

NCAA Men's 1st and 2nd

Rounds: Orlando

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Orlando, Florida



Chris Mack

Xavier Musketeers

THE MODERATOR: We have a question in the back on the aisle.

Q. Coach, when did you realize just how good Trevon Bluiett was going to be, and how important is he for your team down the stretch?

CHRIS MACK: I've known Trevon since he was a freshman in high school, and he's been a terrific player at every step of the way, whether it's high school, whether it was AAU, whether he first stepped on the campus. I think his game just continues to evolve. His confidence is at an all-time high.

The way he played in the second half was special yesterday. So I've known it for a while. Like most players, they continue to get better, and Trevon is no different in that regard.

Q. Chris, when you got some Dunkin' Donuts in you last night or this morning, what was your evaluation of FSU once you got to see them in tape?

CHRIS MACK: They're really athletic. They're really long. It's just stating the obvious. It's amazing how Leonard Hamilton's teams play very, very hard all the time. I was an assistant at Wake Forest years ago, and that was always a trademark of his teams that they really battled on the defensive end. They made catches tough. They got deflections. They tried to get you out of whatever you were running.

Yesterday was no different, and that's what we're going to have to handle on Saturday if we expect to advance.

Q. You'll play tomorrow one of the -- probably, I think, the biggest center, the tallest center that you've played against all year.

CHRIS MACK: I won't. (Laughter).

Q. Thank you for correcting my grammar. What's your evaluation of that matchup? Obviously, you guys will want to stick to your game plan, but does that change anything in any way?

CHRIS MACK: I think you have to be extremely smart when you drive the basketball, and drives can't lead to bad decisions, whether that's blocked shots or whether that's traveling violations because you get intimidated.

We have to do a great job of getting multiple paint touches and trying to figure out a way to draw their center out on the floor. Whether it's Ojo or Koumadje, both of those guys do a tremendous job of protecting the rim.

We just have to be solid with our decision making. Easier said than done, and can't get sped up.

Q. Just take us through the maturation process of Quentin this year and obviously in absence of Edmond Sumner, and the way he's handled everything that's been thrown at him.

CHRIS MACK: He's been force fed a whole lot. I couldn't be happier for Q. I think there's nothing greater than actually getting playing experience and being able to play through your mistakes as a college basketball player.

At times when you're coaching, you obviously have to go with more seasoned and experienced players, but we don't have that luxury at the point guard position because Edmond went down. To see Q develop, he's always been a phenomenal defender. Even when he was playing 12 minutes a game, I talked about it all the time. Now he's playing 35 minutes a game. His effort and his intangibles, his quickness, his toughness on the defensive end gives him a chance.

Offensively, I think he's grown immensely. His assist-to-turnover ratio is phenomenal. I know he didn't have a great night last night in terms of turned the ball over one too many times and did it a couple times when they were sort of unforced turnovers. But he's gotten tons better, and I think our team has developed a confidence in Quentin that they didn't have when he first took over. It's been really fun to watch.

Q. Chris, maybe when you were with Skip, either at Xavier or Wake or even you saw Sean go through the time of year when jobs are open and names are mentioned and trying to figure out who's going to land where. I wonder what you learned about that process and how hard it is to go through, and whether the coaching fraternity kind of talks to each other about that during that time.

CHRIS MACK: Yeah, coaches talk all the time. In terms of coaches moving on, I think everybody's different. I think everybody's situation is different. I'm

certainly different from Sean. I'm certainly different from Skip. Both of those guys spent a long, long time at Xavier because Xavier was really, really close to their heart.

But I'm from Cincinnati. I went to Xavier. I'm in a little different place. I also think Xavier is in a much different place than it was five, ten years ago. The league that we're in, as I've said many times this year, is a monster.

How things play out for other coaches, I think coaches have learned that the grass isn't always greener. We certainly have a great thing going at Xavier.

Q. Have you seen it put a strain on guys, though?

CHRIS MACK: The transition's never easy. I really -- I've been a part of one transition when Coach went to Wake Forest. Xavier really, really cares about our basketball program. They put the resources. They've made the commitment. Well before me. It really started with Bob Stack and Bill Daily and the administration who said, hey, we can use basketball to make our university better. That foot on the gas pedal has never really been taken off, and it's a great thing to be a part of.

Q. How unique a challenge is Isaac? Have you faced anyone like him this season?

CHRIS MACK: Oh, wow. Probably not off the top of my head. I have short-term memory. I can barely remember Maryland from the other night.

The unique thing about him is he can do it in a variety of ways. He can post up. He can certainly shoot the basketball from the perimeter. They throw lobs to him. He's a terrific offensive rebounder. He's really, really talented. For as good as he is now and as productive as he is now, I'm glad we don't have to play him in four years because he's going to be even scarier.

He's a challenge. The thing that makes Florida State unique and as difficult as they are now, he's not the only guy. We've played a lot of teams over the years where you can key in on a guy like that because maybe their other players aren't near the talent level. That's not the case with Florida State.

Q. Coach, just asked the guys about the video coordinators and their job last night turning that FSU tape so it breaks it down in personnel and stuff. How important is that for you and your staff to get that immediate feedback and be able to implement that?

CHRIS MACK: Our video coordinator, Ty Sampson, he's incredible at what he does. Not only is he good at getting instant film, he's that type of guy, when your computer goes out and you're offline, he can get it

back. He hits control X, Z, F1 and it's back up and running. He's special. He does a great job.

I'm not that bad, though, with technology. I'm not going to sit up here like a dinosaur and act like I don't know technology, but when things go offline, I usually get frazzled.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks very much. Good luck.