

Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 15 2019

Mike Hopkins Nahziah Carter Matisse Thybulle Washington

Washington - 66, Colorado - 61

MIKE HOPKINS: Well, you know, the first half, Colorado came out like they've been. They came out really aggressive defensively, offensively, and shot 47 percent from the field, 50. They went to the foul line.

You know, down 6, we just challenged these guys to play defense. When you've got the National Defensive Player of the Year, who he should win it, it changes things. And our guys battled. We played better defense, held them to 20 percent from the field, 12 from the 3 point line.

That's why we win, has been our defense all season. And we're lucky, Colorado gave us a great fight. They've got a lot of heart. They've got a great coach. And they just kept coming at you and coming at you and coming at you, and it's hard to do that when they were on the third day. Got to tip our hats to them. These guys were resilient enough to come out with a win.

MATISSE THYBULLE: I think some guys stepped up huge for us today. Jamal Bey brought us some energy, because we came out flat, and we need someone to be a spark to us. And he came out in a huge way. Nahz did what Nahz does, and he was able to exploit some matchups.

The guys stepping up in that way is huge for us, and every game it's someone different. And we know it's the next guy up. With this tournament, having played back-to-back days, guys are banged up and tired. We know we've got to have each other's backs.

NAHZIAH CARTER: I feel like I came in, gave a lot of energy. Offensively, but more defensively. We held them to five points for the majority of the second half. So I just like how much emphasis we put on the defensive end in the second half and how we came out at the start of the game down 8-0.



Q. You stayed for the entirety of the Colorado, Oregon State game yesterday. What mental notes did you take watching the Buffs play, and how did that help you in preparation taking on the Colorado players today?

MATISSE THYBULLE: Any basketball player knows how important it is to watch film, and to have a chance to be able to sit there and watch some play and see what guys are doing and seeing how they're able to attack Oregon State was -- I don't know, it's helpful.

And going into a game, knowing guys' tendencies and things like that, I trusted coach's scout, but to see it live helps you even more.

Q. You might have alluded to this a little bit, but going into this, Colorado is a short rotation, they've played two games against your one this week. Was there a sense at all going into this you might be able to wear them down as the game went on?

MIKE HOPKINS: We wanted to keep the energy high. Like Matisse said earlier, we just tried to get guys in the game. We started a little bit slow, a little bit lethargic. Jamal Bey, like he said, he came out and gave us toughness, played unbelievable defense.

Big thing in this game was transition defense and rebound. And he went right up, a couple, and got two huge rebounds, got us in transition, which was huge. But I think our depth today, we were able to wear them down. And I thought you saw that at the end.

Q. Going off the depth, a theme seems to be could be a different guy every night around here, and I think two guys stood out were Nahz and also Hameir on the defensive side, getting those four steals.

MIKE HOPKINS: It was incredible. I tell you, in the second half, I thought Hameir Wright changed the game on the defensive end in the post. They were trying to post up Tyler Bey and Battey, and those guys are big, physical guys.

Got a couple steals, we were aggressive, we made it a little more difficult for them to touch the ball. That was our adjustment. But Tisse [Matisse Thybulle] touched on it a little bit, we had five guys in double figures, and two other guys, one with 8 and one with 7.

That's a team. We had nine assists in the second half. That's a team. And that's how we're going to beat people, that's how we're going to go far, is by team. These guys did it. They shared, they cared, and they played for each other. And that's what it's all about, and that's why we won today.

Q. You guys opened the second half on a 25-5 run. What's the psychology of a run like that, how do you compound stops, and how does that build over time to build a lead in situations like that?

MATISSE THYBULLE: Something we struggled with is maintaining leads and being able to step on guys' throats when we get going. And I think it showed a little bit today, we weren't going to let up.

A lot has to do with focus, focus and energy. And we know what's on the line at this point, and no one is willing to give that up. We knew we had to stay focused and locked in, and by doing that we were able to keep the energy consistent and stay on them.

Q. Over 50 free throw attempts in this game. Is it kind of hard to find offensive rhythm in a game like that?

MIKE HOPKINS: It was a big part in the second half. We saw a lot of threes in the first half. We still want to shoot threes because we we've got really good shooters, but we wanted to put more of an emphasis on getting to the line.

The second half we went to the line and we attacked. And the guy over there at the end, Nahz Carter, you know, he's hard to guard one-on-one, and he finds a way to get there. It's very, very difficult.

I think at the end of games when you're trying to make them take time off the clock and you don't want to give up threes and they're just trying to barrel into you and go to the foul line, you kind of kill the rhythm. But it's actually a good strategy, because they were the aggressor.

But like I said, the foul shots, I don't think it hurt us, I think it helped us in the second half. We made it an emphasis and the kids executed.

Q. You obviously knew what you were doing defensively, you could feel you were getting a lot of stops in the second half. They shot 20 percent from the field. Did it not feel like it was that low of percentage? When you hear that number, what are your thoughts?

MATISSE THYBULLE: In order to do things like that, you have to be so locked in that it's hard to focus on the numbers like that. When you're in the moment and

you're playing that hard, you don't realize really what's going on, you're just reacting and hustling.

And I think that says a lot. I don't think Nahz realized it, I don't think any of the guys realized we were able to string together that many stops and hold them to low scoring. And it's all because we brought energy and stayed locked in. And when you stay locked in, none of that other stuff matters.