

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday March 13, 2019

Tim Miles

Nebraska Cornhuskers

Nebraska - 68, Rutgers - 61

COACH MILES: I've got a lot of respect for Steve Pikiell and Rutgers. I think he's done an excellent job building them into a formidable team in the Big Ten, and this league is as strong as any in the country. We were fortunate today to come out and ride a hot hand, and get some defensive stops and get the win.

Q. Do you have an injury report on yourself after that fall?

COACH MILES: I'm fine. You know, I've just -- the wires they jumped up and got me. I thought I was a better athlete than that. But I'm old, I'm old.

Q. Can you just describe what happened? It wasn't pretty, but...

COACH MILES: For anybody that doesn't know, I fell down waving at the crowd, running down the hallway when I was leaving. I think it got caught on TV according to everybody that's rubbing it in on me. So, yeah. I would say that's a lot of exhilaration, but, yeah, just enough clumsiness to keep things interesting.

Q. You guys were down I think 46-51 in the second half, and you go on a 15-0 run. What changed and what did you tell your guys that was different?

COACH MILES: I thought that we were soft coming out the second half in terms of they didn't have an offensive rebound in the first half, and they came out and got two the first two possessions, scored five points. We missed an inside shot that we were going fading away. So we took a long time out. James, I thought, played pretty strong after that. But they were rolling pretty good. Then we just got defensive stops. I think Johnny got a couple steals, Roby got a couple blocks. They didn't get any second shots. Palmer hits the three. Roby gets four free throws. We get a couple things. Glynn makes a play. And now all of a sudden you're feeling like you have a little rhythm.

But it all really started with this team; I thought we were rock solid defensively the whole night.

Q. Johnny played a lot and he seemed pretty valuable. Is it surprising to you at all that he's been as productive as he's been when he's played?

COACH MILES: I hope he makes me look as dumb as



he can. It's so cool to see him out there. The guys believe in him. Nobody is judging or saying, oh, how come we're playing whoever, whether it be Thor, Johnny, Brady, anybody. So if we have to change the game plan a little bit when one of those guys is in there, nobody blinks. Johnny has done so well just playing without any fear, just fearlessness. What did he have, four steals? And knocked down one of those foul shots. I think that he's one of those guys that he comes in and he makes us better, and he does as good a job as he can. He was staying in front of guys, made a couple errors here and there, but nothing nobody else had made all night. So I'm very, very proud of Johnny Trueblood.

Q. There's been a lot of speculation about what might have happened at the end of the season. How do you tune that out? And how do you get the guys to tune that out?

COACH MILES: I just told the guys, you know, this is a big-boy business, and whatever will be will be. I want to be the coach of Nebraska. I love Nebraska. The decision is out of my hands. So we just to control what we can control. I told the guys, you can control if you're in stance. If you're ready. How hard you're playing. I can control how well I coach and how well I prepare. We just go about our game plan.



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#13 Nebraska 68 (17-15), #12 Rutgers 61 (14-17)

Nebraska will play #5 Maryland at approx. 2 pm ET Thursday on BTN



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POSTGAME QUICK QUOTES

Nebraska senior G Johnny Trueblood

On the big run towards the end of the game...

"Yeah I mean, we keep riding, we keep sticking to the game plan. Like that last run we had, we always say within the 8 to 3-minute mark, that's when you win the game. So we really went on that run and that helped the team."

On if he is afraid to shoot the three since he has only made one...

"No, I'm not afraid. I just feel like we can get a better look sometimes, but I keep having that in my ear to keep shooting. I just got to look at the rim and be more confident."

On what he was thinking when he stepped on the court today...

"Not really, I mean just to come in and eventually play. It took some injuries to do so but it worked out."

On the reaction to his bucket along with James Palmer Jr.'s dunk...

"Yeah, it was cool, it was a special moment. I didn't score in the meaningful minutes I played last game. This is my second game with meaningful minutes and to score and make an impact on it means a lot."

On what is next for the team...

"Maryland. Maryland is next."

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Steve Pikiell

Rutgers Scarlet Knights

Nebraska - 68, Rutgers - 61.

