

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday March 11, 2017

Mike Anderson
Dusty Hannahs
Jaylen Barford
Moses Kingsley
Arkansas

Arkansas - 76, Vanderbilt - 62

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with Arkansas. We'll ask Coach Anderson for some general comments on the game. Then we'll take the questions just for the three student-athletes. And then we'll come back and finish up with the Coach. Coach Anderson.

COACH ANDERSON: I'm really proud of these student-athletes up here and the guys in the locker room. What a tremendous effort, a team win. We came out and got off to a good start against a Vanderbilt team that was probably one of the hottest teams in the country. But we knew we had to do it with defense, and of course, this is their third game in three days.

We figure we had to come out and really kind of make the game chaotic for them and, of course, they didn't make shots. Our defense was really good, especially starting off in the second half. But it was a team effort. Our guys came off the bench, played well. We attacked the paint. That's where we score. We talked about going off the dribble and getting in the paint and scoring. We did that. They got to the free throw lines, we got into the paint in the first half.

I thought the second half we really came out and our defense really turned up the pressure on Vanderbilt and gave us some easy opportunities, and we extended it at times and we just disrupted tonight. We shot the ball well.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jaylen, Dusty or Moses.

Q. For all three guys, I think it's 36-31 at the half. You outscore them 28-6 to open the half. Did you



guys kind of get a sense you were going to break them? What is each of your thoughts on that big second half?

MOSES KINGSLEY: Yeah. We emphasized the first five minutes of the second half. The Coach said let's get started with the first five minutes. That's what we did. We make them take tough shots and rebound and ran with it.

DUSTY HANNAHS: Yeah, we just -- they played -- this was their third game in three days. We knew if we came out the second half would be our half if we just kept running and executing. We started off the half with a basket and Moses had a dunk the next possession. That's a great way to start the half. We fed off of it and got stops, and that was ultimately what propelled us to win.

JAYLEN BARFORD: What Dusty said, we did a great job of containing, just denying the wings like we should, just pushing the ball and keeping the pressure up.

Q. You guys obviously get a shot at Kentucky tomorrow. They're going to play like their 31st SEC Tournament title. What's y'all's feelings about playing Kentucky?

JAYLEN BARFORD: Say the question again, please. My bad.

Q. You have to play Kentucky tomorrow. They won 30-10 in championships games. They're going to have the crowd with them like a home game. Kind of what are your feelings about getting a shot at Kentucky in what's going to be a very tough environment?

JAYLEN BARFORD: It's a neutral site. We got a lot of confidence and we're not too much worried about what Kentucky is doing. We're worrying about what we're doing.

DUSTY HANNAHS: They're a good team, but so are we. We're playing really good basketball right now, and we're ready to face anybody in the country. So it should be a great challenge tomorrow.

MOSES KINGSLEY: Yeah, I feel like we have to come out and play good defense just like we did tonight. If we do that, we're going to be fine.

THE MODERATOR: Other questions for any of the three? One more question, Bob.

Q. Just for Jaylen. You're 4-0 in the State of Tennessee. How does it feel to come back to your home state and close to your home and get these wins and how many family and friends do you have here at the tournament?

JAYLEN BARFORD: Couple friends and family. It's a great feeling to be back home, close to home at least. Last time I was up here, I won a State Championship. I'm going to try to do it tomorrow, too.

THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse you. You can return to the locker room. We'll continue on with questions for Coach Anderson. If you'll raise your hand, get a floor mike to you.

Q. Mike, just you outscore them 28-6 to open the half. What do you think was key to that?

COACH ANDERSON: We came out and got some stops. We fed off the energy. I thought our energy really we got dialed in. We made them push the offense way out on the floor and we got a chance to get some easy opportunities. And again, it feeds your defense and our defense really got going. And offensively we started, continued to attack the basket and started making some shots.

