

NCAA Men's 1st and 2nd Rounds: Orlando

Friday, March 17, 2017

Orlando, Florida



Joe Dooley Brandon Goodwin Zach Johnson FGCU Eagles

Florida State - 86, Florida Gulf Coast - 80

THE MODERATOR: We'll ask Coach Dooley to make an opening statement, and then you can raise your hands for questions.

JOE DOOLEY: First of all, I'd like to congratulate, obviously, Florida State on a win. They've had a terrific year. I told Coach Ham, it's been fun, with the exception of tonight, watching his team, and he's done a great job. The sky's the limit for them. They've got depth, athleticism. They can make a deep run this tournament.

Second part is, obviously, we're disappointed that we lost. I don't think it diminishes the year we had. We're proud of our guys. We had a heck of a year. Disappointing, but hopefully something that we can build on here going forward.

Q. Congratulations on a great season. Joe, can you talk about only 11 turnovers, which is fine against a Florida State team, but many of them of the catastrophic variety that led to breakouts the other way.

JOE DOOLEY: Yeah, our turnovers weren't awful, but we took some unnecessary shots, and I thought that some of the shots that we took were as bad as turnovers, and they created things, and that happens.

Also, to our guys' defense, it's hard to simulate what they do. You can't simulate height and length and athleticism like they have. We just sort of never really got into an offensive rhythm.

That being said, we did take care of the ball, and I thought we battled for the most part.

Q. Joe, obviously, you don't play much zone at all, but you played it tonight quite a bit, and you played it quite well, I think. How important was that for you guys tonight?

JOE DOOLEY: Well, we're really concerned the first

half especially, 30 of their 40 points were in the paint, a lot of it off of driving. They were 0-for-5 from three in the first half. We played good defense on other plays. Bacon jumped up and made a shot, and Isaac jumped up and made a couple shots when they were well guarded. There's a reason Isaac is projected as a top-ten pick. He's skilled. He's athletic. Sometimes we're just better offense than defense.

But the zone, I thought, bought us some time, and we were able to rest our guys a little bit, but also change the tempo of the game a little bit.

THE MODERATOR: Any questions for Brandon or Zach?

Q. Brandon, you talked about the experience of being able to play an ACC team. You don't get to play teams a lot that are in different conferences. What was it like being able to have that competition tonight?

BRANDON GOODWIN: Like Coach said, Florida State is a great team. They're young, very talented. Isaac that's projected, and Bacon that can score, Xavier -- they're all around pretty good.

It was a challenge for us, but I thought we fought pretty hard. We just made some plays that weren't smart, and you can't do that versus that type of team. They're going to capitalize on it, and that's what they did down the stretch. They made plays for each other, and they executed.

Q. First off, Zach, Brandon, congrats on a good season. Brandon, what was that like being out there for you in your first NCAA Tournament game?

BRANDON GOODWIN: It was fun. Like I said, I thought we played really well for the most part. I couldn't be more proud of my teammates for stepping up at that stage and just battling all game. I thought we never gave up. We always pulled each other together, and we talked to one another. So it just makes it that much sweeter next year going in with pretty much the same guys and that stuff, except for our two seniors.

Overall, it was a pretty fun game, and we had fun for the most part, except for the end, of course.

Q. Brandon, kind of touching on what you just

talked about, obviously, you lose Demetris and Norelia. This run was good for you to build off, building last year and building on this year. Heading into next season where you add some pretty doggone good pieces next year.

BRANDON GOODWIN: Definitely. Michael Gilmore, Ricky Doyle, both are great guys that can replace Meech and Marc. Sorry, I'm a little out of it. Today just shows that we can fight. We fought hard, and they came in second in their league, and we played with them and played hard the whole game. So I think that's a little bit of momentum, definitely, going into next year, just having the prize right there and not being able to fully grab it. That definitely makes us a lot more hungry going into next year.

THE MODERATOR: Does anyone have a question for Zach?

Q. Zach, could you just speak to your feelings right now in terms of the entire season. It was successful, but you're in a place right now where it looks like you're pretty bummed out even though you still have two years left.

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, definitely. Looking back at the season, we obviously did some great things, some things we haven't done before, but like you said, kind of took a tough loss. We played real hard. I'm proud of my teammates. I'm proud of Brandon. And I'm proud of the people that's also redshirting to also make us better. They come to practice every day, and they work hard. I'm excited for what we have to come.

THE MODERATOR: One more for Brandon or Zach, and we'll get back to Coach.

Q. Zach, it seemed like in the second half, every time they were poised to pull away, whether it was you, whether it was Brandon, one of you guys hit a big shot to kind of stem the tide and never let the game get out of hand. Can you talk about that?

ZACH JOHNSON: I think with the schedule we played throughout the year, we definitely played a lot of great teams, a lot of good teams, a lot of teams that's in this tournament right now. Just playing in that atmosphere, it kind of prepared us for what we have to face today. If it was Brandon, if it was me, if it was Marc-Eddy, whoever it had to be at the moment, we all look at each other as big players, and big players make big shots when it's needed, and we try to step up and do that.

Q. Joe, could you just talk a little bit about, you guys had five threes that went in and out tonight. It just seems like your game plan seemed to be to try to counter their muscle and athleticism inside by making threes.

JOE DOOLEY: We talked, and we said that we're

probably going to have to make 8, 9, 10, 11 threes to be in the game because they're so big. It's hard to finish at the rim. We're very good at points in the paint, but attacking the paint against those guys -- on the flip side, they played quite a bit of zone in the second half, and we weren't able to get downhill.

We had some good looks. I thought Christian had a couple good ones that rimmed in and out. Marc-Eddy had a couple of mid-range shots that rimmed in and out. That one stretch is where they broke it open a little bit. We had that one stretch where they were up eight or nine. We had two or three that didn't go down that could have changed the complexion of the way it ended.

Q. Joe, what's your overall thoughts on the season and the strides you guys made? And then also, like I asked Brandon, like I spoke about with Brandon, you've got some really nice pieces. You lose a couple of good pieces obviously, but you gain three or four really nice pieces next year.

JOE DOOLEY: We'd like to think we're going to -- first of all, we have -- I think we had a really good year. Just a great year with a disappointing end. And you look back, we hadn't lost a game in double figures since early December. We've been in every game. We fought. We've had games where we looked like we're dead in the water. We came back. We had games where we should have been beaten badly, and we fought back, and we're in every game.

I think it's something to build on. I do like the pieces we have coming back. I think they'll be older. We'll get stronger. I think we're going to add a couple pieces. I think we're trying to sustain this thing, I think going forward we're going to continue to build on this deal.

Q. Joe, once again, congrats on a good season. We noticed that RaySean didn't dress. Is he injured? What's the status of Meech?

JOE DOOLEY: Meech, we're having the doctor evaluate that. Obviously couldn't come back, which was unfortunate. And RaySean tweaked his back earlier in the week, and he couldn't go. Hopefully Meech is okay. We'd like to get him prepared for some professional opportunities. We'll get an X-ray and have our doctor look at it and hopefully it's good.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. Congratulations on a great season.