

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Georgetown vs Colorado

Saturday, March 20, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Hinkle Fieldhouse

Colorado Buffaloes Tad Boyle

Postgame Media Conference

Colorado 96, Georgetown 73

TAD BOYLE: You know, the first thing I would like to say is that I've got great respect for Patrick Ewing and Georgetown University and their basketball program. You know, it's kind of ironic that when we got here last Sunday morning at like 2:00 in the morning and you walk in the team room, one of the gifts for the players and everybody in your travel party was a book, autobiography from John Thompson, who obviously was a coach at Georgetown, recruited Patrick. I read about the first two chapters. I've been busy with film and stuff, but it's a great read. It's a book that I've really encouraged our players to read, certainly this spring or maybe this summer. Maybe some of them have dug into it already.

Again, what Georgetown University represents and the basketball tradition that they have and really the man that John Thompson was, I think it's important that we recognize that, acknowledge it, and I would encourage anybody listening to get a copy of that book and read it. Again, he was a special man, and I know he changed a lot of lives, Patrick Ewing's was one of them, and Patrick admits that. I just want to tip my hat to Georgetown.

Q. Two questions, two-parter. Number one, this is the first tournament victory for you in a while, and you and I both had a little more hair back then. What's it mean to you? And second, the players have talked about getting into their music and being happy before this game. Do you have music or do you listen to music or not?

TAD BOYLE: I do it on my walks, especially here in Indianapolis through the convention center. I just got AirPods for the first time in my life. I think that was a Christmas gift from my wife. I don't listen to it before games. I'm really kind of locked in to what our game plan



is, what plays I'm going to run for who at what times and that sort of thing.

Yeah, our players, look, we have been a resilient team all year long. Last Saturday night when we played for the Pac-12 championship, we were not ourselves. The guys were, again, a little tense, and I think they were too worried about the end game versus just enjoying the moment and letting it all hang loose.

We talked about that this week, and our players talked about it amongst themselves in our team meeting that we had on Tuesday or Wednesday. It was on Tuesday, I believe. Tonight was a totally different kind of mentality, and we've got to keep that. We've got to keep being loose, but understand the game plan, and enjoying the moment, and hey, let it all hang out, pin your ears back and let's go have some fun, and when adversity hits, let's fight through it together.

This team has been doing it after losses all year long, so I don't know why this should be any different.

Q. Coach, if you guys play defense like this going forward, do you like your chances with whatever comes next?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, when we guard, we're really, really good. Now, we didn't guard very well in the second half. They scored 50 points, and we've got to do a better job of guarding without fouling. We put Georgetown on the foul line too much tonight, so we've got to get our hands back and move our feet a little bit better.

But yeah, defense and rebounding -- now we got out-rebounded by one tonight, which I wasn't happy with, but when you make shots like we made tonight, it makes up for so many things, and that's what we have to really understand as a group is that on Monday whoever we play, if we're not making shots, we'd better be guarding better than we did in the second half. In the first half we did a really good job of it. But defense and rebounding keeps you in every game. And then on nights like this when you're making shots like we made, it's going to be a little bit easier.



But through this tournament, there will be some droughts, and again, depending on who we play, we've got to dial into that game plan.

Q. Strictly in terms of points in the paint, you guys were plus 8 tonight. I know you could assume they were going to attack the low post, but just with respect to that part of the defensive game plan, how pleased were you with the execution of that and just stopping their big guys down low?

TAD BOYLE: Very much so. I'm not sure we stopped them. Wahab had 20. He's a good player. They do a good job in their ball screens looking for him and rolling. He rolls and catches and finishes as good as any big we've played against all year long.

But the fact that we beat them in paint points and he still got 20 is a testament to our guys offensively because we wanted our threes to come as a result of our paint touches and attacking the rim, whether it was in transition, whether it was in the half court, and our guys did a good job of that.

When we're attacking the rim and finishing at the rim like we did tonight and we're kicking out for threes and making threes, we're a really, really hard team to guard. You think about as good as we were offensively tonight and Jeriah Horne really wasn't a big part of that, and we know how good of a shooter Jeriah is and how he stretches the defense. Jabari was feeling it tonight. D'Shawn made some big threes. Eli made a couple of them, but we're going to get Jeriah going and hopefully we'll be even harder to guard.

But we always want to play inside-out. The threes come as a result of paint touches, either by our bigs or by our guards penetrating.

Q. Is that as good a 40 minutes as you guys can play?

TAD BOYLE: You know, offensively I think it's pretty close to it. We had 12 assists. I thought we got a little careless there at the end. We didn't handle our press as well as I would have liked to because I think if we would have been a little bit more aggressive we could have got something on the other end of it.

