

Kentucky Men's Basketball

Lexington, Ky.

Jan. 29th, 2020

Vanderbilt Head Coach Jerry Stackhouse

On how he thought his team played tonight...

"Our team is growing. I have no complaints on how we competed tonight. They came out with a lot of energy. Obviously, playing in this building, there's great energy. We came out and worked on the things that we've talked about over the last few days. We had some mental lapses in the last game, we came out and corrected some of those. We saw the ball go in the hole a little bit, which built our confidence. In the second half, we had a little bit of fatigue. Nick Richards came back in the game and became a big presence for them with his ability to get on the offensive boards and finish above the rim. In saying that, I have no complaints about how we competed tonight.

On the younger guys on the team playing well at Rupp...

"They performed well. We went to Auburn early in the year and that was a spirited environment, just like here [Rupp]. This was a great test for them. Obviously, in the second half, we hit a low offensively. They had a bit of a rhythm, they [UK] make some tough shots. Everything that was marginal didn't go in our favor today, which happens when you're on the road. You must be prepared for that. Hopefully, we continue to grow and know we must continue to get better. We also must play harder, especially when we're on the road, as opposed to playing at home."

On if Nick Richards looks like an NBA big man...

"Absolutely, I think he has all of the tools. He's still working on his game. I just see how he has improved. You can tell a lot about the guy when you look at his free-throw percentage, how he's improved each year. That lets you know that he's focused on improving and getting better. The sheer ability to play above the rim, set screens and roll, crash the offensive boards. The best Nick Richards that you're going to see isn't going to happen while he is here, at Kentucky, he's going to be a guy who's ceiling is going to be a lot higher at the next level."

On the game plan in the first half and how they executed...

"They run a lot of motion where they have wings that like to turn in to the paint and we didn't want to get off of Richards' body. I think if we had help with the bigs that we normally do, he would have had slips at the rim. We had our guard who was up top help and the first time he helped, (Tyrese) Maxey hit a three at the top key that bounced up near the backboard. We just played the percentage. We were aware of (Immanuel) Quickley and aware of (Nate) Sestina, both of those guys are really good three-point shooters, around 40 percent. And then you take

Maxey, a guy who is shooting 30 percent. They stepped up and knocked down a couple tonight too. We played the numbers and they beat us tonight.

On the good shooting in the first half...

"We're playing guys heavy minutes and I think if we look at Scotty (Pippen Jr.), Max(well Evans), Saben (Lee), Dylan (Disu), all of those guys are 30 plus minutes. Our depth isn't there right now. We tried to get a few minutes from guys, Matt Moyer came in and gave us some good minutes. Braelie Albert did some good things for us. I just think we just need to try to take more timeouts to try to help them rest a little bit, but I think they might have needed it at the end of the game but that's something you battle with as a coach. The media timeouts were good for us. We haven't been shooting the ball at all for the last three games. We've been pretty bad, and for us to get a little confidence to come in here and see it turn for us a little bit, hopefully that's something that can continue."

Things that the Vanderbilt needs to work on...

"Well, I think you know you're not worried so much about the streak and all that type of thing, we're focused on our young group. Obviously we had some setbacks and we fought. Two weeks ago we were a different team. I thought we were a team were fighting for top three, four in this conference. You know we were heading in that direction but adversity set in a little bit, but again, now we have what we have and we're going to continue to build with that, what we have. Obviously there was like a real glaze in everybody's eyes a couple weeks ago when Aaron (Nesmith) went out and I think now they're starting to see, okay we can still do something with the group we have. It's going to take a big effort from everyone, night in and night out and we're going to have to make shots, but if we could defend the way that we are capable of, that will give us a chance to hang around and eventually string together maybe a few games for us this year. Our guys are fighting and they're learning, but I think they take the approach seriously and that's all you can ask for, for a young group like this. They'll get better and we'll have better days ahead."

The effect of team momentum when Dylan (Disu) went out...

"He was all over the place tonight. I think he was shooting the ball well, rebounding the ball really well, he was protecting the rim, had a couple chase down blocks and different things. Like I said, marginal foul calls that changed the game for us when he had to leave the game. I brought him back earlier than I probably should've but he still came back seven, eight minutes because we couldn't afford to have him out of the game. Again, like I said, those are the things you deal with when you go on the road. You have to be ready and prepared to do more than enough, but I thought he was really good all night."

Vanderbilt Student-Athletes

#1, Dylan Disu, Fr, F

On the game overall ...

"I definitely think we grew a lot tonight. We've had a rough stretch of games where we have a good first half and then come out flat in the second and let the other team go on a run, then we find ourselves down on the board. I think we grew in that aspect because we fought the whole game."

On Coach Stackhouse encouraging shooting ...

"I've grown out of passing up shots I know I can make. They always tell me to shoot my shot because I think everybody is getting more comfortable and see what I can do."

On double-double in Rupp ...

"It was cool. I was on a big stage and it's a place I've always dreamed of playing in. Truly a surreal feeling and I had fun, but of course, I wish we could have taken home a win."

#2, Scotty Pippen Jr., G

On what changed in the second half ...

"We stopped getting stops. We had a little lapse on offense and we weren't able to make shots. But in the first half our defense kept us in the game, really."

On potential areas of growth for the team ...

"We play five freshmen, so we're a young team. Saben (Lee) is a junior, Max (Evans) is a junior, Ej(ike Obinna) is a sophomore. So, games like this, close games against teams that are older than us, really help us mature."

On how Kentucky is different from other teams they've played ...

"I would say they're better athletes, they're bigger than most teams. Defensively, they have better shot-blockers, and just all-around better players."

On how he talks to his dad (Scotty Pippen) about basketball ...

"All-around on my game, defensively, offensively. He tells me to play hard, and defensively he tells me to play smart."