



**Head Coach Wes Miller Press Conference
Cincinnati 84, South Florida 65
Feb. 11, 2023**

Opening Statement

"I'm pleased with the second half. I told the guys in the locker room it's, it's tough. You feel like you're playing your best basketball you've played all year the last couple of weeks and within a matter of minutes Wednesday night or Tuesday night Rob Phinisee who's was really given us something, getting back into the swing and Vik (Lakhin) goes down. And that's tough on the team, you can say whatever you want, our team feels it and that's frustrating and tough. But we talk about this a lot as a group. It's not about what happens it's about how we respond to what happens. And I thought we responded really well in the second half tonight to what happened in the first half, or the frustration of those two going down and not being available. So, I'm proud of that. I think that says a lot about our leadership and our locker room and I think about David DeJulius first when I think about that. I'm proud of him. I thought he really did some nice things to try to get us going defensively and get our grit and our edge going defensively tonight that might not show up in the stat sheet. That might not be the cool thing to talk about, but there's some possessions where he just sits down and defends and it makes the rest of our team want to defend. So, I was proud of him. Needless to say, guys, the second half was what you want to see, we got our hands on balls, our defense was active, defense leads to offense. Jeremiah (Davenport) I thought played some of his best offensive basketball and defensive basketball there in the second half and that gave us a huge lift. We're asking so much of Dave (DeJulius) and Ody (Oguama) and Chez (Landers Nolley) from a minute standpoint right now. And I thought they were all terrific even though it wasn't Landers' night shooting the ball. So, the second half was something I'm proud of. There were some things in the first half that were very frustrating. I'm sure they were frustrating to watch. But again, I liked how we came out and responded second half."

On adjusting without Viktor Lakhin and Rob Phinisee

"It's hard because you want to go to practice and get more rhythm for Kalu and playing Oguama and him together because we have had success with a bigger lineup. It's very difficult because DeJulius, Nolley and Ody played heavy minutes and we can't run them into the ground because they are going to have heavy minutes again tonight. You can only ask so much of them because of what we ask of them every night. This is what we have to do in February and walk that tightrope. All of these guys adjusted great and found a rhythm offensively without Lakhin, who is such a big part of our game."

On Ody Oguama's career-high 18 points and 9-for-9 shooting

"He was finishing well early in the season but went through a tough stretch in conference play where you could see it was in his head. He went and worked at his game to get extra time in the gym and focus more in practice and now he is starting to finish again over the last couple of weeks. I love seeing him finish with a career high 18 points and 9 for 9 from the floor."

On his conversation with Davenport in the first half

"God, I love Jeremiah Davenport. I love them all but I love Davenport. What is great about him is that you can coach him very hard. We talk about him being prideful and proud but I have dug into him pretty hard because I didn't like some of the decisions he made. It is amazing because you get to know these guys more than what you all see on the court. He is one of the better offensive talents we have in college basketball with his ability to shoot it and stretch the floor. I want him to be aggressive and take shots and make plays but sometimes it goes a little too far. I have seen this when he was putting his head down in traffic and shooting fade aways and these are like turnovers. We have been working through this with him the last couple of weeks and he has taken steps in the right direction. The bottom line is when he takes the floor, he wants Cincinnati to win basketball games. He is fun to coach and I am proud of how he responded tonight."