

Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Colorado Buffaloes

Tad Boyle

Postgame Press Conference

Colorado - 61, California - 58

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement by coach.

TAD BOYLE: Look, March is all about surviving and advancing, tournament basketball. I think it was Coach Valvano that came up with that, if I'm correct. But we survived tonight and we're advancing. But we didn't play our best basketball. Cal had a lot to do with that. I thought they, they're so physical and they got hot going in the second half. We fouled three three-point jump shooters in the second half. I mean, just, you should never foul one. We fouled three of them. One of them I was just like, I'm not sure. But whatever, I mean, we can't do that. We got two timeouts and we get a five-second call on our press offense.

So, look, we didn't play our best basketball. We were sped up. Cal sped us up for some reason tonight. We were rushed. Evan was rushed in the first half, McKinley was rushed, D'Shawn was rushed. We had a -- we didn't make any plays in transition. For as good a defense as we played, we didn't get any, we didn't capitalize on our transition offense at all tonight.

So you got to figure out a way to win when you don't play your best, we did that tonight, and we weren't at our best. And but again Cal had a lot to do with that and I've got great respect for what Mark Fox is doing. They have had a rough year in terms of wins and losses, but, man, they have been in every game and tonight's another example. They didn't give up and they made it hard on us. So we got a quick turnaround tomorrow to play the Trojans.

Q. The defensive job by Eli on Matt Bradley, obviously Bradley's a guy that has kind of torched you guys the last couple years, but he hit a couple shots late, but Eli seemed pretty motivated from the get-go tonight?

TAD BOYLE: Eli was terrific and did an unbelievable job.



And, again, I think Matt Bradley was scoreless until we fouled him on a three-point jump shot and he made three free throws and saw the ball go in the basket, and then he started feeling it a little bit. But we held him scoreless at halftime. We were trying to double-team him in any handoffs or ball screens that he was a part of, to try to get the ball out of his hands and we did a good job of that and I think it frustrated him in the first half. But he's a good player and he torched us in Berkeley for 27. So we had to come up with something. I thought we did a good job of that, for the most part. They scored a couple times out of it. Anticevich hit a three there in the corner because we didn't get to him. But Eli was terrific all night and I don't know how many of his 10 he got on Eli. I know the three free throws were not on him. But terrific effort from a First-Team All-Defensive player.

Q. Earlier this week you talked about wanting to get your post guys going a little bit more offensively, and both Evan and Dallas tonight were able to get themselves going, probably more in the first half for Dallas, Evan more so in the second half. What did you see from those two tonight, just their ability to finish and get to the line and then how encouraging was that to get your post offense going again?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, we need those guys to get going because if you look at their numbers over the last five or six games, they both have struggled a little bit from a percentage standpoint, relative to what we normally expect out of both of them. I thought Dallas with a terrific in that first half. He kind of kept us in the game and hit the three and then hit a 15-foot jump shot. They went to zone there at the end when I called the timeout. I wish he would have shot that one because Dallas is a good shooter. But you're right, he kind of kept us going in the first half, and then Evan got going emotionally in the second half, and he plays so hard and he's got such a passion for the game that, those guys are important to us. Jabari Walker, great minutes off the bench. Jeriah Horne, again, wasn't probably his best tonight but did some really good things for us. And rebounding the ball is going to be key for us. We play USC tomorrow night. They're the longest team in our league in terms of length and height, so we're going to need to rebound tomorrow night. But I thought we battled



on the boards tonight and our bigs were a big part of that.

Q. Looking ahead to tomorrow night, you guys have beaten USC twice, what do you expect them to do differently against you guys tomorrow night? Do you expect them to change things up or?

TAD BOYLE: I don't know, Coach Rohn has that scout. I know he was watching them on the plane on the way out in hopes that we would be playing them tomorrow night and we are. So I'll probably have a better feel for that in the morning after Coach and I get together when we get back to the hotel tonight and talk about our game plan and what USC's been doing here recently. As a head coach you don't get the opportunity to probably watch as many games as you would like to sometimes. You catch pieces of them.

But USC's a very talented team. We know that. They present a lot of problems. Obviously they beat UCLA on the road, which is hard to do. Taj Eaddy is playing very well, and obviously Evan Mobley, look at the post-season awards he got. He's a terrific player. So USC's got great personnel, so I don't know what they're going to do. But this time of year you don't see a lot of changes in terms of what people do, but there might be some nuances here or there that we'll have to either anticipate or we'll have to adjust to tomorrow night.

