

Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 8, 2018

Sean Miller

Allonzo Trier

Deandre Ayton

Arizona

Arizona - 83, Colorado - 67

SEAN MILLER: I thought Colorado came into tonight's game the way they played against Arizona State, with a lot of confidence. Their offensive performance yesterday really got our attention. So for us it was a real big defensive challenge, and they had a lot of players playing with confidence. Obviously when McKinley Wright went down, that certainly hurt them.

But I really liked our defense, especially in the second half. Eleven steals might be a season high. We had plenty of transition opportunities because of our defense, and that's when we're at our best.

So we're excited to be playing tomorrow the winner of Stanford-UCLA, obviously two terrific teams, and anxious to prepare and hopefully play even better tomorrow.

Q. At one point this season, you said you had trouble getting your guys to play hard. I was curious to see how you felt about how your guys played today in that aspect?

SEAN MILLER: I think every team has its challenges. I don't look at our team as ever on purpose not playing with effort. But even somebody like DeAndre, who is immensely talented as a young player, it takes time to really learn what it feels like to play on the road, what it feels like to play in conference play. Tonight is what it feels like to play on a neutral court in March.

So you learn as it goes. But our team has gotten better in that area, for sure. We wouldn't be able to win the Pac-12 regular season championship and be here today if we didn't improve in that area.

Q. Having the last few days off after everything that happened last week, how did that help you guys?

SEAN MILLER: We had a couple good days of practice. Our guys are on spring break, so that was great for them that they didn't have to juggle both the academics and basketball.



But these two guys set the tone right after the Cal game and took one day off and got ready for what we did here today.

Q. Colorado shot around 60% yesterday from the three. What did you guys do defense defensively today to limit them to 25%?

SEAN MILLER: Especially in the second half, they were 1 for 10. I thought our ball screen defense was good. Our team defense was good. We had a lot of players working together. I didn't really look at them having a lot of great looks that they missed. I think our defense was intact.

Q. What kinds of things have you done to keep your players to tune out all the noise going on around you? What have you talked about with them?

SEAN MILLER: We're really focused on the task at hand. For us it's about can we be ready for Colorado and can we now get ready for UCLA.

Q. Without addressing the FBI reports specifically, should the NCAA give consideration to that Olympic model where guys like DeAndre or Bagley or Trae Young could get compensated through sponsors at all?

SEAN MILLER: I don't understand your question.

Q. Well, instead of being paid directly by the NCAA, those type of players would be paid by a sponsor such as Nike or adidas or the like.

SEAN MILLER: I'm not really qualified to answer that.

Q. Allonzo, you shot 1 for 10 and had two points in your last game at Arizona. How did you manage to bounce back from that and have such a good game today?

ALLONZO TRIER: I think my body of work over the year speaks for making up for that 1 for 10. It was just one day where the ball didn't go in the basket. The most important thing was closing out the season, winning at McKale, winning an outright Pac-12 Championship. But I didn't lose confidence one bit.

Q. Can you talk really quick about the luxury of having two seven-footers? If one doesn't play well

in a day, you have another guy to go to?

SEAN MILLER: Well, I think Deandre can answer that as well as I can. Him and Dusan have really forged a great relationship on the court. I think they play off each other very well. They're both unselfish. I think you have to pick your poison, so to speak, in defending them, because both of them have proven that they're very productive and very different.

Defensively they cover for each other. A lot of times some of our best offensive rebounding takes place when one of them shoots and the other rebounds. They're unselfish players. They're team guys. Over the course of the 32 games we've played together, they clearly have formed a bond.

Q. Deandre, you were 4 for 14 today. Was it more you or Colorado that had you struggling from the field today, do you think?

DEANDRE AYTON: It was me. I was rushing all my shots. I wasn't taking my time down low.

Q. Deandre, just curious, what do you think is the biggest thing that you've grown from this year and how would you sum up this year for you so far?

DEANDRE AYTON: I would say playing hard, especially on the defensive end and being a leader on this team. Being one of the leaders on this team.

Q. Obviously there's been a lot going on the last couple weeks. Is there any concern on your part about your guys getting distracted about the bigger goals you guys have, and how have you been able to keep them focused in on what you're trying to accomplish here?

SEAN MILLER: No, we have great kids on our team. We have a lot of winners. We have talented players that have always, from day one, played for the win. And everybody on our team and in our locker room realizes what March Madness is.

So right now our focus is strictly on competing for a Pac-12 Championship. We have quite a few guys here, Dusan and Parker, for example, they've won two Pac-12 Tournament championships. They've won three Pac-12 regular season championships.

These two guys up here, they're trying to add to what they do as a member of the team, not just individually. So that's been our focus and will remain our focus moving forward.

Q. Just to follow up on that question to some degree. You called the ESPN report about the wire tap defamatory. Do you intend to pursue that legally?

SEAN MILLER: I've already made my statement.

Q. But I don't think you addressed whether or not you'd pursue it legally.

SEAN MILLER: I've already made my statement.

Q. How much do you guys feed off of Dusan when he's rolling like he was today?

DEANDRE AYTON: It's amazing. Teams really try to double team me and Dusan down low, but seeing him fight through all that contact and making big plays like that really sparks a fire.

ALLONZO TRIER: I think Dusan is just doing what he's doing. He understands this is the last time he's going to go down this road. He's playing his best basketball, being a senior, playing with a lot of confidence. When he's playing with confidence, it gives us confidence and belief in our basketball team.

So we need everybody to be sharp, and Dusan's been on top of his game, which has been a very big part of why we were able to win a Pac-12 Championship and why we were able to win tonight.