On the offensive end, yeah, it's as good as we can play. Defensively we can do a better job of not fouling and we can't give up 50 points in the second half. But you score 90-some points and you shoot the way we shot tonight, again, it makes up for a lot.

Great first game. Kind of got the jitters out. Our guys were

amped up before the game. There's no doubt about that. But they -- and then we lost our poise a couple of times in that second half, but we regained it, and credit to our seniors and our players for playing with poise because we talked about that the second half, play with confidence, play with poise and play with aggressiveness, and I thought we did that for the most part for 40 minutes.

Q. Talk about the implications of their kind of like dropping the big man halfway down the lane on a pick-and-roll. It seemed to really open up your pick-and-pop and your perimeter ball movement action. Talk about that.

TAD BOYLE: It did, yes. I mentioned on our radio here with Mark Johnson, Wahab at the 5 gives us problems in terms of his ability to roll and score in the paint because he's a really good low-post scorer and their screen-and-roll game is pretty darned good. On the other end of the floor with Wahab, sometimes he shows or tonight he was plugging, we felt like we had the advantage on that in terms of pick-and-popping. We had a couple sets that we were ready to run to pick-and-pop with our 5 man, which we normally don't do, but because of his plugging and kind of being in the lane there, we wanted to stretch the defense with our 5.

Dallas made a three, which he's capable of doing, but we also got Jabari in some pick-and-pop, especially after he made the first one out of the motion set, and then once Jabari makes one, he kind of gets -- he's kind of a rhythm shooter and we ran a couple pick-and-pop plays for him because when he was in with Jeriah, Wahab was guarding Jabari, and that's a really hard lineup when you have a pick-and-pop 5 man and they have a big guy like Wahab, that makes it really difficult for them, especially when our 5s are shooting it like they can they and they did tonight.

We tried to expose that the best we could, and I think our guys did a good job of it.

Q. McKinley had 12 and 5 and then 13 assists. He out-assisted Georgetown by himself. How important was he in his ball movement for the win?

TAD BOYLE: Huge, because you could tell Georgetown's defensive game plan, or at least part of it, was to when McKinley came off ball screens to really make him play in a crowd and not let him score the ball. When that's happened before at times this year McKinley has gotten frustrated. Tonight he didn't. He just took what the defense gave him. Our bigs did a great job of rolling or popping, depending on the case, but McKinley did a terrific job of just being patient.

There in the second half, Evan set a high ball screen for him and rolled and McKinley just kept the ball, kept the ball, engaged the big and then boom, hit Evan with a pocket pass for a wide open lay-up. Again, we were shooting the ball so well, they were sticking with our shooters on the tags and McKinley played a really heady game from a ball screen read standpoint. It's as good as he's done all year long with his reads in the ball screen consistently.

He didn't get frustrated with his lack of scoring because we want McKinley to be a scoring point guard. That's what he is. But you've got to take what the defense gives you, and our guys did a really good job of that tonight. 27 assists on 34 baskets means you're moving the ball and you're making some shots.

Q. So much is made of upperclassmen guard play this time of year. Between McKinley always wanting to get on to this stage and the way he played tonight and then what Eli Parquet did today, what did you see out of your guards?

TAD BOYLE: Well, they played terrific, terrific basketball. Those two guys combined defensively are so underrated because people look at their size and maybe lack of length, but Eli Parquet is as good of an athlete as we have on our team, and McKinley, he's an All-PAC-12 level defender. He's one of the top five defensive players in our league. I know Eli got that award this year, but McKinley as a sophomore and junior was first team all-league on defense. We know those two can really guard.

Eli has really done a good job of playing his role and taking open shots and making open shots for us. He did that again tonight. He doesn't force things. Those two guys, we've got a lot of confidence in those two guys in the backcourt. They're going to need to play well as this thing advances because you're exactly right, guard play means a lot this time of year in this tournament.

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know when you're going to be back. They said, just come out, smile, have fun while playing the game. One of the things we did in the Pac-12 championship, we were too tense. We had too much pressure on our shoulders. So just let all that go, just our brothers, just lock in and just play free.

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Q. Congrats on the win. Do you think you guys made a statement today kind of laying it to the Big East champ, and what do you think you proved to fans that may not have been able to watch you all season long?

