Well, I thought we did a lot of good things down the stretch. Ike missed the foul shot, but he did a good job getting that loose ball. Zo -- and again that goes back to Zo. Zo just gets it. He knows everybody's role. Sometimes he does things you don't notice, but he's done that before in games. And I think if you rewind the tape, he jumps up in the air just to find Bryce and Isaac and get two of our very good foul shooters the ball. He knows that's their role late in the game like that. He's not throwing it to somebody that is an average foul shooter. So he just gets those type of things.

Then late, Bryce made a really good play before they got to him, it's the length of floor to Isaac and the time ran out. So I liked our late-game management. I thought our guys did a really good job of getting stops. We went and pressed in the zone with 12 seconds to go, and I thought we did a really good job with that in that possession as well. We didn't want to give them a quick basket or quick three to extend the game. We wanted them to -- if they do score like they did, there's only three, four, five seconds left, and then it was going to be difficult on them. So I thought even though they made the shot, we defended it pretty well, because it took time off.

**Q. Just for the players, if you wouldn't mind talking about the previous Arizona game. You guys outrebounded them, especially on the offensive glass. Just what is your take away from that?**

LONZO BALL: It was a good game, but once again it's

in the past. We've got to take it, learn from it, see the good, see the bad, move forward and try to get a win tomorrow.

ISAAC HAMILTON: Same thing. Yeah, they played a good game at Arizona, and like Coach said, we've just got to get down on defense and get stops for the most part.

**Q. Isaac, you shot the ball well tonight. It seemed at the end there were plays called for you in the second half. But what kind of rhythm did you feel like you were in, and why do you feel like you were able to shoot well tonight?**

ISAAC HAMILTON: We got a lot of inside out. We passed the ball to TJ, and they kind of doubled him when they went four guards and they kicked it out and left me open. So those kind of shots I need, just rhythm shots like that. And once two or three go down, just I'm in a rhythm and I'm good to go.