

Maui Jim Maui Invitational

Wednesday, November 22, 2017

Eric Bovaird

Dantley Walker

Austin Pope

Chaminade Silverswords

Chaminade - 96, Cal - 72

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Chaminade to the media room, Coach Bovaird, Dantley Walker, and Austin Pope. Coach, your thoughts on this morning's game.

ERIC BOVAIRD: How about those Silverswords, huh? Incredible performance. We got our butts kicked the past two days. Notre Dame just beat us. Notre Dame just beat us. And for these guys to bounce back, get up at 6:00 in the morning, get a little bit of breakfast, watch film of a Cal team that we've never seen live before, and to follow the game plan and to execute what we were trying to do, I give these guys all the credit. I didn't make a basket. These two guys right here were pretty special today, and I'm really proud of them.

Q. Dantley, I saw you guys down maybe the last six, eight, ten minutes just smiling every time down the court. You too, Austin. When did you guys start to believe that we had this, we've got this?

DANTLEY WALKER: I'm kind of the type of person that never thinks the game is over, even if you're up big in the last couple minutes. I always think there's something that can happen. But I think about two minutes left and I think Austin scored one of his many late buckets, and I thought, man, we really did it. I've been coming here for three years, and this is the most special moment I've had, so it's pretty awesome.

Q. Same question to you, Austin?

AUSTIN POPE: Oh, man, I mean, going into that second half I knew that they were going to buckle, but we had to come out and play solid. Our guys stuck together through their runs. They came out on us tough early. Couple guys put up a couple bad shots. I missed some free throws, as you could see. But we pulled it together. Like Dantley said, about two minutes to go, I had a lay-in, and I just knew it. The coaching staff, everybody was just down, and I felt like we could get it done.

Q. Could both of you guys speak to maybe



envisioning something like this kind of moment when you guys came to Chaminade? Austin, in your case, a couple years ago. Dantley, three, four years ago. What is this moment like after that amount of time?

DANTLEY WALKER: When Coach first started recruiting me, and I decided to transfer from UNLV, this is what I envisioned happening -- winning a game at Maui, and having this feeling. It took a couple years to get it, but I tell you what, it was well worth it. It was well worth the last three years. It's awesome.

AUSTIN POPE: Yeah, same thing along the same lines. I unfortunately -- fortunately, actually, I ended up at Chaminade. Coach Bovaird told me about the Maui Invitational, and I watched it year in and year out. Last year we played some pretty good teams, just like this year. I knew going in if we played against Cal Berkeley and we played hard, I knew we could beat them, and we got it done tonight. We didn't have much time to prepare, but we got it done.

Q. You guys are both seniors. That was your last game here. But next year this team is not going to be here. How much -- is there a statement that was made here today? Any kind of anything like that?

AUSTIN POPE: I mean, you could say that. But at the end of the day we're trying to enjoy it. We're not really worried about the next year or the following years. Of course we're always going to be Silverswords for life. But we're going to enjoy this moment. We've got Thanksgiving and our family and friends are here supporting us. So that's where we're at right now.

DANTLEY WALKER: You said it.

Q. Can you talk about the defense? That was something else. You guys shot it great, but you played really well. Held them to 42% shooting, and worse than that, from three-point line. How about the defense today?

ERIC BOVAIRD: Well, we were not pleased at all with the past two days of defense. We had several days to prepare for Notre Dame. We knew exactly what was going to come at us. We gave up a high percentage both way days.

This morning, we had a heart-to-heart talk. Like, look, we're tired of getting these side ball screens coming off

and scoring on us, like they've done the past two days. That's a big part of Cal's offense. We made a few adjustments, and the guys really bought in, which is a huge deal.

Because after getting your butt kicked for two days, obviously, everybody's questioning everything. So for these guys to buy in and execute the game plan while we were sitting with no breakfast at 7:00 o'clock in the morning, it's a pretty special group of guys.

Q. When did you start to believe? When did you believe, hey, maybe this is going to happen?

ERIC BOVAIRD: Well, I had the same feeling that I had against Texas. You know, the last three, four minutes of the game seemed to go forever. You keep looking to the clock, looking to the clock. You think are they starting the clock on time because it doesn't appear like it's moving fast enough.

But we believe from 7:00 o'clock this morning that we could do it. Was it going to be tough? Yeah. I talked to the guys about, look, we shoot the three. We had two horrible days of shooting. I have the confidence in you guys if you have an open look, take it. I know them having the confidence from their coach is a part of the reason why they shot the ball well.

But the unselfish play that we had, I thought it was spectacular. Cal was known for their press. We were getting the ball into the center and attacking the sides and getting a lot of good stuff. So, you know, they did a great job.

Q. Obvious question, but what does this do for your program when you win a game like this?

ERIC BOVAIRD: Oh, it's huge. I'm going to have 1,000 text messages and 1,000 emails. Everybody wants to come to Chaminade now. We might have to -- we're going to increase enrollment by a couple thousand too. But it means a lot. It means a lot. It puts us on the map. If you leave this tournament and you get beaten three times by 40 points, they're thinking, well, who wants to go there and get beat? But whenever you beat a Pac-12 team or a Big 12 team like we did years ago, it means a lot to the guys that are trying to -- most of the guys we recruit are getting recruited by Division I schools. They look at us and think: Hey, I've got a chance to play in a tournament like this? I have a chance to do something special. And they believe that they can come here and win.

Q. I think this year's team is your largest team. And just overall team makeup, team identity is a little different than the type of team you've had here in Maui in the past. You did shoot the heck out of the three today. But that size, that different

makeup of the team, how did that help you today and how did you succeed with that today?

ERIC BOVAIRD: Well, we've had -- even though, again, Notre Dame and Michigan beat us, we were pretty even on the boards rebounding-wise, the past two days. Today was huge. Going after loose balls and having that extra couple inches of height makes a big difference. We wanted to change our strategy as far as how to figure out a way to get PacWest championships. And some of the power teams in our conferences, the Cal Baptists, and Dixie States and stuff, we're going to have to make some adjustments. So we really hit the recruiting trail as far as trying to get the 6'8" plus guys, but I like the 6'8" plus guys that have skills. Luckily some just fell into our lap this year. They were supposed to go to Division I schools, something happens, and I get a call from a connection that I have and they want to come to Chaminade. So, yeah, height definitely makes a difference, especially if height can play. We've got a good group of 6'8", 6'7" plus guys that can play. So definitely helps.

Q. You're now done with the D-I portion of the season. Just talk about the next portion, you started off well in Alaska, and now the goal is to get as deep as you can in the Division II tournament and make it there. This year we'll have another competitive PacWest. Talk about that aspect?

ERIC BOVAIRD: Number one, this tournament has always done a great job of preparing us to get into conference play. We have one out-of-conference game before we start getting into conference play. But these teams we play against, they have the ability to expose weaknesses. I can tell you the first two teams really did. It's great for us as coaches to see what those weaknesses are before you get into conference play. So I like to play a tough schedule. We have probably the toughest Division II schedule in the country. So it's going to help us going into conference play without a doubt. I'm still going to go back and watch the first two games and really analyze what we need to continue to grow on. But today I'm going to enjoy this win.