JABARI WALKER: Well, it was crazy coming into this game. We were like the underdog, even being a 5 seed, everybody had us losing this game. So we just met I think it was yesterday as a team, and it was like, there was really no pressure. Just come into this game, we're the underdog, nobody has us winning. Anything we do from now on, nobody expected it. Just go in there with that underdog mindset, trying to prove everybody wrong, and really we wear the warm-up shirt, it's just us. It's us versus everybody, just this group.

Q. Is this as good all around as you guys have played for 40 minutes this season?

JABARI WALKER: Can you repeat your question?

Q. Just wondering if this is as good a 40-minute performance as you guys have put together this season?

JABARI WALKER: Yeah, I think so. It's definitely up there. Later on in the season, our shots weren't really falling like they were tonight, and we said eventually they would fall, so just keep trusting the process, and tonight we had several guys get hot, so definitely one of our best shooting performances.

Defensively we all locked in and the motto today was just going in and playing happy. For some of the seniors, this is their first appearance here, so I'm blessed to be here and I just want to enjoy this moment because you never

Q. I guess a lot of people were saying maybe you guys might lose this game because of the Georgetown mystique. How did you guys keep that out of your minds and how much did you know about Patrick Ewing and how nice was it to beat Georgetown?

JABARI WALKER: It was really good, especially with them winning their championship in their conference, everybody thought they were hot and they were on a roll and they had us losing this game. But really we just focused on our group, focused on what we could control. Like all our guys believed, if we're playing our best basketball, there are not too many teams in this country that could beat us. With a guard -- we have the most versatile guys. We can guard pretty much every position. We can score in so many different ways. We're a dangerous team. A lot of teams can't run with us. There's just so many skill sets that we have.

The seniors, they just lead us, so just with all that, it is really hard to beat us, I believe.

Q. You guys were so good from three tonight, and strangely enough it really didn't seem like Georgetown was getting a lot of hands in your faces early on or contesting shots. I don't want to say they were daring you to shoot the long ball, but it didn't really look like, especially with how good you guys were from deep, that they were doing much about it. What were you seeing defensively from them and was there kind of lack of pressure? Was that encouraging in you guys wanting to get up those three-pointers?

JABARI WALKER: Yeah, I was definitely surprised. I noticed when I first caught the ball he was kind of far, and I thought, I'm going to wait it out, we'll see how he continues to guard it, and then we ran a couple plays that came to me, and I just found myself getting wide open, and I



thought surely after the first few that they would get a hand up, and then I just kept finding myself open. I was a little confused. Maybe that was part of the scouting report or I don't know what was going on, but I got open shots, and just like I continue to say, it's my job to knock them down, and I've been able to do a good job at that.

Q. When you and everybody else on the team, including Dallas Walton, are channeling their inner Steph Curry, do you get a look in each other's guys like it's going in? What the heck was happening in the first half? You shoot 65 percent from three, you're going to beat a lot of teams.

JABARI WALKER: Yeah, maybe it's contagious. I think I started off, D'Shawn kept it going, and then Dallas. Next thing you know Dallas is up hitting threes. I would have liked Jeriah to get hot. That would have made it even more fun. They haven't seen Jeriah get hot yet and they don't want to see Jeriah get hot. If they would have happened tonight, they would have seen even more threes going in the basket.

Q. You mentioned the senior leadership there a little bit. I know McKinley ended up with 13 assists. How much does he bring to this offense and to the team from a leadership perspective?

JABARI WALKER: Can you repeat that question one more time, please?

Q. I just asked about McKinley and what he brings to this offense as well as the leadership standpoint, as well.

JABARI WALKER: Yeah, there's so much that I don't even realize yet playing with him. I'll probably see it next year. But just having him initiate the offense, it just makes my job easy. I really don't have to do too much. He just finds me when I'm open. When he shoots the ball, you don't realize how many people are going after to block his shot. So helps me getting offensive rebounds. Just keeping us in the right mentality, keeping us composed. He's been in like so many situations and his experience has carried this team.

It's a blessing to have somebody like him and like all these seniors that we have on this team, especially with it being my first year playing college basketball.

Q. When you saw them kind of soft drop your big man and pick-and-roll, it really opened up the pick-and-pop as well as the deep corners through ball movement, did you lick your chops a little bit? Because it seemed like that scheme played into what you guys wanted to

do, you were getting wide open shots.

JABARI WALKER: Well, originally the plan was for me to just start rolling, and I think my first three came in just like a motion set and just me getting open. When we seen that they were kind of focusing on Kin a little bit too much, then we started to run a couple plays that had me getting open for three, and we just attacked that, attacked that part of their defense.

It wasn't really designed for me to just come off and start shooting threes like that tonight, but we just took what the defense gave us and just kept going from there.

