

2015 Basketball Championship

Second/Third Rounds - Seattle, Washington

Friday, March 20

Iowa 83 - Davidson 52

Iowa

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

COACH MCCAFFERY: I want to say that I'm not sure we can play much better than we played in this game. I'm really proud of our team, their focus. I have tremendous respect for Bob McKillop, known him a long time. The team he has and the job that they did this year, it's a terrific win to beat them on any day. But I thought defensively, I don't know whether you can play much better than we played in this game. We were able to get our transition game going early, our execution at half court was also very good, whether we were in motion or in sets. I think that these three guys were spectacular.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You played terrific tonight. What was the defense giving you, how did you get that done?

AARON WHITE: First of all, thank you. Looking at the roster size before the game I knew I had a size advantage to whoever I was guarding. I got to give credit to my teammates also Coach McCaffery for running a lot of stuff for me to get me in position to score. But there's a stretch there where I was just feeling confident, feeling good with my shot, with my hook shot and I was finishing around the basket. So, but most of the credit goes to my teammates and the coach for running stuff for me.

Q. Coach, your size, you're big, you've been big all season but tonight how did that really play out for you game-plan wise and execution wise?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I thought we did a really good job contesting the three-point line. It's not easy against this team because they have three-point shooters who can also drive one through four. So, our length disrupted their ability to get comfortable threes. We didn't give up a lot of driving kick threes either. We didn't give them any, well very many, second shot broken play threes. We rebounded the ball. So I think that's, in a nutshell, what you have to do. You got to limit them to one. We dominated the glass, which in theory we should because of our size, but they are typically a very good running rebounding team. They play small, and they shoot a ton of threes, so the ball's



coming off long and they go get them around the elbow, in the middle of the lane, and we didn't give them those second shot kick out threes on the same possession. I think that was very important.

Q. Coach, first round ouster in the Big Ten tournament. Are you a rested team coming here? And as you know, there's another team in the state that won a conference tournament championship and finds themselves -- their season over. So can you talk about from Chicago to here and how your team responded?

COACH MCCAFFERY: All I can tell you is after we lost that game, which we obviously fought hard to win, we just locked in and waited for the bids to come out and knew we were going to be in it. And the professionalism that we showed was tremendous in terms of -- obviously, it's a new team, we haven't played them, we haven't played anybody in that league, didn't know any of the personnel. I thought that we did an unbelievable job of knowing and understanding the nuances of every player on that team. Because if you don't, they will carve you up. I think that was the difference.

Q. How big was Kalinoski getting the third foul early on in the game?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Well, Bob took him out and then we went a little run, he put him in because he felt like he needed him in there and we got a third one on him pretty quick. He's in a tough spot. He's trying to guard Whitey or Jerry. He's giving up quite a bit of size. Now conversely, it's, it can be a tough cover for those guys. We did a good job on him, I thought. But what it did, I think, it put a lot of pressure on Gibbs and Sullivan and I thought they did play a lot of minutes. I thought as the second half wore on, they looked tired to me. And I think a lot of it was because they had to play a lot more minutes because he didn't play as much.

Q. There's a lot of discussion about the tempo with which Davidson likes to play, but that's also the tempo you guys like to play. It just doesn't always work out that way in the Big Ten. Did that play into your hands as far as not only the way your defense was able to get stops and run, but the fact that's exactly what you wanted to do?

AARON WHITE: Yeah, obviously following us that we

like to run off the misses. Today it was crucial to get those misses where we could run, get in our transition. The Big Ten, every team does a good job of stopping our transition game pretty good, setting guys back. But tonight I think it was huge that we played the defense that we were able to play opening up our transition game. We were able to throw up the floor, our bigs run like they always do, so, yeah, it was a good part of the game for us. It's big for us to get stops so we can get out in transition.

MIKE GESELL: I agree with that. We want to get out and run and they want to get out and run, but we don't want to just trade baskets the whole game. We want to have our defense feel our transition game and the stops and rebounds let us get out and get running. We were able to get quite a few stops. We always harp on getting consecutive stops so you can make runs. We did a great job of that tonight. And then our wings and everything really got out and ran, we got the ball in quick.

Q. There's been a lot of discussion about Iowa not winning a NCAA game since 2001. Kind of a monkey your players have carried even though they haven't been here 14 years. But they spoke highly that that was a motivating factor. Does this feel like it's another step in the program?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Well I think everybody that competes at the Division-I level wants to play in the NCAA Tournament and wants to win and advance. I think it's a sign of the quality of players that we have and the character that we have in our program that we're able to come out here and beat a really good team on this stage. So, I don't really look at it like that. I don't look at it in terms of historical perspective. I look at it in terms of this particular team's journey. How we came together, how we have had bumps in the road, and how we -- I think in the last month and a half, have played as well as any team in the country in terms of understanding what we have to do defensively and what we have to do offensively. Our execution has been excellent. Taking care of the ball has been excellent. We have rebounded the basketball. We have been together, as together a group as I've ever been around and that's what makes me proud. You can talk about the history.

