

Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Mark Pope Dalton Nixon

Kolby Lee

BYU Cougars

Kansas - 71, BYU - 56

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

MARK POPE: Proud of our guys for competing and fighting. We were excited about the opportunity to go compete against Kansas tonight. They're a good team, they're really physical, they're well coached, they played well. We just couldn't answer the bell in the second half. But we're excited to get a chance to play again tomorrow in a great game.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the players.

Q. Can you describe what it was like to go against Kansas' defense?

KOLBY LEE: Kansas is a really good team. And defensively, they make it really hard for an offense to run their stuff. They're really good at keeping it on one side of the floor. And I thought we did a good job trying to work it and get our players in position to make plays, and unfortunately, there were some times where we got good looks and just couldn't hit those shots, those shots that you need to hit to beat a top-5 team like that. But they're really aggressive, they're really intense defensively, and they're a really good team.

DALTON NIXON: They're great team, obviously. They're one of the top teams in the nation for a reason. They are all super athletic, long. We knew that coming in, that they were a great defensive team. At times we played with great force and were able to get what we wanted and other times they caused problems because they did, like you said, they kept it on one side of the floor. And a lot of times we did get great looks but sometimes the ball doesn't fall in and that's the way it goes.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll let you two get back to your team. Open it up for questions for coach.

Q. 20 turnovers tonight. That had to be a key to the bad for you guys?



MARK POPE: Yeah, for sure. They have, I think they have three guys or four guys that are in the top whatever in steals, and certainly that had an impact on us. They do a good job. They do a really good job keeping it on one side of the floor, and they have great length. And they're kind of a ball-first defense or downs. We actually had a really tough time passing out of it against their length. And you're sitting there and you have an open roll and you can't just quite get it to them. So our guys really struggled with that.

I think the frustration for us mounted and we probably didn't handle that as well as we would like to in the second half, and so the credit Kansas for that, they're good. They're good. They can guard. I think they are No. 9 in the country defensively on KenPom's numbers and they've actually played a pretty challenging schedule, so they're probably actually better than that.

Q. Jake's been great, obviously, but tonight was a tough matchup with Agbaji. You talked about the length with Kansas. Was that something that you saw with him, just having a tough time with the matchup?

MARK POPE: I did a poor job finding places for our guys to get downhill. That's what we do is we break down the defense, try to get into a drive and kick game and that's where we operate, that's where we feel like we have some juice. And we just had such a hard time getting to the front line whether it was drag screens or ball screens or stop actions or stagger aways, it was just really hard for us. We kind of - sometimes we'd get a step down and then that gap would close pretty quickly. And that's something that, as Jake continues to progress as an extraordinary basketball player, that's something that we have to help him be able to do, where he actually feels comfortable committing to that gap and making plays there. And so I need to do a better job and he needs to do a better job and we'll grow.

Q. It felt like last night you played a little faster, for some reason tonight it felt like your tempo wasn't as fast. Is it just the quick turnaround or what was it? It just felt like it looked like you weren't, that they weren't playing as fast.

MARK POPE: Well I think first it's Kansas, right? So first it's Kansas. Second, you know, it's my fault my rotation was just too tight. We just, right now we're just

somewhat limited in our depth. So I think I played eight guys last night and so I think we were, we played the least amount of guys yesterday and these guys are carrying a big burden and I'm asking them to go a lot, so that's probably part of it. And also part of it is our learning curve. Our default personality is to have guys a little bit more analytical and contemplative about the game and the decision-making process in the game rather than just going and just trusting the simple play. Yesterday I felt like we made some real progress trusting the simple play and trusting the next guy and a pop rule, a .5 second rule like where, if you don't have something, you're just moving the ball. And today, especially when we got down, we got stuck with guys probably trying a little bit too hard to make a play to fix it, rather than just trusting the guy next to them.