Q. You shot 90 percent from the field today, man. How did you feel before the game?

JABARI WALKER: I felt happy. Just listening to my music and just happy with the guys, dancing before the game, getting back to what we usually do. This last game against Oregon State I felt like we were a little tense and all the guys know that. Like I said, just relieving that pressure and remembering it's just basketball. We're supposed to have fun while we're here, it's not supposed to be stressful.

Everybody had us losing this game, so we just played with a chip on our shoulder and we played free. I got back to my normal routine, having fun before the game, laughing with my guys, and just being relaxed.

Q. Your father played four tournament games back when he was at Louisville and averaged about 13 points a game. My question for you, what has he told you or taught you about what it takes to win games in March, and how does it feel to know that you're now averaging 24 points a game, ahead of him right now?

JABARI WALKER: It feels good. We didn't really talk about March Madness or anything like that to be honest. He just told me that it was a big platform, just -- not to come out here with any pressure, just do what I'm supposed to do, just play the game that I play. Nothing special, just do the little things like I always do, and eventually everything will work itself out. It wasn't too much. He called me and he said, I'm not going to fill your ear with nothing, but I'm just telling you, just play your game and play stress-free, and that's what I went out there and did.

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PATRICK EWING: Disappointed with the outcome. We've had a very good run. We picked the first game of the NCAA Tournament to not play our best game, and I'm disappointed about that.

Q. Obviously a disappointing performance today but still a great season overall. What do you have to say about this Georgetown team and your guys overall?

PATRICK EWING: Overall I'm very proud of our guys. Considering where they had us ranked, considering the obstacles that we had to overcome to get to this point. Naturally I'm disappointed in the outcome, I'm disappointed that we didn't play our best game, but I also have to take my hat off to Colorado. They played an outstanding game.

They did what they do best: They shot the ball extremely well from the three, they were able to get some pick-and-roll -- hitting the roll man. So I take my hat off to them. Coach did an outstanding job.

Q. You spoke a little bit about it as far as how proud you are of the guys, especially with what has happened through this year of the pandemic and everything. Do you feel like because of this year and what you saw from your team that that mystique from the Georgetown of the past is coming back?

PATRICK EWING: You know, I think we're still -- our book is still being written. We have accomplished a lot this year.

A lot of people didn't think that we were going to be here. We did an outstanding job of winning the Big East Tournament to give ourselves an opportunity to be here. Like I said before, disappointed in the fact that we didn't play our best game, but our future is bright.

We still have a lot of work that we have to do, but I believe



in my team. I believe in my university, and I think that we'll be back next year.

Q. What do you tell the players after a game like this and after the season, of course?

PATRICK EWING: First of all, I'd like to applaud them for getting us here, but then I also got to talk to them about the fact that we didn't bring our "A" game. In order to beat a team like Colorado, you have to be able to bring your "A" game, and today was not our "A" game.

Q. Talk about your team's defensive effort on the perimeter. There were a lot of guys overstuffed and lost on some pick-and-pops.

PATRICK EWING: Like I said, we didn't bring our "A" game, both offensively and defensively. The things that we were doing great in the Big East Tournament we didn't do well today. Part of it was they're a very good team, but they're no different than any other teams that we had to play in the Big East. We just did not get the job done today.

Q. As a player you represented Georgetown in the 1980s. Can you describe a different perspective playing versus coaching in the March Madness?

PATRICK EWING: The only difference is back then I was the one getting it done on the floor. As a coach you've got to be the one putting them -- trying to put them in the right position to get the job done. Back then, Coach Thompson was the one that -- he was drawing up the plays and getting us into position to be successful, and now it's come full circle, now I'm the one that's trying to get it done.

Q. Looking back at that first half, the free-throw shooting for your team, did that kind of allow Colorado to build a bigger lead than maybe you would have wanted?

PATRICK EWING: Yes, it did. I think in the first half we missed like 11 free throws and also front end of one-and-ones. That's 11 points we gave away. The lead wouldn't have been as significant, and then you're trying to



dig yourself out of that large of a hole, it just made it tough.

Q. I know it's been a successful season for you guys and you've talked about making steps along the way. Obviously the season just ended, but have you had a chance or do you plan to talk to seniors given the possibility they have to return?

PATRICK EWING: Right now I haven't even thought about that. This game is fresh on my mind, the disappointment of this game. I need to take a couple of days to exhale and then I'll think about that later.

