

Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 11 2020

Larry Krystkowiak

Timmy Allen

Alfonso Plummer

Both Gach

Utah

Oregon State - 71, Utah - 69

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: The end, they made two big threes in the last 30 seconds. And I thought we lacked a little discipline on the second to the last one, and then we tried to step in on penetration for the last one and weren't fortunate enough to get the call. But they hit two big threes, and obviously two really nice passes that led to that.

Proud of the resolve and the fight with our guys. We obviously had an unbelievable shooting performance by Alfonso. And out-rebounded them, which I thought was a positive. But 17 turnovers, you're not going to win very many ballgames at the 1-3-1, half court disrupted us, as it has a few teams this year. We spent some time preparing on it, but thought those were some of the keys to the game.

Q. Just given the way that Alfonso shot the ball and the fact you guys were up 13 in the second half, how tough is this loss to take?

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: Thanks for reminding me. They're always hard to take, regardless. And there really aren't any little things in the game, and come out on the losing -- it's really tough. I wasn't ready to speak to our team at the end of the conference tournament. I didn't think it was going to happen quite yet.

But it's kind of the harsh reality, being 80 or 100 feet away from Oregon State at one end of the spectrum celebrating in their locker room, and then it's kind of the epitome of sports, we all ride the highs and lows of it.

Our guys played really well in the first half, had an eight-point lead and came in and extended that, and then we got stagnant with turnovers. We still had open looks, a bunch of really nice open looks. They didn't go in for us, and give credit to Oregon State for rallying behind that 1-3-1.



Q. Is there any way you can celebrate this personally?

ALFONSO PLUMMER: Just trying to help the team to win this one. So I'm just going to go back to the gym, try to get better for the next year.

Q. It's been an up-and-down kind of year for you guys, but you've always been competitive. Can you sum up this team and the season to this point right now?

TIMMY ALLEN: We stayed the course. Never gave in. Never gave up. Just together.

Q. The NIT would still appear to be an option for you guys. My question is how will you guys spend the next few days, and would you welcome an NIT bid if one were to come down Sunday night?

LARRY KRYSTKOWIAK: Oh, for sure. This group, as Timmy said, is connected. It's as positive of a culture that we've had at Utah, and we've got a number of young kids. We've been talking about it all year. It's been a little bit of the story line. I don't think anybody wanted to talk about our youth, but the reality is when you look at the team that we just played, and you've got a couple of seniors in Kelley and Tinkle and Ethan, a lot of reps.

And there's a number of times where we've got four or five guys on the floor, oftentimes four freshmen. And this is about a process. That's in our practice facility all over the place, trust the process. You're judged by wins and losses, obviously. But what we need is experience. If we can garner some experience from being in an NIT tournament because we weren't qualified for the NCAA Tournament, then we'd love it.

We can keep growing. It was one of the best experiences I had. I know this isn't the time of year to talk about the NIT in light of our tournament and everybody's aspirations to be in the NCAA.

But when we got to the championship game of that thing a few years ago, that was one of the best basketball experiences I had. And so that would be our goal is to try to get back there, and we'd be committed to doing that.

Q. Alfonso, at one point during the game you hit

seven straight threes. What was going through your mind at that time?

ALFONSO PLUMMER: Just playing with confidence. My teammates trust me. They give me the ball to shoot open shots.

shooting. Just keep the confidence I played today. So, yeah, just stay in the gym, keep shooting.

Q. Coach just touched upon what a young group this is, but also a group that has an incredibly special bond. If this group stays together, what are some things that are possible in the long run?

BOTH GACH: I feel like we can do something special. Our coach keeps saying we've got a young team, we stay the course, continue to get better, and I just feel like we make something happen in the long run.

Q. You got the ball back with 50 seconds to go. Was there any consideration or maybe you did try to get maybe a two-for-one so you might have the last shot? You were up by one point?

LARRY KRYSKOWIAK: No, not in that environment with the trap, in particular. It's really hard to manufacture a shot. If you can run some man stuff, maybe you have a quick hitter.

But it's really not as much of a play against the 1-3-1. We put our guys in positions to make plays. If something presented itself. We were all for it, but we weren't going to try to force anything.

Q. Just from your vantage point, how did the complexion of that game change? They threw a man at you, a 2-3 at you. How did things change when they went to a 1-3-1?

LARRY KRYSKOWIAK: If you watch the Colorado game, Oregon State was down big at Colorado, gets you standing a little bit, more than anything. And, again, against the 1-3-1, we had a pretty good plan against man, I thought we did a nice job executing the 2-3 zone, it got a little bit more complicated.

If we look back on it, I know there was a number of open threes. It wasn't the matter of the defense being stifling. It gets you standing around, and when you get an open look against the 1-3-1, it's the unique pressure you don't feel at other points in the game.

Those shots didn't go in. I thought we had some really good looks. Credit the defense. We knew it was coming. They played a number of different defenses all year. And we missed some open looks.

Q. Alfonso, I was wondering, you ended the season really well. You started shooting better than you had the rest of the season. How are you going to keep that going possibly in the NIT or also next season?

ALFONSO PLUMMER: Just go to the gym. Keep