

Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Monday, November 25, 2019

Mark Pope

Jake Toolson

TJ Haws

BYU Cougars

BYU - 78, UCLA - 63

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

MARK POPE: Guys, I couldn't be more proud of my guys. That UCLA team is a really good team and I know Coach. And Mick is a big time coach. I've known him for a long time. We knew that they were going to come in here on fire after starting the season great and having a little setback against who Hofstra at home. And we knew we were going to have our handfull and I'm just proud of our guys. They knew the agenda items that had to be taken care of and they did it. They did it as team with a couple really important fundamental things that we took care of. So I'm super proud of them.

THE MODERATOR: Take questions for the players.

Q. For both guys: How do you guys go out there and shoot 62 percent? It was pretty impressive.

TJ HAWS: I think we were trying to take great shots. And I thought tonight we moved the ball really well, we made them guard us, we moved the ball from side to side, and we kept our dribble alive a little bit, which helped space out the floor and guys stepped up and made big shots tonight. It was great.

JAKE TOOLSON: This is a fun gym to play in. These rims are soft and it feels like a high school gym, so we feel like we can get great shots and the best shot's the open shot. So we wanted to just step up and take those shots tonight and they're going to fall for us.

Q. I'm sure you saw the film on Havstra. They had trouble at times staying in front of their man and guarding the three-point line. Were those things you thought you could exploit because you had a lot of success in both of those areas with beating them off the dribble and at the three-point line.

MARK POPE: Well, I know Coach and one of the things that he's going to make this team great at is they're going to really protect the rim. That's what they do. They really protect and they have guys that can do that. And so, and it's an important part of what they do.



They get the flex and they protect the rim. So our guys actually did an unbelievable job starting with TJ about just extending the play and being really judicious about the decisions he made at the rim, right? He was spectacular and it was contagious on our team. So we knew coming in what makes, what makes now and is going to make UCLA great, because they are going to be really good. And our guys did a really good job of responding to it and being really smart about the decision they made in the key.

Q. In the last 10 minutes what was the difference where you guys were able to pull away and TJ, you really kind of asserted yourself. You had a tough year shooting, a little bit, but coming on strong. What was that difference in the last 10 minutes of the game?

TJ HAWS: I thought we just stayed aggressive and I think something we did really well was we trusted in our game plan. We knew that if we kept moving the ball, if we stayed aggressive, that we were going to get good looks. And for me, I'm just trying to shoot good shots and trying to stay aggressive. And if I can get to the basket, which I did a few times, that helps me get into a rhythm a little bit and that was great for me tonight.

Q. For both guys: How much are you guys looking forward to Kansas tomorrow?

TJ HAWS: That's going to be a blast. That's an incredible program. They have so much history. It's going to be so much fun. The environment's going to be great tomorrow and we're really looking forward to it. It's going to be a fun night.

JAKE TOOLSON: Yeah, I mean, I'm just, I just want to keep doing this. It was a great feel out there tonight. This is one of the best tournaments out there, so, if not the best. So we got another challenge ahead of us tomorrow but all of us are really excited about it and we're going to have another chance at it tomorrow.

Q. Coach, what do you think about playing the No. 4 team tomorrow in the semi-finals?

MARK POPE: Well, listen, Kansas is a great program. They have unbelievable size. Today their perimeter was really, really good, really effective getting to the rim and really effective getting shots and sharing the ball and playing with space. They're long and physical and

capable of guarding. So they got a great coach and a great coaching staff. So that's why you come to this tournament. Like, if we didn't want a chance at Kansas we would have gone to some Mid Major tournament somewhere. But this is where we want to be and we are learning things about ourselves every day. And this team, we're not backing our way into this season. We are chasing the toughest challenges we can get and we're going to get nicked up along the way. We already have gotten nicked up a little bit in terms of being exposed and learning. But you know what's really amazing? You talk about the last 10 minutes of this game, okay, we had last 10 minutes against San Diego State, against Houston and against Boise State. They were pretty similar in situations in terms of it being a close game. And in those three games we won one and loss two and we didn't have the trust in each other that we had tonight down the stretch. Tonight, and it mostly was my fault, but tonight these guys had trust in each other down the stretch knowing that they could continue to extend the play to their next teammate and it was beautiful. It was the best close we have had to a game. So this difficult schedule is beautiful for us to learn who we are. We're a better team now than we were a week ago and hopefully after we play Kansas we'll be a better team tomorrow than we are tonight. And that's the whole point of playing. We want to be the best team we can at the end of this season. That's our whole goal. That's all we have talked about since we started.

Q. It might be different perspectives, Coach Self said the other day that in these types of situations effort and passion maybe win out over scouting report because you just don't have so much time to prepare. What is the key for you guys to preparing on such short notice for a new opponent and especially an opponent like Kansas, player perspective and coach also.

JAKE TOOLSON: I think first and foremost we have to take care of our bodies, get rest, recover, watch the film, see what the game's going to be like. But like you said, it's, here it's three games in three days so it's a fight. And this is a great opportunity to play three games in three days because eventually in the conference tournament that's what it's going to come down to. So we're going to just, we're going to attack this opportunity of three games in three days to really prepare us for what's going to pay off for us this season.

TJ HAWS: Yeah, I think that this team when we have great energy on both ends of the floor we're really good and that helps us block out, it helps us to get rebounds, when we have great energy on offense we're moving fast and we're playing with pace and force and that really helps us. So it can be a challenge to play three

games in three days, especially against great opponents, but I feel like if we can come out and have great energy to start this game and play for 40 minutes we're going to have a great chance tomorrow.

Q. It's clear you have great balance on your team but it's clear when the two of you assert yourself it's a difference-maker. When do you both know when it's time to take over? You both made winning plays down the stretch.

JAKE TOOLSON: I think our mindset or at least I'll speak for myself, my mindset is always to try and make a play and try and help this team win, whether that's grab a rebound or making the extra pass or at times getting shots up and I think the way we played tonight it was we set ourselves up to make plays for each other and then down the stretch especially TJ had the ball in his hands a lot and he was making plays for us and I feel like our mindset was to make a play for our teammate and when you can live there, then things just come back around to you and you're able to help this team win by whatever it is.

TJ HAWS: Yeah, I agree with that completely. I feel like for me I'm trying to make the right basketball play and we have great shooters on this team and so attacking, being aggressive, and if the right play is getting someone else open or if the right play is to shoot, trying to make the right basketball play and I feel like good things are going to happen if I do that.