

Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Tuesday, November 21, 2017

Mike Rhoades

Justin Tillman

De'Riante Jenkins

VCU Rams

VCU - 83, Cal - 69

THE MODERATOR: We now welcome VCU to the media room. Coach Rhoades, De'Riante Jenkins, and Justin Tillman.

MIKE RHOADES: Really proud of our guys' response from yesterday. Told these guys last night, today the team that gets over yesterday's game will give themselves a better chance, and I'm really proud of our guys. They did a good job of focusing on what we had to do. I thought our defense was much better today. I thought we rebounded. Our guards got really involved on the glass in the game and set the tone. That really helped us. Really proud how we shared the ball. Thought we did a good job of getting in the lane and sharing it and making some plays. It was a good effort. Now we need to see if we can get one more.

Q. De'Riante, you had a big game, career highs in points and rebounds. Doing those things, did it feel good in warm-ups and how did you feel out there today?

MIKE RHOADES: Because of his defense, he played great defense today, and it carried over to offense.

DE'RIANTE JENKINS: Just I was aggressive, and Xavi went down yesterday, and he's a big part of the team, so I had to step up and help with scoring on the defensive end and rebounding.

Q. Justin, how do you feel you guys kind of filled in with Isaac out? He was the second leading scorer coming in. But you put up season-high points at the half and really scored really well today?

JUSTIN TILLMAN: We all know we had to pick it up. Coach was telling us before the game, we have to put our first punch in. Shots were going in today, so it was in our favor.

Q. Can you guys talk about how key the threes were today. You guys made 12. They made only 4. How key was long-range shooting today?

DE'RIANTE JENKINS: We know they could see the ball, and it was an emphasis since Marquette and



Virginia. This was our best game guarding the three-point line. We need to feed off of this, and that's pretty much what we need to do all season.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

DE'RIANTE JENKINS: We work on that a lot, every day in practice. We do two or three drills, and I guess it paid off today.

Q. You talked about and mentioned yesterday about carrying over that defensive execution from practice to the game. How do you feel they put everything together today on the defensive end?

MIKE RHOADES: Much more, much better. It's tough to have less than a day's scout of a team. We knew they were really going to work the ball inside with those two big guys, and they also have some guards that can shoot it in Coleman and Sueing.

So we knew we had to protect the three for sure, but we had to make sure we did a good job on the glass and defending that basket. Right off the bat, I thought our guys really locked in a game plan on the defensive end.

Our biggest thing is we're so young, we're inexperienced. The more we play, the better we're going to get. These guys really want to win, but there is a process to it all. We have to have that carryover. We had it today. It's from yesterday, from the scouting report, and we did a good job defending the three. But I thought we did a good job rotating and rebounding better.

Q. Do you feel this was maybe the best cohesion they had on defense, particularly in the half court?

MIKE RHOADES: Oh, absolutely. Without a doubt. I thought we did a really good job of guarding the ball. I thought we did a good job of rotating where we needed to be. We didn't give up a lot of easy ones, let's put it that way. 4 for 15 from the three, that's how we got to defend with our length all year long.

Q. With Isaac being out, you had to use your bench more. How do you feel about the production from some of the young guys?

MIKE RHOADES: We talk about we have an army of guys. With our style of play, we can bring these guys in in waves. Mike'l Simms has had two really good

games for us with great energy. He's a tough, hard-nosed kid from Richmond. He really helps us. I thought Xavier Jackson gave us some really good minutes. Our freshman point guard, Ty Maye, we're throwing them, and this kid's 17, and we're throwing him in the Maui Invitational against a really good player. He's trying to survive. I thought he gave us great minutes today.

It will get better and better as we throw these guys in the fire. But if we can use that bench more and more, then Johnny Williams doesn't have to play 34 minutes a game. We don't want him to, but at times we've got to keep him in there because the way the game is going. So the more these guys off the bench come in, the four freshmen, they can all help us. They just need game experience, and really proud of their effort today.

We're going to play like this tomorrow because these guys deserve that time.

Q. Coach, the opportunity to go 2-1 here presents itself tomorrow. How big would that be?

MIKE RHOADES: Oh, it would be huge. It would be awesome. The one thing is everybody thinks we're supposed to win every game at VCU. Our fans think that, everybody thinks that. I understand. That's why it's an awesome place to be the basketball coach. But winning games is really hard. It's really hard wherever you're at. So we want to celebrate any type of success we always have, no matter who it's against, whatever tournament we're in, whatever. But to be 2-1, and get another one tomorrow and head back home, that would be awesome.

These guys, you know, but everybody deserves it. So we've got to go get it.