

Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Tuesday, November 24, 2015

Bill Self

Devonte' Graham

Perry Ellis

Kansas Jayhawks

KANSAS - 92 UCLA - 73

THE MODERATOR: We now welcome Kansas players to the media room, Perry Ellis and Devonte' Graham.

Q. Perry and Devonte', what was the key to getting off to such a big lead?

PERRY ELLIS: Just defense. That was the key, getting stops and we were getting those stops and we were running, running great, running the floor great and got some easy buckets.

DEVONTE' GRAHAM: Just like Perry said, coming out with energy on the defensive end, especially I felt like we were getting stops early in the game which led to easy buckets, run outs. And we were getting whatever we wanted to early on the offensive end.

Q. Devonte', what was the assignment for you on Alford tonight? Was that a key to the game plan?

DEVONTE' GRAHAM: It was definitely a key to the game plan. It was make things tough for them, don't let them be comfortable. I just tried to get through all the ball screens, staggers, double screens and baseline runners and just make them make tough plays, shoot tough shots.

Q. Perry, you were able to score in a bunch of different ways tonight. How do you feel your game has come along over the course of your Kansas career?

PERRY ELLIS: It came a long way, I feel. Each year I feel like I started shooting the ball better and better. I'm shooting it really well. Just overall I felt like I became a better player and it's been good for me.

Q. What do you think of tomorrow's game and again tonight, Perry, were you very comfortable shooting the ball?

PERRY ELLIS: Yeah, I definitely was comfortable. Just tried to play within the rhythm of the game. It's going to be a tough game tomorrow, good team, so we've just got to get prepared tonight.

Q. Perry, speaking of specifically the game



tomorrow, the front court that Vanderbilt has between Kornet and Damian Jones, couple strong games to open this tournament, what are your thoughts on those guys and the challenge tomorrow?

PERRY ELLIS: Yeah, from what I say saw, they have a great team and their bigs are good. So it's definitely going to be a team effort, have to grind, grind the game out and just try to get a good effort.

Q. When Perry's out there and he can stretch the floor and shoot the three as well as anybody or any of the guards, how difficult does that make you guys to defend?

DEVONTE' GRAHAM: Very difficult because that just opens up the court even more. It helps me and Frank be able to drive, Wayne just to get in the lane. Then most of the time, it's a big guy guarding in Perry, so he just sinks into the paint, which gives Perry a wide open three-point shots, and when he's knocking them down, he's tough to guard.

Q. How much fun has it been the last two nights scoring this many points both of you?

PERRY ELLIS: Oh, it's been fun. We've been out there as a team moving the ball and good things will happen.

THE MODERATOR: Devonte', anything to add to that one?

DEVONTE' GRAHAM: It's been really fun. Like I said earlier, it all starts on the defensive end. Coach just preaches defense, defense, defense. Once we play good defense he just wants us to run, get easy buckets, get the inside out and just play how we play.

Q. Perry, you've been around for a while, obviously, but do you think this team has maybe more offensive firepower than any team you've been on since you've been at Kansas?

PERRY ELLIS: I think so. I think we have a lot of scores. We just, you know, out of the people we have on the team being around also so we know each other's tendencies. It's just going to be a great year.

THE MODERATOR: We now welcome Coach Self to the interview room.

COACH SELF: We played great the first half. I mean,



that's about as well as we played. We played fast and we made shots and we created some points off our defense. So we built a big cushion.

In the second half we just traded baskets. It was a horse contest the second half. But I was really pleased with how we played.

Q. Coach Self, how do you feel like Perry Ellis has come along as a player in the last four years?

COACH SELF: Well, he was a McDonald's All-American. He was highly recruited. He's certainly gotten better every year.

Last year, in my opinion, he was right there to win Player of the Year in the league until he got hurt. Not saying he deserved it, but he was right there.

This year I'd be very disappointed if he didn't put himself in that same position. I think he can play to an All-American type level. He played so well tonight. He shot the ball well. But he's become a much better all-around player.

Q. How important was what Devonte' did on your defense tonight?

COACH SELF: I didn't think we guarded Hamilton or Holiday well at all. I thought we really struggled guarding the ball and they got where they wanted to.

But to me the key to their team is cutting down on good opportunities for Bryce and they still want to play inside out through Tony. Early on we did a pretty good job on Tony, but Devonte' did a great job on Bryce the whole night. He made one field goal and four free throws, and I'm not sure he scored in the second half. So I thought that was as big a key as anything for us.

Q. What do you think about the way you guys have run? I know you always tell the players to do it the last two nights.

COACH SELF: Yeah, we're playing faster. The thing about it is we didn't run the second half because we didn't get any stops. Your defense should lead to your transition as much as anything.

I thought the first half, whether it be missed shots or when the other team shoots 34% or whatnot, you're able to run through passes or create pace off of your defense. It makes it a lot easier. I thought we really pitched ahead great tonight and I thought we attacked the rim very well.

Q. Another low turnover game for your team. Was it the two guards you had playing together or just an experienced team?

COACH SELF: I don't really know. I think we're a

better, although Devonte' didn't have a lot of assists tonight, but we had 15 assists in the first half and just four the second. I think we're a much better passing team than we have been. I think we move the ball better. We drive it better than we have the last couple years.

Even though we look better physically playing big on the wings, it hasn't been as good an offensive basketball team because we've eliminated easy baskets in large part because we haven't been able to feed the post or get our shoulders past guys.

Q. With Luke Kornet and Damian Jones, how much are you looking forward to the match-up with them and Perry Ellis tomorrow and the match-up in general?

COACH SELF: First of all, they're a lot bigger than we are. Their standing height, Perry's 6'7.5", and what are they? 7' and 6'11", the two guys that you mentioned. So we're going to have to play bigger than our standing height. We'll have to utilize our quickness inside. It's a hard match-up for us.

Vanderbilt would be extremely difficult to play and defeat no matter what. But with no day to prepare for a team that runs 100 different sets and they're experienced and they share it. Kevin said it's the most unselfish team he's ever had. After watching him, it's like open man is the go-to guy. They do a great job of sharing it.

Of course, they can stretch it. I heard today, nine guys are shooting 40% from three. I mean, that's unheard of. So to think that you've got to defend all over the court and then they can throw it to two big guys down low that can score on anybody one-on-one, it's going to be hard. They're unorthodox the way they defend in some ways, without me studying it, because he doesn't care if they switch big on little or little on big, so it kind of creates something that you haven't really practiced against a whole lot. It will be difficult. It will be fun, but it will be very difficult.