Q. Jabari had some moments tonight where, you mentioned a little bit, but there was some sloppy moments from you guys and he just looked like a bull in a China shop to kind of get you guys going, get you back into a flow. For him to have that in his first ever post-season game that's pretty big-time stuff, right?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, absolutely. The thing about Jabari all year long, is he plays with no fear, doesn't play with any hesitation, he believes in himself, and his motor is just so good and he just gets his hands on so many balls, rebounding the ball. I mean, he snatched a rebound tonight with one hand, which we don't teach, but he went up and got it and he finished, didn't get the foul, but he put the ball in the basket. It was just a big-time play by a guy, who just, he just comes in and plays with zero fear. So Jabari, it's great to have him back. He hit a big-time three that McKinley hit him on and didn't hesitate, he knew he was going to shoot it before he caught it and he stepped in and knocked it down. The thing I like about our team is our depth in the post. Dallas Walton and Evan Battey start for us, but you got Jabari and Jeriah that come off the bench. That's four guys that you can depend on on any given night, and Jabari was good in his minutes tonight. But had some freshman mistakes as well, but I was overall pretty pleased with him.

Q. Curious, with the two overtime games ahead of

yours, including the double overtime right ahead of yours, this thing tipped off about an hour late. I realize it was the same situation for you and Cal. But wondering, is there any kind of inherent challenge to you get geared up to play a big game and then you kind of find yourself in a hurry up and wait situation?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, not really. It's just part of it. These kids have played and a lot of them have played in state tournaments in high school and that happens and it happens in AAU events that they play in coming up, so, yeah, not really. Here's what I like about our team. Our team is enjoying this moment and they were, in today's technology world, they had the game on on their phones, they were following it, they were just enjoying themselves. And I want them to do that because I think, what I don't want is I don't want us to play tight, I don't want us to play like, oh, my God, you know, if we don't win this game, the world's coming to an end. I want them to enjoy the moment, enjoy March Madness, and part of that is watching other people that you're going to compete against and obviously we're going to play one of those two teams tonight, so they watched a lot of that game down the stretch, so that hopefully that will help us in our preparation tomorrow.

But this time of year, especially in league tournaments like this, there's no secrets, there's no secrets that we have that USC doesn't know about. I don't think there's a lot of secrets that they have that we don't know about. It's just who is going to execute and play best tomorrow night. We're going to have to play well to beat them. We're going to have to play better than we played tonight, I can promise you that, and I really believe that we will.

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Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Colorado Buffaloes

Evan Battey

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado - 61, California - 58

Q. How much of a battle was it out there tonight? I know things weren't going the way you guys hoped them to, but you still pulled away and advanced.

EVAN BATTEY: Yeah, Cal's a good team and they compete and they fight and they're a physical team. So nothing easy is going to come in March and I feel like we did what we needed to do to win this game. Obviously we can play better on the offensive end, but we guarded and that's what, I say this all the time, but that's what our program is founded off of, and he gives us a chance to win every night, defend and rebound.

So you can, you take your wins anywhere you can get them. And we're not satisfied. We know we have a talented team tomorrow, talented, good, well-coached team. So we're going to be prepared and try to win that game. So it's March, it's, there's no really explaining it, it's just March.

Q. I know McKinley kind of leads the way for you guys, but it seems like when you guys are at your best you're getting contributions from across the board. Was tonight a good example of that? Dallas obviously had a big burst in the first half and then yourself and a few other guys made key contributions at times in the second half.

EVAN BATTEY: Yeah, you said it. Our team is the best when we get contributions from everybody. We have a lot of just solid guys. We have some quality depth. So when one guy is maybe not playing as well, other guys around him on our team can step up their game and I mean that, 1 through 18, we have 18 guys on our team and I have confidence in and I believe in every one of our guys. So I just, that just says the culture we have here at this program and it just, it's a beautiful thing to see when dudes might not be having the best night and we can stay in it and we can get behind it and we can ultimately drive it forward

despite that.

Q. The last time you guys saw Cal, Matt Bradley dropped almost 30 point. Tonight for the vast majority of the game Eli was pretty much able to shut him down. From your perspective and just being in the locker room with Eli, how much do you think he was looking forward to that one-on-one rematch with Bradley and how important was it for Eli to win that battle for the majority of the game, just D'ing him up one-on-one?