Q. McKinley Wright, was that the best point guard performance that you've experienced this year?

PATRICK EWING: He's a very good player. I'm not sure if it's the best performance I've seen. We've had some guys in our conference that have done extremely well, also, but he's a very talented young man. You have to take your hat off to him. He plays the right way. He did everything positive for their team both offensively and defensively. He facilitated and also was able to get his shots and make them.

Q. You said a couple times that the team didn't bring their "A" game and that you were disappointed in that. Can you pinpoint as to why that happened?

PATRICK EWING: You know, if I could, we would have done a much better job. We just didn't get it done both offensively and defensively. We struggled to score. We struggled to get stops when we needed to, tried to trap a little bit, tried to get the blood flowing a little bit, and that worked a little bit in the second half, but the lead was just that big that we couldn't overcome it.

Q. I know you talked about being disappointed in the game. I wanted to ask you, being that this is your first time coaching in the tournament, did you learn something as far as not just from your team but just as far as experience coaching in this magnitude?

PATRICK EWING: Well, I mean, every day of life you should learn. This is no different. I think this experience today is going to help me in years to come. It's also going to help my team. I'd rather be here in this tournament playing for the National Championship than be home watching it.

But I think that definitely there is some learning experience. I think this learning -- this experience is going to help me in the long run, but right now it's hard to -- it's a hard pill to swallow.

Q. Your team got four games canceled during the year. How did you guys overcome that adversity? You had four games canceled in January, excuse me.

PATRICK EWING: You know, just like everyone else in America, we had to pause. I think that we tried to keep them locked in, keep them connected, talking to them every day. Once we got out of the COVID pause, we were able to hit the ground running, and I think that the way that we were going at that time, we were struggling. We weren't playing our best ball, and then after the pause I think that's when we started playing our best ball. We came together. We were a more cohesive team, and that helped us. I think the pause definitely helped us.

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Donald Carey

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concern was just winning. I wanted to come here to help contribute to winning. That was the biggest goal. That's the main thing. I'm a winner. Everywhere I go, I just want to win. That means everything to be able to win a Big East Tournament my first year here, and that's going to be the goal for next year and then continuing to play in the NCAA Tournament, as well.

Colorado 96, Georgetown 73

Q. Talk about your team's defensive pressures from the perimeter. They were pretty much able to get every pick-and-pop and every skip to the corner that they wanted, particularly in the first half.

DONALD CAREY: Yeah, we didn't defend the three well. Our goal was to make them play inside-out, but we just didn't get to the three-point line. And credit to them, they shot I think 63 percent from the three-point line, but we didn't execute on the defensive end guarding the three-point line.

Q. Obviously a tough loss today, but when you look back at the season, what do you have to say about this Hoya team and the way this season played out?

DONALD CAREY: You know, just considering COVID, everything was tough. There was a lot of ups and downs, pauses, but every team went through that. I think it was a good year overall. We found ourselves towards the end of the year, Big East Tournament, but it's just a good group of guys in that locker room. We came to practice every day. We toughed out those hard times throughout the whole year.

So I'm just proud of those guys how we fought through and how we played in the Big East Tournament, but today unfortunately we just came up short.

Q. When you transferred back to George -- back home to the Georgetown area, how much does it mean to you winning a Big East title, getting Georgetown kind of back on the map?

DONALD CAREY: It means everything. The first conversation I had with Coach Pat, I told him my main

Q. What kind of challenge did McKinley Wright pose for you guys, just scoring and assisting? I think he had 13 today, seemed to be moving the ball really well.

DONALD CAREY: I mean, he's just a good player. We knew that they kind of played through him. So he was kind of the focal point of our defense, just to stop him, get it back in front of the ball on the pick-and-rolls. But he just did an excellent job, hitting shots when they were there and then finding his guys on the offensive end.

Q. My question to you is was there a player on your team or your opponents that really surprised you today?

DONALD CAREY: I wouldn't say a specific player. I would just say the one thing that surprised me was how well the opponent shot the ball. Like I mentioned earlier, they went 63 percent from the three-point line. I think that was a shocker to all of us. But credit to them for shooting the ball well, but on our end we just didn't defend as we should have defended the three-point line.

Q. This is a final situation, the finality of it all, are you prepared just to say goodbye to so many of your teammates or a number of your teammates because this is the end of the road for many of your guys?

DONALD CAREY: I don't want to say I'm prepared to say goodbye, but every game that we play, starting with the Big East Tournament, I just embraced the whole moment as if it was my last because nothing was guaranteed; you lose and you go home. So every game, every practice, every shootaround, I just kind of let it all sink in and just enjoyed that time that I had because I never knew when it would be my last time.



I'm not ready to say goodbye to them guys, but I still embraced the moment when it came.

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