

Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 11 2020

Tad Boyle McKinley Wright Tyler Bey Colorado

Washington State - 82, Colorado - 68

THE MODERATOR: Coach, looked like it never got going.

TAD BOYLE: Credit to Washington State. They were the better team tonight. And CJ Elleby had a heck of a game. Came out on fire, and got himself going and ended up with 30.

We've been talking now for the last five games how our defense is not been good enough to win games, whether it's first half, second half, full ballgame, it doesn't matter.

Tonight they shot 70 percent in the second half, and we couldn't get back in the game. We couldn't get a stop, we couldn't claw back.

We've got some guys on the team struggling offensively to shoot the ball and make shots. Tonight we did a great job I thought of getting to the free-throw line tonight, we shot 32 free throws and we haven't done that in a long time. We attacked, but we didn't make enough of those.

But the bottom line is we couldn't get stops when we had to get stops. Our ball screen defense, we tried three different coverages all night, and none of them were really effective.

Switching a little bit late was better, but too little, too late. I've got to do a better job at these guys coach. Tyler and McKinley played their hearts out, and they're two All-Conference guys, and deservedly so.

Our team right now has lost its identity. We've lost a fight. We've lost a toughness that we've got to get back. And thank goodness we played really, really well the first 27 games of the season to put ourselves in a position, I think, to be in the postseason.

But nothing is guaranteed until we see our name pop



up on Sunday. And certainly our seed probably has dropped. And we're going to be in for a really, really difficult game probably in the first round.

But if we can find who we were that first 27 games we'll be okay. If we can't, it will be one and done. We certainly don't want that. We're going to use the next five or six days to get ourselves back to where we were. I thought we were coming into Vegas. I thought your practices were good, our mojo was good, I thought our body language was good.

Boy, when things started going bad for us on the floor, we don't come together as a group right now, we kind of splinter, and that's not a good sign.

THE MODERATOR: Are there nights when you feel like it's not the night?

TAD BOYLE: No, I mean, look, you've got to figure out a way to win when you don't play your best. And we haven't figured that out. We've done that in November and December a little bit. It's a long season, but we haven't been able to do that as late. It's hard to do late in the season because other teams are better.

Washington State wants to win just like we do. They don't want their season to end. We talk all the time about it's not going to be given to us. You have to earn what you get. Especially in March. And harder to win late in the year.

You've got to have better fight and better toughness than we had tonight. I thought offensively in the first half we just got pumped at times. We turned the ball over. They were the aggressors, and that's why they were up ten.

I still thought we could get back and win that game. I really felt like that at halftime. I felt like that midway through the second half. We cut it to ten in the second half, but we could never cut it to less than that, we kept giving up a three or fouled a jump shooter or we didn't box out on a free throw.

You can point to a lot of different plays that game defensively where it's like, okay, we're switching our ball screen, we fall down, the guy goes in and gets an and one. Unless you get stops, you can't get back in

games, and we weren't able to do that this game.

Q. All year long this team has had a habit of fouling three-point shooters. We saw it even against Northern Iowa. Why has this team been unable to correct that?

TAD BOYLE: I've got to do a better job as their coach. Maybe we've got to drill it more. We talk about it a lot, we show it on film a lot. We fouled two three-point shooters, fouled a two-point shooter, too. I'm not sure it was a foul, but it was called a foul. 18 jump shooters we fouled this year, at least that's to my count.

And that's something when the season is over with I'll look at. Something we have to get better at because this team, for some reason, it just happens. I think we gave up two four-point plays tonight. I have to do a better job.

Q. McKinley, can you tell me what's going on with the squad right now emotionally and trying to get back to where you were? It's been a struggle the last couple of games.

MCKINLEY WRIGHT: Obviously it sucks right now on the losing side. Came here to win a Pac-12 Championship and fell short. It's not how we wanted it to be.

But I love my team. I'll never give up on these guys. And especially these two, Tyler to my left and Coach Boyle, they believed in me since I stepped on campus. They've got my trust and I've got theirs.

Q. You know how tough a rebuild is, and you take a look at the other sideline, what Kyle Smith has been able to do, first year in Pullman, how tough is it in what he's going through and what he's built so far?

TAD BOYLE: I think Kyle Smith, Washington, State, Mark Fox, Cal, and they won a big game tonight before us, beat Stanford, and obviously Mick Cronin at UCLA, all three coaches that came into this league are good coaches. And they've made our league better. And that's a good thing. Kyle is a good coach. They've got some talented guys. CJ Elleby is a good player. And Bonton is a really capable scorer. Jervae Robinson can shoot the ball. He's done a nice job with that team. And they just try to find a way to stay in games.

And I wish I could honestly say that I feel like Washington State beat us tonight. And the credit goes to them, don't get me wrong, I don't want to take anything away from Washington State. As the coach from Colorado, I felt like we beat ourselves with our lack of ability to execute offensively and to get any stops defensively in the second half. But Kyle has done a great job, he's got a good team. And I wish him the

best.

Q. For the players, Coach just alluded to this, when things start to go wrong for this bunch right now, it just seems to snowball and you can't snap out of it. Do you sense that on the floor? Do you feel like that happens when things start going against you?

TYLER BEY: I don't know. I feel like when we miss shots, we put our heads down and it affects our defense. But we can't have that. We've got to just keep our composure and just move on from it. That's something we've got to work on.

Q. Tyler, a follow-up real quick. You guys are at your low point, probably playing some of your worst basketball of the year, if not the worst. How do you guys put this in the rearview, sleep on it tonight with that bad feeling and go into probably a tournament game and have to get back to that team that was 21-6?

TYLER BEY: I feel like we're going to figure it out. We've got one more chance to make it in a tournament. And we've got to come together as a team and just figure it out. We've got to go practice hard and keep watching film to learn from our mistakes.

Q. Coach, can you put your finger on or have any explanation for what has happened to D'Shawn Schwartz in the last few weeks? He looks like a player that's completely lost his confidence.

TAD BOYLE: He's not the only one. I'm not going to call a kid out. Because D'Shawn is a good player, and he's a great young man. And he works as hard on his game as anyone we have, especially shooting the basketball. Confidence is a real delicate thing as a coach. I've really tried to be positive with D'Shawn. He's got to believe in himself. I think self-belief -- the one thing I know about McKinley and Tyler, these two guys really believe in themselves. I said this after the Cal game, I said if the rest of our guys believed in themselves as much as they believe in McKinley and I would put Tyler in there, too, because they've got a lot of belief in these two guys, they are our horses. But these guys need some help. It's not just D'Shawn, it's a multitude of guys. You look at the stat sheet tonight and thank god Tyler and McKinley were on our team. It would have been really, really ugly. It was ugly, but it would have been really ugly. We've got to have some guys step up.

And that's the challenge I have as a coach. It's so much more of a psychological thing right now than it is a physical thing. And I said this facetiously a few years ago, but I said if I knew I was going to coach, I didn't know I was going to coach when I went to college, but if I did know I would have majored in psychology not in business, and it would serve me well right now. Right now I'm trying to find a way to be positive with these

guys and get them to believe in themselves. And that's a tricky thing to do.