Tad Boyle presented by Roman
Saturday, December 21, 2019

Tyler Bey
McKinley Wright

Colorado Buffaloes

Colorado 78-Dayton 76, OT

MODERATOR: Welcome, everybody. We have coach first with opening comments, then questions for the players, then we’ll continue with questions for coach.

I want to welcome coach Tad Boyle and the Colorado Buffalos. We also have with us Tyler Bey, McKinley Wright.

Let’s open with the coach.

TAD BOYLE: I think it’s appropriate you see the Chicago Legends, you have some legendary busts in the making, with these guys to my left and right, D'Shawn Schwartz who made two big, big buckets down the stretch.

We came to Chicago, Donnie Boyce, got a chance to reconnect with him, had some former players here. I just couldn't be more proud of this team. I think like the end of the regulation, I screwed up by not calling time-out, getting the defense set, talking about fouling a dribbler. I didn't do that.

You know what, these guys gutted it up when they had to gut up in overtime. The thing I think that made this game special, obviously it was a high-level game, two big-time, big-time basketball teams in 2019, but to beat a team like Dayton, whatever the net rankings happen there, this is going to show up as a neutral-court game, and it shouldn't have been. It should be a road game. This was a road win.

These guys knew that coming in. It was a big game for McKinley personally. But this team trusts each other, and we showed it tonight. We haven't necessarily shown it a lot this year. We haven't at times. But tonight it showed. That last position, McKinley Wright trusted Tyler Bey. Tyler Bey trusted D'Shawn Schwartz.

The pass he made to Tyler in the post, we talk about playing inside-out all the time, that's what good teams do. If we can keep buying into that, this is a special group, couldn't be more proud of them.

MODERATOR: Thank you, coach. Now let’s take some questions for the players.

Q. McKinley, how was it coming in to play at the United Center with a lot of boos coming, having a double-double, amazing game tonight?

MCKINLEY WRIGHT: It was a really dope feeling. I expected the boos. I told my teammates before we came to Chicago that it was going to happen. I was getting messages on Instagram about how much they hated me or whatever because I left. I kind of knew it was coming. I talked to my teammates this morning, told them I needed this one personally. They responded for me. That was a big-time game.

I have a lot of family from Chicago. My dad is from here, the Bulls are his favorite team. He wanted me to put on a show. So I just had to go out and play my game.

Q. Coach, I know you’ve talked a lot about the last time you guys met in the NIT. You had six or seven turnovers. Only 10 tonight. What does that do confidence-wise?

TAD BOYLE: It's huge. I mentioned trust. The other thing we try to talk to our guys about, we watched some film of last year's game, we had it on at our meal last night, we also watched it today on game day, because we were playing so well offensively late in the year last year to beat Dayton in Boulder. I want our guys to play with confidence. We got good players. They’re better than the way we’ve played certainly offensively up to this point.

We knew going in we were going to have to have a low-turnover game, eliminate them. Ten is a great number, 11 is the number we shoot for, we came one under that.

Again, credit goes to these guys. They did what they had to do tonight in a really tough environment. I know what it's like to be booed like McKinley was tonight. I feel his sense of satisfaction, and I think his teammates do, too.

Q. Tyler, take us through the last play. How did you
see D'Shawn out there on the wing?
TYLER BEY: I just took my time really. I just passed it. He was wide open. He was the only person open, so I just passed it to him. It was like slow motion. It was great.

Q. You and coach have talked about getting you to slow down a little bit in the post when you get the ball. Was that a good example of it, even with the clock ticking away?
TYLER BEY: Yeah, definitely. The other thing is, too, is I had one turnover today. That feels good (laughter). But, yeah, that shot was big-time. I'm happy for him, super happy for him. This is his game. He's averaging 30-10.

Q. How much poise did you show in the overtime session being able to come back like that?
TAD BOYLE: Great poise. We fell down three. We were a little down after regulation. I could sense it in these guys' body language, facial expressions.

But look, our program is based on defense and rebounding. You look at the numbers, they shoot 50%, we shoot 39%, we end up winning. It's just a matter of making plays when they had to be made. That's what our players did tonight. That's what great players do.

I mentioned, McKinley Wright is going to be a legend at Colorado before he leaves, Tyler is going to be a legend before he leaves. Schwartz is on his way, as well.

Q. Earlier in the game, they're known for their field goal percentage. What is it like to sit down, sell your guys, for them to be able to slow down and relax?
TAD BOYLE: Yeah, I mean, they made their run at the beginning. Like you said, they made eight or nine of their first 10 shots. Our guys, that just shows you what we're made of. We don't fold. We kept fighting.

I think they were 8-20 the rest of the half if I'm not mistaken. So we settled down, we started having good offensive possessions. We talk all the time, the only way you shrink leads is by getting stops. We couldn't expand the lead tonight, but we shrunk that one, in the beginning, one possession at a time.

It's a long game. I'd rather have them make their run at the beginning than the end.

Look, Dayton's a good basketball team. We beat a really good team tonight. A well-coached team. These guys are legit. But you know, I think we are, too. I think we showed it tonight for really the first time all year. Out in Vegas, we were pretty good, but tonight we took it to another level.

Q. So far this year the defense has been there, it's the offense you wanted to take to the next level. What was different about tonight, about playing Dayton, this game that allowed you to hand in one of your best offensive performances of the year?
MCKINLEY WRIGHT: We trusted each other. We got the ball moving, we saw some shots go in early. Sticking to the game plan, getting stops and getting out and running. When you get stops, that opens up the game a lot. Obviously we didn't get stops early in the game, but to close the half and second half, we did a pretty good job. That gets your offense going when you get stops.

