

Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Wednesday, November 22, 2017

Mike Rhoades

Mike'l Simms

Khris Lane

VCU Rams

Michigan - 68, VCU - 60

MIKE RHOADES: Hard fought game by both teams. Thought we had put ourselves in a position to find a way to pull it out, and we just beat ourselves late in the game there. A couple mishaps on offense, just didn't get good shots, and they made a couple plays. They executed down the stretch, we didn't. I love the fight we had to get back in it, take the lead. It's in your grasp. But we're going to learn the hard way through this one today that you've got to finish it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. Guys, I know it wasn't the result you wanted, but what do you think you learned about yourself in a performance like this against a team like Michigan?

KHRIS LANE: I think we learned we can play with anybody in the country, but it's just about execution, playing hard, and playing solid defense for 40 minutes. When we do that, we can win, like we did yesterday. When we don't do it the whole game, we lose close games like we did just now.

Q. Mike'l, how do you feel you maybe have come on and progressed?

MIKE'L SIMMS: I just try to bring a lot of energy off the bench, especially since Isaac went down in this tournament. So I just want to bring a lot of energy, whether it's defense or offense.

Q. Coach, what was your message to the team in the locker room after a game like this?

MIKE RHOADES: Well, number one, we've got to learn to finish out games. The biggest thing to me is you can't beat yourself against a team like Michigan. We had them on the ropes there, and we had them throwing the ball around a little bit. We sped it up, especially late in the second half to our advantage.

But you get that lead, you've got to be solid on defense and take care of the ball and get good shots on offense, and we didn't do that. A lot of it's on me. I've got to teach these guys. I've got to make them better to understand late-game situations and to get good



ones and execute.

On the other end, we've got to make sure we get stops late in the game. There was a stretch there where we were really guarding well, the best all year long, especially that offense, but we didn't finish the game, and I thought we beat ourselves at the end there, and that's what happens.

Against a team like Michigan that was so well schooled, you've got to make sure you take care of those little things, free-throw blockouts, I think two or three times, we gave those up. Coming out of the timeout, executing a play. We've just got to get better. Sometimes you learn the hard way, like we are right now. We're going to use this to get better and better. Hopefully late in games, we can close them out.

Q. You mentioned that stretch you guys had. You had an 11-0 run there and forced some turnovers. What do you think was working well for you guys during that stretch?

MIKE RHOADES: We changed up the press from man-to-man to a zone press. I thought we caught them off guard a couple times. Got it caught in the air a couple times. Then we just sat down and guarded, and I thought we did a really good job of defensive rebounding and limiting them to one shot. They are pretty big and hang at the top of the rim.

So I thought we did a good job to scrap out some rebounds and go with it. I thought we got downhill and shared the ball in that run. We had some really good possessions where they were on their heels and we were attacking.

So we've got to learn from it. I hate to keep saying that, but this is what happens when you play a great schedule and you play really good teams. Sometimes you learn the hard way, and that's what's occurring right now.

Q. Kind of positives and negatives, what do you think will be the biggest takeaways you'll take back home from this tournament?

MIKE RHOADES: I definitely think that we're really improving, but we've got to continue to improve at this rate. Then we've got to learn to win games. We're playing with people, but we have to learn to win games

and put them away. Our returning players are playing different roles. We've got a lot of new faces that didn't even know where Hawaii was, and now they're playing three games against three really good teams.

The thing about it, there are no excuses at VCU, and I'm not one to ever make one. We've got to find ways to win. But we're improving, and I don't think a lot of teams want to play us either. But we've got to find ways to get wins like we could have in our two losses here on this trip.

Q. What is the status of Vann? Do you expect him to be ready to go next week?

MIKE RHOADES: I hope so. We'll see. It's a high-ankle sprain, but there wasn't a lot of swelling. The doctors felt pretty good about where he's progressing. So hopefully Isaac -- we definitely need him for sure. Really proud of the guys stepping up, Mike'l and Tyler Maye and Marcus Santos Silva. The guys are stepping up, and that's what you do when a guy goes down.

Q. Jon Teske is a guy that hasn't played very much for Michigan. I wonder where he was on your scouting report and how he changes.

MIKE RHOADES: Well, he was on there for sure. When you have a guy that size, and we don't have a guy that big so we wanted to make sure we kept him off the glass. Got a couple on rolls where we didn't have the right coverage or ball screen coverage. Sometimes that's just how it goes, being in the right place at the right time. I thought he helped them on the defensive end protecting the rim.

A couple times we drove in there and he's just standing there, roots in the ground, 7'1", 255, you're not moving him. He did his job. It's almost like a turnover. To me, that's just a bad shot. That happened three or four times especially in the second half.

He did the job. We were aware of him. But he definitely helped his team win today.