I thought we limited them to second chance points in the second half. And I thought that was a big difference. We got it and got out in transition. Just attacking, attacking, attacking both ends. I thought that was the difference in the game. We attacked them offensively. We made them work on defense. And then, of course, when they had offensively, we worked them as well.

Q. Coach, you won 8 out of your last 9. Looks like going back prior to that stretch, maybe you can really focus in on the fact you guys are really sharing the basketball as well.

COACH ANDERSON: We're playing defense. I think that's the first and most important thing. We outscoring people early on. But I think now we're starting to trust each other offensively and that leads to more assists. Trusting the guy that got the hot hand. The trust factor that you're talking about is not only on offense but on defense. And we're seeing Moses become that rim protector. We're seeing Trey Thompson very, very involved in our defense.

So, I think it's just a combination of guys getting comfortable in what we're doing and trusting one another. Our defense was really good today.

Q. Mike, in the game earlier this year in Lexington,

De'Aaron Fox had a really good game against you. He continues to play real, real well right now. What are your thoughts about being able to contain him this time around? Where are you going to be able to do differently?

COACH ANDERSON: He's a very good basketball player, really quick, shifty. We got to deal with numbers. We can't do it with one-on-one with the guy. We got to build a wall and make him find somebody else. He's one of those guys, he's gets in the lane, as well as Briscoe and Malik is having an outstanding year. Then they got Bam. They got some guys that do more than what we think. I thought the Willis kid has always been a thorn in our side. He plays well against us for some reason.

It's a different game, different venue, different time. It's for the Championship of the SEC Tournament. So, we're looking forward to the opportunity. I'm sure they're looking forward to it as well.

Q. Coach, could you feel Vanderbilt had hit a wall at a certain point in the game, and if so, when was that?

COACH ANDERSON: Well, I saw some of it in the first half. I thought they kind of -- you could see, a little like half step slow in items of making decisions. The shots were short. But I thought in the second half when we kind of really got our defense, we put -- we turned the intensity up. Then you could really see it when we went on the run. Our guys did a good job of staying in the moment and utilizing their momentum. Our bench, again, it's amazing when the bench comes in, it seems like the score really took off.

Q. Coach, I just wanted to ask about this team, you know, it's a marathon, not a sprint in a basketball season. You got off to a slow start in the SEC schedule. How much has the team improved? You seem to be playing your best basketball at the best time.

COACH ANDERSON: I think that's probably something that we talk about our team is built like that. We got so many new players. And even when you talk about you're playing a lot of players and guys that are playing key role. I probably started who knows how many different lineups. But I have eight or nine starters. For those guys to get comfortable with each other, it takes awhile.

I have cautioned a fan, I've cautioned everybody. They will change before your eyes and hopefully be playing some of the better basketball in late February and on into March. And I guess it's starting to take place, and I think it's a tribute to our guys just I think trusting one another and working hard each and every day. And even as we are in our practice right now, our practice

goes 45 minutes. Sometimes less is better.

But I think our energy has been really, really good in the game leading up to now. And we just know our roles now. Let's say a guy like Macon, Macon he's a starter to me. He can come off and light it up. He went for 30 against Ole Miss. I don't know what he had tonight, but he's capable of doing that.

Then you got a guy like Barford. They get more and more comfortable. Takes a lot of pressure off Moses. Right now, Moses in his role with this basketball team, he's a lot more comfortable. I think one of the biggest pluses is the emergence of Trey Thompson. He's adding another dimension to our basketball team.

Q. Mike, Jaylen said it's a neutral site, but I mean Kentucky, they got 99 percent of the fans it seems like. What do you expect tomorrow and how big a challenge from an atmosphere standpoint?

COACH ANDERSON: Great atmosphere. We're looking forward to it. I think our guys will come in and play. It would be played out on the court. That's the bottom line. We're used to playing in front of people. As a basketball player at Arkansas, you play in front of people. We'll have some fans here, too.

THE MODERATOR: Other questions for Coach Anderson? Maybe one more. All right. Thank you.