



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
MEN'S BASKETBALL

Lehigh at Mississippi State
Friday, November 25, 2015
Humphrey Coliseum
Starkville, Miss.

Opening Statement..

"They are a very good team. We were right there with them for a little while, and then they got a little bit of a lead going around the 10 minute mark causing us to play catch-up the rest of the game."

On Lehigh's overall performance...

"They have very good guard play that helped their shooting percentage. They shot pretty close to their season average tonight. We knew this was going to be a very tough game on our kids. We didn't defend well, we struggled on the switches, we got hurt trying to switch out on our four-man and I thought that was really telling. They were hitting jump shots right in our face because we didn't switch out quick enough.

At times, it looked like we were playing tired. We didn't turn it over much, and we didn't cause as many turnovers either, but again our defense really hurt us on the attack. It was obviously a good performance by Lehigh and we will watch the film tomorrow and learn from it."

On why Lehigh had so many straight line drives to the bucket...

"It had a lot to do with miscommunication on the switches. You saw Mario (Kegler) down there one time, go right past him because he thought he was supposed to be somewhere else. The same thing happen with Eric Holman. He got caught up in the screen and let the guy pass right by him. A lot of times it looked like our guys were tired out there. I had to sub Eric a lot. He has asthma and it really looked like he was laboring out there. That was a great example of why they were having so many open layups to the basket."

On Lehigh switching to zone defense...

"We made corrections at halftime and we really had to focus on getting the ball to the high post. I think Eric got one flash at the high post and Mario maybe had three, and that was it. Last year, we even put I.J. (Ready) in there because we did not do a good job at getting the ball to the high post player. The zone test the ability of the other team to pass the ball and that's an area that we have get lost of reps in at practice and get better at, just the ability to make the simple pass. Fake a pass to make a pass and then score. Hopefully by studying it tomorrow as a team, it will help us improve.



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On zone defense...

"There were a lot of factors that went into us going zone. Normally we like to establish ourselves defensively in a man-to-man. However, Mississippi State had scored a lot in that first media segment and it forced us to make an adjustment. Also, we were dealing with some pretty significant foul difficulty, especially with (Tim) Kempton picking up his third foul in the first half. The zone was a way to protect him a little bit more and fortunately we were able to hold them to one shot. We didn't get crushed on the glass in our zone and we were active enough to get them a little bit out of their rhythm offensively."

On second half...

"As a coach I was still being a little greedy because we also gave up 12 points in that media segment. We had started the first half defensively not quite as strong as we needed and ended the first half not as strong. I was seeing a pattern in the way we didn't defend the way we needed to particularly in the opening part of the second half. Offensively, it was a little bit of a story of our night, we were sharing the basketball, the ball was moving, and everybody was involved. To have six guys in double figures against a pretty good team says a lot and is a great testament to our teamwork and commitment to teamwork."

On State missing [Quinn] Weatherspoon...

"I was really disappointed for Mississippi State, they have a tremendous recruiting class with young talent and they have a guy that's returning that can almost take them to another level and then he's injured. That's really unfortunate, especially with a player who is as terrific as he is. He has been such a major part of everything they have done playing up to this game that it was going to be interesting what their identity was going to be without him in this particular contest. At times a guy gets hurt and everybody kind of elevates, but at other times a team has to find the way in which they will find their flow when they rely on someone heavily. I am very confident that they will find their way as they adjust to playing without him."



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G – I.J. Ready – Sr.

On Weatherspoon being out and the difference he makes...

"It's going to be tough without him. Having him be our best player and our best scorer, being a great defender and everything that he brings. We have to find a way to make up for everything that he brought for us."

On what the team needs to work on...

"I just think we held onto the ball for too long and we were trying to be heroes at times. I think we have to learn how to play team ball. With Q (Weatherspoon) being gone, he's been carrying the offensive load, I think we've got to find out how to share the ball and attack zones better."

On wanting to be more active throughout game...

"I just want to be more aggressive. I know that we're losing 20 points and seven or eight rebounds, but we've got to be able to rebound and of course, get shots from our players and still be aggressive. I think I need to be more aggressive in the first half. I think I was a lot more aggressive in the second half, but I think I need to be able to set the tone for the young boys with another one of our leaders going down."



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2 - Kyle Leufroy; So. Guard

On what he saw defensively...

"They were showing a lot of attention to Tim (Kempton), so that just opened it up for everybody else. The guards and I try to be aggressive and that opened up my three-point shot. Obviously, when we stepped up on that, it was easier to go to the basket."

On second half adjustments...

"We just wanted to keep our foot on the gas and keep trying to share the ball. We just wanted to play as much as a team as we could, share the ball and know the difference between a good shot and a great shot. We did a good job, especially to start off the second half and once our defense started to pick up, we were able to extend the lead."

On the effectiveness of the 2-3 zone defense after starting in man-to-man...

"I think it was a good job of just mixing it up and kind of caught them off guard. (Lamar) Peters and (Tyson) Carter are really good shooters. I guess it just wasn't their night. Carter was hitting a couple of threes and Peters was kind of having a rough night. (I.J.) Ready was not looking to shoot as much. Our main focus in the 2-3 zone was to pressure up on the wings and force them to take tough shots."



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY Basketball

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Paid Attendance: 6,697

Mississippi State Team Notes

- Lehigh claims the first win in the series.
- The Bulldogs fell to 2-1 all-time against Patriot League teams.
- MSU saw its four-game winning streak at home snapped.
- Mississippi State fell to 0-2 on the year when trailing at the half.
- This was the largest margin of defeat (14) at home under Ben Howland. The previous high of nine was against Georgia last February.
- Lehigh was the first opponent to shoot 50 percent or better from the floor since Central Florida last November (32-64).

Mississippi State Individual Notes.

- Lamar Peters earned his first-career start and totaled 11 points, 2 rebounds and 1 assist.
- In two home games, freshman guard Tyson Carter has scored 33 points, including 16 against Lehigh.
- Mario Kegler tied his career high with 12 points, while the 9 rebounds were a career high.
- I.J. Ready scored a season-high 20 points, marking the fourth time in his career he's totaled 20-plus points.