

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Drake vs Miami (FL)

Friday, March 17, 2023

Albany, New York, USA

MVP Arena

Drake Bulldogs

Coach Darian DeVries

Roman Penn

Darnell Brodie

Media Conference

Miami - 63, Drake - 56

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Drake University, the coach and student-athletes. Mr. DeVries, if you could provide some opening comments. Thank you.

DARIAN DeVRIES: Incredibly proud of our team's effort tonight. I thought they played their hearts out. Congratulations to Miami. Really good team. Congratulate them on advancing.

Certainly disappointed, disappointed for our group that we weren't able to pull that out, but I thought overall we played a really, really good 35, 37 minutes, and couldn't quite finish it out.

Q. Roman, you were -- it was a team effort, but you were on Isaiah Wong a lot tonight. You held the ACC Player of the Year to five points, and most of those were off free throws. Can you just talk about what you did, what the team did to kind of limit his touches?

ROMAN PENN: Yeah, I think we had a great couple days of preparation against Miami, preparing for a Player of the Year. He's a great talent. You know, just trying to make it difficult as much as we can.

It's hard against a great player like that, but I think it was a great team effort. It wasn't just me, but it was a lot of guys who contributed to making it hard on him. At the end of the day, he's a great player, and he made some plays toward the end of the game.

Q. Roman, I mean, what's it mean to end your college



career here in this arena where you started it?

ROMAN PENN: Not the end we wanted, just kind of disappointed how it ended. I'm blessed to be back here in Albany and happy to play in front of some Siena fans and just some family and friends.

Just disappointed how it ended, but really grateful to be in this position and just thankful.

Q. Darnell, congratulations on a big game. Can you talk about Norchad Omier? There was a lot of question whether he would play, and he did play, but you still dominated in the paint. You guys had a lot of points in the paint. Can you just talk about how you guys dominated inside?

DARNELL BRODIE: He's a great player. He's strong. Probably one of the strongest players I played against all year. Tonight the matchup with him was fun.

Q. Roman, for you, this is probably a tough thing to ask right after a loss, but you've been with this program for five years now. Looking ahead at the team that's going to be coming back, what do you see in them that they can continue the success that you and your teammates have built?

ROMAN PENN: Just a bunch of potential. Coach has built a great program here at Drake. Us coming here, we just kind of wanted to lay the blueprint down for future Bulldogs hopefully and just hope to continue the tradition and keep on winning and playing hard.

We'll always be here, a part of the program, always here to help out. I'm just grateful, blessed to be a part of this program. The ceiling is super high for these guys, and with Coach in the hands of the program, the sky's the limit.

Q. Darnell, can you just go a little bit further on that? You had a disappointing final five minutes obviously, but the season as a whole, you're pretty proud of what you guys accomplished and where you're leaving the program?



DARNELL BRODIE: Oh, yeah. Just this whole season has been a crazy season. We came a long way, and we worked hard to be here. So yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, student-athletes.

I'll take questions for Coach DeVries.

Q. So we all know that Darnell isn't the most talkative guy on the team, but he, at least in the last three games, has been a guy that's led by example on the floor. Can you just talk about what he's done coming from the conference championship and what he did in this game?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I thought the way he finished the year was a big reason why we're here today. He continued with that today. He had an excellent game with 20 and 9.

His physicality gives us something that's much needed. We're not a very big team, so having him in there to give us some low post presence at both ends of the floor has been really big for us. Tonight I thought he was really good.

Q. What about Miami's press made it so tough to break?

DARIAN DeVRIES: We had worked on it all week, and we hadn't been pressed a lot this year. I thought we had handled it pretty well in our practices. They did a good job. They were aggressive with it.

Unfortunately we had a couple turnovers in there late in the game that allowed them to kind of get back in there and tied it up.

Like I told the guys, we had done a lot of things right up to that point. Give Miami credit for making some plays there to get that game tied back up.

Q. With Isaiah, Isaiah Wong and Jordan Miller, who are normally sort of the calm leaders of that team, struggling, can you talk about what Wooga Poplar and Nijel Pack did and just the 16-1 run at the end? Why do you think they were able to do that in those closing minutes?

DARIAN DeVRIES: I thought in order to take away Wong, we had to give up something. So we had to -- we tried to make him play in a crowd a little bit. So some other guys had some opportunities for some better looks, but we were willing to live with that.

Down the stretch, like I told the team, we had that six-point

lead or so. We had a couple turnovers. Then I had told the team I didn't do a very good job of getting us in something a little better in some possessions there late that we could have had a little more movement, a little more action to try and get something a little cleaner. I thought we had some pretty stale possessions. Like I told them, that's on me.

Q. Coach, you're 14-1 at home this season, and I mention that because MVP Arena for a while tonight sounded like Knapp Center East. You had a great travel and a lot of tremendous support here.

DARIAN DeVRIES: We did have a lot of fans that made the trip out here. So I was certainly thankful for that. It was a great environment, great atmosphere. It's what this is all about.

Unfortunately, we came up on the wrong end of it.

Q. Talk about the team's defensive effort, holding a team like Miami to 63 points and 30.4 percent shooting.

DARIAN DeVRIES: I thought defensively, I thought the guys competed really hard. They did a great job of keeping them out of the paint. It was just one of those games that they got to the free-throw line a little bit too much with 29 free throws, but outside of that, I thought we did a really good job of taking away what we wanted to and then living with some.

I was really proud of the guys. I thought they really competed there on the defensive end.

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