Q. For Peter, just talk about your comfort tonight, seems like your confidence might be at an all time high right now. You're stroking the ball good. Talk about your performance and what it's going to do for you maybe in terms of Sunday no matter who you play.

PETER JOK: I came out here crashing in the beginning of the game, but then when I went out the coaches and some of the players jumped on me and to be more

aggressive. So when I went back in, I just tried to be more aggressive and I just scored.

Q. I saw you high fiving every member of the pep band, is that something new for you?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Well, the pep band's never by the locker room cheering me when I come back off the floor. They were going crazy. They needed some recognition, Mike. We appreciate them coming all the way out here with us and the job that they do for us all year long. They really do a tremendous job. There's a big break in our mid semester and those guys make a lot of noise and they make our arena a tough place to play. So I wanted to thank them.

Q. Northern Iowa is here, you guys are here, just a statement about the state of Iowa having two teams in this region and these will be Sunday your game will be I believe Sunday late, so we'll cap the first round of this third round of this tournament, so state of Iowa two teams out here in Seattle.

COACH MCCAFFERY: I'm not surprised that Northern Iowa is here, they have got a tremendous team. We played them, they beat us. They won 31 games. You kind of expect them to be here. We won 12 games in our toughest league in the country and we're sitting there at 6-6 and basically decided we're going to be a NCAA Tournament team. We had some games that everybody said, okay, whoever wins this game is in, the other team is on the bubble, all that kind of stuff. We kept winning. We won on the road. We were really tough road team all year long. Going back to we beat Carolina on the road and got a number of road wins in our league, which is very difficult to do. So I think what you have is you've got tremendous basketball programs in our state. One of them got beat, but they're also a terrific program. They won their conference tournament and they were a three seed, but that's what this team, that's what this tournament is. Sometimes you get nipped, sometimes you advance, but it doesn't change the fact that we have got three pretty special programs in our state and we're very proud of that.

Q. These kind of defensive performances, they're not magic, you have to work at it. Can you kind of describe the intensity of your practices this week on defensive end and how quickly the team is able to get in tune and apply it throughout the week.

AARON WHITE: I thought we did a good job in prepping for this game. Obviously Coach McCaffery goes back and knows Coach McKillop well and how he plays. Coach Speraw did a great job of getting us ready for this game. We had a couple days off before Selection Sunday, we got right back to work after Selection Sunday when we knew who we were playing. I thought we really got after it especially on the

defensive end. I thought as a group we were real professional in how we approached the game, watching film, listening to the game plan from the coaches, and executing that on the floor. It's one thing to understand it and to know it, it's another thing to turn that around and execute on the floor. We were able to do that. When it comes to defense, defense is all about effort and want to. You got to want to play defense and you got to play hard defensively. A team like this who constantly is in motion, constantly cutting, four, five, three-point shooters on the floor at once, you got to be locked in each and every possession. Credit to us, we were able to do that.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you.

COACH MCCAFFERY: Thank you.

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think one of the things we go back to the history that I have with Coach McKillop, I think when you battled a guy, it's kind of like we, to get to the tournament, we had to go through them and they had to go through us for a good three or four years. You get to know how a guy coaches. So, we were able to convey that to these guys but like Aaron said, you can convey what they do -- Davidson's one of the best screening teams you will face. They screen and get people open. They cut hard. They free each other up. They have willing passers and they have good passers at every position. So they're going to find people, if you're not locked in and in your stance. So we switched as needed and so sometimes Gabe's on point guard and Mike's on the power forward, you got to know what those guys do and how they're going to get open and how they're going to try to score. I thought our guys really knew and understood that and really made it hard for them. We didn't shut them out, but we had a number of situations where we had consecutive stops. We had eight three stops or more. Which is pretty impressive against anybody, but especially against this team.

Q. What is it like as a basketball fan to see Aaron take over a game like that in the second half?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Well, when have you somebody of his caliber and his character, you try to utilize him in a variety of different ways. The thing that's beautiful about him is he can dominate a game and not score 26. But when he gets going, it's incumbent upon me and my staff to get him the ball and then what we do is get him the ball in various locations, we post him up, we pop him out, we isolate him on driving action, and when he gets going like that, it becomes infectious to the rest of the team. When you're playing at the energy level that he plays with, that's what everybody else wants to do. So the beautiful thing I think about him and our team today is when he was really cooking, we weren't trading baskets, we were going back and getting stops. That's how you extend the lead and that's what the real good teams do and that's what the great ones do and he's a great one.