



2018 Southern Conference Basketball Tournament



No. 1 UNCG vs. No. 2 ETSU

March 5, 2018

UNCG

Coach Wes Miller

Opening Statement

"I'm overwhelmed with emotion. It's been really hard to get here. I always believe we could cut down the nets and get to the NCAA tournament here at UNCG, but it's taken a bunch of kids to believe. I feel really grateful that I get the chance to coach these kids. They are a really special group."

On learning from last year

"We've held on to that feeling. In my office, there's the runner-up trophy so we can remind ourselves that we came up short. I did see things a little different this year and I felt better about how I prepared. This group really allowed me to coach them."

On what changed in the second half

"I thought we were good defensively in the first half. I thought that was the only reason we were in the game. In the second half, I thought we were a little quicker to the ball. In the second half, we won the boards and I think that was the difference."

On his vision

"I did have a vision we would get here. Once I make a plan, I have a lot of conviction. But very rarely does it go the way you draw it up. You believe in people. And we have those kind of people and support in our locker room."

On ETSU

"I couldn't have more respect for Steve Forbes and what he's done since he's gotten to ETSU. I can't think of one game against ETSU that hasn't been incredibly contested."

Senior Jordy Kuiper

On hitting big threes

"When I came in as a freshman, my coach in high school used to make me run sprints if I took a jump shot in a game. Starting from my freshman year, the coaches started working with me on my jumper. They gave me a lot of confidence and that confidence was huge for me."

On bouncing back from last year's loss

"You can't control whether the ball goes in or not, but you can control your effort and communication. Everyone on our team is bought into defense. Today was a low-scoring game, but our defense stayed strong and that's how we were able to pull out a win."

On getting to the NCAA tournament:

"When I was a 16-year-old kid playing in Spain, Coach Miller came over to watch me play and I vividly remember him sitting me down and explaining his vision for his ideal vision for a culture of a basketball team. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

Senior Marvin Smith

On bouncing back from last year's loss

"It left a bad taste in our mouth. We learned that our defense would lead us to a championship so we took pride in that every single day. We take pride that we are a defensive team."

On getting to the NCAA Tournament

"We just came in really committed to one another. We shifted and changed the culture of this program and it's going to continue to stay that way. It's a testament of our hard work and ability to buy in as a team."

ETSU

Coach Steve Forbes

Opening statement

"It was a defensive battle the whole game. I felt like the first team to get to 50 was going to get the chance to win, we just couldn't get it going. They took us out of our rhythm. We got to the basket and again we couldn't finish. So that has a lot to do with the way they played, they are very athletic around the basket and we just couldn't finish. These guys, I am so proud of them. They really battled hard. When you put that much into it, it's hard to lose like that. They got beat by a good team a really good coached team."

On his future

"I signed the contract to be the head basketball coach at ETSU through 2023. I have a great job. I love it here. It [the reputation] will continue to grow because we'll get better. I'm very fortunate to have the job that I have."

On the loss tonight

"It's hard, it's difficult. It was a hard locker room, they expected to win so it was hard. It doesn't get any easier and it shouldn't be when it really means something to you, but they played their tails off."

Senior Desonta Bradford

On his injury and play

"It didn't really affect me. I still played through it. Like coach said, we did some things defensively but we couldn't capitalize on it. We still had opportunities to win the game, so I just feel it's not an excuse."

On what ETSU means to him

"It's very difficult, like Bo [Hodges] said these are my brothers. We built crazy relationships over these past couple of months. ETSU has meant a lot to me. I was from a small town, where a lot of people don't really make it out and do stuff like this. It meant the world to me. They took me with open arms like I was one of theirs."

Freshman Bo Hodges

On performance of the year

"Coming into it I didn't know what to expect when I got here but this is the best experience I've had playing with a team. These are my brothers and I'll never forget playing with them. I look forward to coming back."

Senior Jalan McCloud

On his one year at ETSU

"I feel like I've been here for four years. The relationships I've built with my teammates and coaching staff is something that I will never forget."