COACH PIKIELL: Listen, you know, Nebraska played really well, and we picked a bad day. It was the most turnovers we've had, and I know it's the most fouls we've had in a game, which isn't a good combination. But I want to give Nebraska credit. They were awesome. We talked about it, we watched a lot of film how to stop them, and we certainly couldn't defend the free-throw line. Did they go 22 times there? So obviously we didn't do a good job with them. But I want to thank the Rutgers people that came out. This has been a season of tremendous strides, and I'm proud of that. We saw four freshmen on the floor. We only have one senior. I want to thank Shaq for being an awesome -- Shaq Doorson for an awesome captain, leader, kid for the last few years. He's a part of raising this program, and I really appreciate all his efforts for the last few. But Nebraska was better today, and congratulations to them.

Q. What do you think was the difference in that 15-0 run late in the game?

COACH PIKIELL: The whole game like we just couldn't get in the groove. Again, awful combination, and a little bit of everybody with turnovers. I can't explain. They don't do a lot of things to make you turn the ball over either. They don't blitz, they don't trap. But picked the wrong day to have 22. I think that's our season high, and I think 25 fouls is definitely our season high. So that's not a good combination when you're playing 40 minutes to keep your season going. I think those were the keys, obviously, in the game. Palmer has 30-something points, and that was a key for us hold him to his average, which is a terrific average. But if we could have done that it would have been a little different maybe.

Q. (Inaudible) the slow start?

COACH PIKIELL: I thought we were just grinding it. They weren't scoring either. So we just kind of grinded it. But we had a lot of turnovers. The turnovers really hurt us on the offensive end, it helped them get some easy baskets. Turnovers, and we've done a decent job especially recently of not turning the ball over. We were a turnover team early in the year. Today it was a little out of the ordinary. I'm very surprised at that number. But the turnovers never let us get into any



kind of flow offensively, and everybody was in foul trouble. Constant substitutions.

Q. I know it's a little early, but as you reflect on the season, seven Big Ten wins, 10th place in the Big Ten. What do you take away from the season overall?

COACH PIKIELL: Well, I will tell you, I'm proud of this group. We had six players out of my 11 that had never played a minute in the Big Ten. This is the best year of the league, by far, from 1 to 14. You know, seven wins -- took us three years to get seven wins. We got it this year. We moved up. Everyone picked us last. We're tied for 10th. Won some great road games. Our fans are unbelievable. We sold the place out. We're building a new practice facility which will be done soon. A lot of good things. I'm really excited about players sitting out, Jacob Young, and Paul, I think he's the finest passer in the country, we're going to add him to the roster. We're going to miss Shaq Doorson, but everybody else is back. Great athletic director, the school is great, I love it. Better days ahead. This was just a step. When I took the job I knew it wasn't going to be easy. It's the best league. This year, certainly in my three years, by far the best league that I've played in, and it's been really good the previous two. So to make the strides that we've made, I feel good about that. Doesn't help me today, but when we look back on it, a lot of good things were accomplished. I'm proud of our guys, and our young guys grew up a lot. We got a lot of minutes for a lot of players: Caleb McConnell, and Myles Johnson tonight with the double-double, you know, Montez, Ron Harper with some unbelievable rookie of the week performances. And Geo is a sophomore, Peter Kiss is a sophomore. Those guys are young, you know. Geno Omoruyi gave us everything every night. Played on his knee. So we had a lot of good things happen. It's another step, and I'm really excited about next year.

Q. At the end of the week, did Ron say anything about playing on the court where his dad accomplished so much?

COACH PIKIELL: He didn't. I know he was excited to come here. I think all of our young guys were playing on this court. None of them have, you know, come here to Chicago, so I think they were all excited to play here. I really appreciate it, thank you, guys.



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POSTGAME QUICK QUOTES

Rutgers graduate student C Shaquille Doorson

On the future of the program...

"We've got a lot of young freshmen here and they've got a hell of a future ahead of them and also Rutgers basketball as a whole. I can't wait to see what Rutgers basketball evolves into. It's going to be one of the tough teams in the league."

On the season overall...

"That's what we expect as a team. You want to get better every day, so we expect to get more wins every season and today wasn't the way we'd like to end, especially every time you go to the Big Ten Tournament, you want to win games. Next year, it's going to be more wins than we had this year and the year after that, just keep them going. That's just what Rutgers basketball is building on -- just improving on what we did the season before."

Rutgers sophomore G Geo Baker

On how the team builds from last year...

"I think one of the things is we'll have really good chemistry next year. All the guys are used to each other and then the two new guys we've got coming in. One of them has been there full-time and the other guy loves basketball so I don't think there's going to be any problem with chemistry. It's only going to get better. Our whole team's gym rats. Everyone's going to be in the gym working hard and that's only going to help. After now, everybody's got a year's experience and it's going to help that, too."