EVAN BATTEY: Eli's a hell of a competitor and guys know Eli doesn't back down from nobody. He might not be the biggest, he might not be, or probably is the fastest, but he might not jump the highest probably does that too, but he's going to compete, and it speaks -- the First Team All Defense or the All Defensive Team that he made, that speaks for itself. He puts in the work every day, he guards McKinley every day, he guards Keeshawn, fastest guards, every day in practice, so he's prepared and he -- I have to give him a whole lot of credit because he can guard multiple positions and he can, if he's not taller than you, he can still battle you and still use his strength. So Eli's a really good player and I'm going to be excited for next year with him, for sure.

Q. Looking at tomorrow, you guys have done a pretty good job of at least making life rough for Evan Mobley in your couple matchups. Obviously you play a big part of that. What do you guys have to do to be able to do that for a third time?

EVAN BATTEY: Yeah, Evan Mobley is, he's Evan Mobley, you know? All the credit in the world goes to him because he's such a good player. You can't really stop those guys. When you have a guy of that talent and that level, you can't really stop those guys, you can only hope to contain them. So we're going to do the best we can to contain him and limit his impact on the game.

Q. How much reflection do you do on tonight's game or do you just flush it as soon as possible and start working on that game plan and what you guys are thinking going into tomorrow against USC?

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EVAN BATTEY: I feel like everybody's different. Some people might flush it right now, some people might think about it for the rest of the day, for the rest of the night. I'm certainly going to look back on this game and realize stuff where I can get better. My post feed to Dallas, shitty pass -- sorry for the language -- it's things like that, little things. It's nothing big, but the little things is what matters in March. You just want to get better every day and that's, the teams that can get better every day and trend upwards, that's the teams that win in March. So obviously we have a short turnaround, so we can't harp on this game too much, but I think I'm going to give it some time to think about it, think about ways I can get better and come in tomorrow with a fresh mindset.

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Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

California Golden Bears

Mark Fox

Postgame Press Conference

Colorado - 61, California - 58.

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

MARK FOX: Well, I thought that our team played super hard and really gave an effort to compete. I thought that the fatigue of back-to-back games showed a little bit in our offense. I thought our defense was very good. It's disappointing when the last shot goes in and out like it did tonight versus a very good Colorado team, who we wish well in the NCAA tournament.

But under the circumstances of the season and all that these players have had to endure, which I don't think most people have any idea, it was an effort that I was proud of, but we came up short.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for coach.

Q. For much of the game they were trapping Bradley every time he got the ball near the top of the key. How should you guys have responded differently to that?

MARK FOX: Well, I don't think you're accurate in that it was only at the top of the key. They trapped him only ball screens on the wings as well, and so we went to some isolations for him, and I thought that a couple times we didn't come, on the pass out we didn't come meet the ball. I think that he finally got a little bit of rhythm in the second half. I probably played Matt, 38 minutes last night was a lot, and in hindsight I probably should have tried to save a couple minutes on him last night because I thought he looked a little fatigued today. But I won't be critical of our players. Execution in that situation wasn't as clean as we wanted, but I thought our intent and our decision was the right way.

Q. Can I ask you about Brown's defensively play against McKinley Wright. It seemed like he did a pretty good job of staying in front of him making it difficult



for one of the best players in the league.

MARK FOX: Well, I thought our defense was terrific. The foul situation was frustrating and, but I thought that we hold them to 61 points and 38 percent from the field, I have little complaint with our defense. I thought Joel gave us a really, really good effort.

Q. You sort of touched on it a little bit in your opening remark, but could you talk a little bit just about what you told your players after the game, considering how well and hard they played tonight and considering how hard this season has been for, as you said, for all of them?

MARK FOX: I told them that a year ago we didn't have a chance to experience this pain because we didn't get a chance to play the game. I thought we played our best basketball of the year yesterday and then today our defense was terrific again. We weren't as good offensively tonight but these kids have been away from their families, some of them, for over a calendar year, but most of them for nine months and not, haven't been allowed to even see their parents or their brothers and their sisters and they haven't had them come to any games until yesterday. I mean, they haven't been able to go to the barber shop. We have been cutting each other's hair, and they haven't been able to watch film, they don't have a locker room. They showed up every day and dressed on the sidelines. And they don't have a film room, and it's been an unbelievable ask of us, of these young people. And because they love to play, they signed up for it, they didn't complain about it, and we went through thousands of COVID tests without one positive. And so what I told them was I was proud of them because there's going to be hard times in life and you got to get through them. And sometimes you got to get through them before you can start succeeding. But I think what they have endured in the past several months is something I have a lot of respect for.

