

Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 14 2019

Larry Krystkowiak

Donnie Tillman

Utah

Oregon - 66, Utah - 54

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: Our guys played really hard. I thought it was quite a defensive game, both ends, first half in particular. 2 for 23 from three, and we've been pretty dependent on the three-point basket all season long. Number of those were good looks.

I think Oregon's defense needs a lot of credit. They've been playing great. It was real physical at the point of attack. We did a decent job, 12 turnovers or less was our goal. We started the second half with a couple untimely ones to get them back; that six-point lead we had at halftime was cut pretty quick and we lost our momentum. We need to make some of those threes to keep it interesting. It got away from us at the end.

But I'm proud of our guys. They just kept buying in all season long. It was a great group to coach. And disappointment, obviously, with how it finished. But it was a pretty dialed-in group all season. I thought we really competed tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Did you feel the pressure in the shooting troubles, the pressure from Oregon, or just a slow start?

DONNIE TILLMAN: Just a slow start. It was just one of those games. Shots just weren't going in. It was a hard-fought battle. Second half just needed to be consistently bring the effort, bring the intensity defensively. A number of great looks, it just wasn't falling.

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: I think Oregon's pressure, three-quarter court, full court, that type of thing, that's all part of the -- the aura of playing that way is you've got to be able to shift into a -- break the pressure, it's sped up, and then break into a little different speed, a gear, where you can execute. And then when you are presented with some open looks, oftentimes you're still sped up, if there's just a little bit of timing that's out of whack.

So as I said, it was physical at the point of attack.



There was a lot of contact throughout the course of the game. But definitely give them credit. As we all know, it's Oregon's defense that's put them in the position they're in right now. And with as physical as the game is, it fits their blueprint.

Q. Your two seniors hitting the threes, but obviously what have they meant to your program and to this season to get where you are now?

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: It's difficult for all of our seniors. A guy like Parker has been in our program for six years, when you count his mission. And Novak is a guy that came in and gave us a nice boost. He's a one-year senior. Everybody kind of has a different path and a story.

And it just goes so fast for those kids. Sedrick has been a kid that's scored a thousand points and has really grown, and Beau Rydalch is one of our red shirts, a Utah kid that took it pretty hard. It's one of the worst days for me as a coach when the season comes to an end like this. You really can't say the right thing. I just wanted them to know that I was proud of them. We really had a group, and I've been doing it a while, that had different weaknesses and things -- we got exposed at various times in the season and our guys came to practice every Monday morning and collectively really bought in. And I thought we -- the goal for us, and when we even recruit kids, it's not about getting to the NBA and it's not about winning national championships, we always talk about reaching your potential. And it's hard to say exactly where that was, but I think a lot of those kids maximized their potential. And our team, as disappointing as tonight was I thought performed pretty well over the course of the season.

Q. Building off of what you just said coming into the season you had a very young team. And so as you coached these guys and you look ahead to the future, do you feel pretty optimistic about what they accomplished and what they can accomplish, and has you excited moving into the next season?

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: We're going to miss our starting back court with Parker and Sedrick, obviously. In the game like this I think about the physicality of it. You have to be skilled. You have to be smart. But you have to have -- postseason play I consider this tournament like -- and three of the guys that played

pretty well, one of them is sitting next to me and I thought Timmy and Jayce, they have a physical presence about them and they're ready for this. Those three are back. I love our recruiting class and everybody that's coming back.

I thought a year ago we kind of got exposed in the championship game against Penn State and it was the same kind of loss, where it was real physical. So through our recruiting efforts and our weight room, we have to do a better job collectively of being able to handle some of that pressure. I'm optimistic. I don't know how you feel.

DONNIE TILLMAN: I feel great about next year.

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: It's hard to talk about next year right now, personally. We learned a lot. We have a number of great kids in the program and a great recruiting class so we'll keep chopping wood.