Q. Coach, obviously you fell behind early, down by 14 at one point. What impressed me was the way your team, they were scrappy. How important is that to stay with your game plan?
TAD BOYLE: It's key. McKinley just mentioned trust. I couldn't agree more. You use 'scrappy,' I use 'tough.' I think we were mentally tough. You have to do that on the road, tough environments, you have to do that when other teams are making their run. You have to do that at timeouts, when, okay, they hit a bunch of shots in a row, now it's time to get back to who we are. Just a tough group. They're mentally tough.

Again, I think this can be a win that, as we look back on it, certainly I'm not interested in looking back on it right now, but I think as we move forward, we have Christmas coming up, this is a great way to go into it, be thankful for all of our blessings, everything we have in our lives, then come back and use it as a springboard for Iona and Pac-12 play. That's what I'm hoping for.

Q. Coach, talk about the defense on Obi. Was the idea to make him work?
TAD BOYLE: They're going to play through him. He slips through a lot of screens, he likes to shoot threes. I thought Evan and Tyler were terrific on him. I thought the job that McKinley did on Crutcher was big-time. McKinley in my mind is one of the most underrated defenders in all of college basketball. This guy brings it every night.

With the job that Tyler and Evan both did on Toppin, it was big. We really wanted to go at him definitely on the other end. He expends a lot of energy on offense. That last play was an iso play for D'Shawn. He was guarding him. He just took him to the rim and finished. That was the design.

We wanted to make him work on the defensive end because we know how good of an offensive player he
is. He's going to get his. Just have to make him work for it.

I don't know how many dunks we had, we were trying to take those away, which is easier said than done, a few breakdowns. But for the most part, we made him work for everything he got.

Q. McKinley, we talked about it earlier, but you come in here, obviously, this Dayton crowd knows who you are, your history, wants to let you know about it. The second you touch the ball, you're getting booed. Sitting here looking, you have a smile on your face. What is going on behind the mask? What does this win mean to you? As a team, with the pre-season hype you had, the confidence in each other, what does this win mean?

MCKINLEY WRIGHT: I've been booed before in high school. Obviously it wasn't the same as this. That was way louder, way crazier.

I told them to keep booing. I wanted them to keep booing. Me it gave me a little extra juice. I fed off that. I needed that.

To answer your second question, we knew they were 13th. One of our coaches before the game told us, Don't worry about their ranking, we don't care about their ranking. We're just as good. We got just as good pieces as they do.

We just stuck to the game plan and fought every possession. It worked out in our favor towards the end. We got stops down the stretch, made free throws, besides mine that I missed. That was it.

MODERATOR: Thank you, all.
MODERATOR: We now welcome Dayton. Head coach Anthony Grant, Jalen Crutcher, and Obi Toppin. Coach.

ANTHONY GRANT: You got to give Colorado credit. Those guys did a great job. We knew coming in a few things about them as a team. Obviously really talented group, well-coached. They’re excellent in transition. They’re really, really excellent in their ability to get second shots.

Obviously a couple things in terms of from our standpoint, we knew to be able to keep them out of transition, we would have to do a good job of executing our stuff and taking care of the basketball.

A lot of things today. I think a very hard-fought game. Obviously the end of the game, the way the game ended, it’s tough to take. But we’ll go back and look at some things that we can learn from this game in terms of what we need to do to make sure we don’t have this feeling again.

This is a team I think still has a lot of room to grow, a lot of room to improve and what we have got to be able to do is mature in some areas as a team to be able to reach the potential that we think we can reach.

MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. Obi, obviously not the result you wanted. What was it like having basically a home game here?

OBI TOPPIN: Yeah, our fans are very loyal. They travel everywhere we go. They’re amazing. It’s like we got the No. 1 fan base in the world. For all the fans that came out today, we want to thank them. It was great seeing them there.

Q. What did you see on the last play, the big shot by Schwartz?

JALEN CRUTCHER: They threw the ball in the post. We worked on it in practice that we were going to double the post. It was just a good find by him, a good shot.

Q. Obi, the game-tying three-pointer, you just missed one earlier. You were 0-5 at that point. How much of a confidence booster was that going into overtime?

OBI TOPPIN: The whole game I wasn’t hitting any threes. My teammates were staying with me, had trust in me, telling me to keep shooting if I was open, don’t stop shooting.

It’s crazy because right before that play, Trey was looking at me. It’s like, If you’re open, shoot the ball. It was in the timeout. I was like, I got you.

I guess it just went in. It was a good feeling.

Q. The turnovers in the second half were probably your biggest issue. What did you see? What was going on with some of those turnovers?

ANTHONY GRANT: I’ll go back and look at the film. We have to mature as a team. We really do. I think a lot of it is self-inflicted. Maybe it was something that Colorado did that caused us problems.

But for the most part, you know, it’s stuff that we need to be able to clean up as a team. If we’re going to reach our potential, we have to do better.

Q. Jalen, second loss like this, you know how good you can be, but do you feel like you’re just a little bit short of being the great team you want to be?

JALEN CRUTCHER: Oh, yeah, we got a lot of room to grow. Like coach said in the locker room, It’s still December. I think we got a lot of room to grow. I don’t think we reached our peak yet.

MODERATOR: Thank you.