Q. First off, it was a 24-20 edge for Colorado, and then in the second half you guys actually outscored them 38-37. But a lot more scoring in the second half than the first half. What do you think accounted for that?



MARK FOX: They difference in the first half is they had seven free throw makes and we had one. That was the difference in the first half. So that essentially was the difference in the game.

And obviously in the second half usually the scoring's a little higher in the second half than the first and the difference in the game was the free throw differential in the first half. Both teams shot 38 percent, both teams played terrific defense, but that was the difference in the game.

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Friday, March 12, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

California Golden Bears

Grant Anticevich

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado - 61, California - 58

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

Q. Grant, could you just talk about how difficult this season was and what your level of optimism is for next year? Because you're coming back and so you obviously think it's worth your time. Pretty young team generally. What do you see coming in the future for you guys?

GRANT ANTICEVICH: Yeah, I think that the COVID-season has definitely been hard and it's taken a toll, it's been taxing on a lot of people and a lot of people have had to go through it and it's been tough. But I'm proud of the way that we have gotten through it, I think we have done a good job for the most part and we have kept working and not let it affect us as much as possible, which I'm proud of how we did as a team and, yeah, I'm extremely excited about next year, I think that we're going to have a really good team, I think we have a good team this year, we played some good basketball the last couple weeks, and I think if we keep playing like that and just keep building on the way we played these last couple weeks this pass season I think we'll be a tough team to beat.

Q. You guys played for most of tonight played really well defensively again. Especially early in the game at the other end. What do you think happened offensively tonight?

GRANT ANTICEVICH: I got to give some credit to their defense. They're a really good defensive team and I think especially in the first half I think both teams were playing really good defense, and we weren't able to get a couple of shots to drop, we were getting a couple to drop here and there, but I think we were kind of doing the right things, I think it was like a high-intensity game it was a low-scoring game, which the is the way we wanted it to be, so, yeah.

Q. I was just wondering how much confidence did you

guys take coming into this game knowing that you guys have beaten them last time at your building, how much confidence did that give you going into this game, because you played them tough?

GRANT ANTICEVICH: Yeah, obviously it gives us confidence but Colorado's a great team and we have a lot of respect for them and knew coming into the game it was going to be a battle. And that they were going to play hard and play well. So we knew we had our work cut out for us, but obviously having won a game before, that kind of gives us that little confidence, I guess a little edge we feel like we can have, but we knew it was going to be a competitive game, regardless.

Q. I thought one of the most impressive things from you guys tonight was a rare night Matt Bradley did not score very well, and then he fouls out, which to me watching the game when Matt fouled out after he had gotten going, I figured, okay, well that's the end of the game and it really wasn't. Why were you guys able to play so well when Matt had an off night and he fouled out?

GRANT ANTICEVICH: Yeah, Matt played really hard. He got some foul calls and got fouled out. But he got it going and then I think everyone had to -- we knew we had to step up when he got fouled out. We knew the game was close and we knew we could get the win and we feel like we could and we kept battling and we kept just making plays, I think everyone stepped up and played aggressively, played assertively. And unfortunately it didn't go our way. But towards the end it was, the game was depending upon that last shot, so we were right there.

Q. You said the last shot, when you saw it leave Makale's hand did you think it was in?

GRANT ANTICEVICH: Yeah, I mean he's hit that shot before. He hit it I think against San Francisco -- yeah, San Francisco where he just shot the last couple seconds to win us the game. So that's his shot, he hits that shot all the time and when I see it I thought it was going to be good, obviously it didn't go in but he shoots that shot all the time and that's a shot that we like for him to take.

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Q. D.J. Thorpe had a pretty nice game tonight. Showed some things, especially offensively that we haven't seen a lot. What do you think he can give you guys going forward?

GRANT ANTICEVICH: Yeah, I think he played really well, I think he was active defensively and offensively he was assertive. He was making plays, he was being strong down in the paint in the block and making some big-time plays, especially when we needed him of the. So he played really well and I think he's just going to keep improving.

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