

# Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Monday, November 21, 2016

**Greg Gard**

**Ethan Happ**

**Bronson Koenig**

Wisconsin Badgers

Wisconsin - 74, Tennessee - 62

THE MODERATOR: From Wisconsin we have Coach Gard and Ethan Happ and Bronson Koenig. We'll start with opening comments from Coach.

COACH GARD: Obviously it's great to be here on the island and the hospitality we received has been terrific. As always trying to get the first game is always the one you want to get under your belt.

I'm proud of our guys how they battled back. And obviously we've got a lot of things to clean up and a lot of things to get better at.

But the resiliency and the fortitude that these guys play with obviously makes them who they are. And there's a lot of things execution-wise we've got to get better at.

But I like how hard they played. I didn't think they flinched when Tennessee made a run, which we knew they would do. There's a lot of things we would take from this. This is what makes this tournament is that you see good competition three days in a row, and you've got to continue to improve from game to game. And it also prepares for what's coming down the road as you get ready for conference play.

I'm so proud of how hard we played. We've got to play a little bit more intelligently as we continue to move forward.

**Q. Bronson, could you talk a little bit about the turnovers, especially early, and just the problem, what kind of things was Tennessee doing to cause that?**

BRONSON KOENIG: I thought they did a pretty good job of getting up and pressuring us, trying to speed us up. And I mean it's early in the year and it was a good test for us and it's just kind of showed us what we need to work on. We need to slow down not let them speed us up. And play at our pace and control the tempo more so.

**Q. Bronson, you had good looks early in the**



**second half. They just weren't falling. Just kind of tell yourself to keep shooting and eventually it will go down?**

BRONSON KOENIG: Yeah, I mean, we'll take a good shot any day. If they're not falling then we always try to get inside-out touches and just keep shooting. And eventually they start falling for us if they start coming down we'll get a lot better.

**Q. Ethan, I don't think you scored in double figures the first three games. Did you feel more comfortable today, like you were getting better looks inside?**

ETHAN HAPP: I think one of the biggest things this team did differently was they didn't double. I have been talking with the coaching staff about doing things more efficiently down low and getting in front of guys rather than flashing up next to them. So I put myself in better spots but they also didn't double.

**Q. Bronson, how effective did you think your zone was in the second half? How comfortable are you guys? I know you've been working on it a while, but how comfortable are you playing zone?**

BRONSON KOENIG: I mean, we're not really used to playing zone in the past year, so it's a work in progress right now. And I thought it was a good change of pace for us to throw it at them and give them a different look.

I thought it shook things up a little bit, but we still, like I said, some of our closeouts weren't as sharp as they needed to be and some other things that we'll clean up in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks. Questions for Coach.

**Q. Can you talk about the turnover differential? At one point I think it was 12-2 early in the second half. What were they doing to you guys, and how big of a challenge is that to overcome?**

COACH GARD: I think a lot like Bronson and Ethan both said, it's more what we're doing to ourselves regardless of the opponent. This is something we continually try to work on. And basically it's playing too fast.

It's not playing at a tempo where you're under control. And some of it is passing and catching fundamentals but a lot of it is footwork in terms of what decisions

we're making when we're in the air, don't have our balance, or we try to throw the ball into places that it has no business going.

It has to be reduced drastically. We know it. We'll continue to work on it. And they understand it. They understand that if we want to become the best we can be throughout the course of the season, that's 18 shots we don't get at the basket. So it will be constantly reinforced and continue to work on it.

But Tennessee, I thought, did a good job at the right times of trying to speed us up. And it's a matter of not so much what they were doing as what, how we responded to it. And it's more the pace that it forces some people to play at that needs to be slowed down a little bit.

**Q. Nigel was pretty quiet for much of the game until the latter part of the second half there. Could you talk about some of the sequences he gave you guys in the final minutes, the weak side blocked shot that led to the 3 and then of course the 3 that ended up being pretty much the dagger for you guys?**

COACH GARD: Yeah, I thought he was -- that's one thing we've talked about is trying to develop him into becoming a more complete player, by that I mean playing -- making game-impacting plays the whole game.

And I thought he was pretty active in the zone. The steal he had, the block he had, he did a pretty good job on that in the back end of it.

But that's the type of impact he can have. And that's what we've talked about a lot with -- he needs to continue to be an everyday player. And he's working on that. But I thought he impacted the game in a lot of different ways on both ends of the floor.

And we got him the ball early inside and didn't come away with much. But at least it set a tone that we need to continue to throw the ball inside and be aggressive at the rim. And obviously we got in the bonus quick which helped us, I think, down the stretch shooting free throws.

Like I said, becoming more consistent that's the biggest thing. We know what he can do. He's a very talented young man. Tremendous player. But it's a matter of that type of impact all the time.

**Q. Can you take us through why you went through the zone when you did and did it serve its purpose, do you think?**

COACH GARD: Yeah, we talked about it as a staff and

looked at film we had seen. That's usually why a decision is made, what we had seen. Because you have very little film from this year. So you're going back to previous years or last year in terms of your decision when it can be effective and when it can't, who it can be effective against.

But I thought what it did, it minimized dribble penetration. And that was something we were having an issue with. We were doing pretty good with it early. And then they were able to find gaps. And we broke a lot of rules defensively early and late in the second half which allowed them to get some momentum.

Then I thought the start of the second half it was more our offensive inefficiency that led to their offense. It wasn't so much what we were doing. It's hard to defend when you turn it over, taking some bad shots and not getting good looks, and when we have to play a transition defense in transition.

So I just thought it was going to give a look for a while and see what the response was. And I thought we did a pretty good job. I think we played it nine possessions, it was 11 points, but the types of shots that we were giving up and what we took away from them, there was -- the first possession we had three loose balls we should have had.

So there was, I thought, at least half of those 11 points should not have occurred had we just stuck to our rules and cleaned up loose balls that were bouncing around. We tried to dribble a loose ball once loose in the paint. And as Bronson said we closed out improperly a couple times.

It created gaps. It wasn't so much what happened, it was the result or the cause and effect of, similar like what happens in man-to-man, when you get beat off the dribble, you have to rotate and it ends up leaving somebody else open. And teams have put the ball on the floor a lot, can be effective when they do that.

So I thought it changed the pace just enough for us to -- we've got three turnovers out of it. We scored out of it.

We've got a long ways to go with it. And our man is still our best defense. But we've got to get better at that as well.

So it was a good look and I liked what I saw. But we've got to get better with it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.