

# NCAA Men's 1st and 2nd

## Rounds: Nashville

Saturday, March 17, 2018

Nashville, Tennessee



## Cuonzo Martin

## Kevin Puryear

## Jordan Geist

## Kassius Robertson

Missouri Tigers

Florida State - 67, Missouri - 54

THE MODERATOR: Now the Missouri Tigers are here. Cuonzo Martin, the head coach, is with Kassius Robertson, Jordan Geist and Kevin Puryear. Going to ask Coach Martin to start off with a statement and then we'll go to questions for all four gentlemen from Missouri. Cuonzo, please.

CUONZO MARTIN: A great win for Florida State. They played well. Got off to a tremendous start. In the first half, they shot it well. They executed. We didn't get into a flow like we needed to. Give them a lot of credit for pressing us, getting out in the passing lanes, forcing us to make extra plays.

We settled in the second half and played more like we're capable of playing a team we're used to seeing. Good effort by our guys. Great win by Florida State.

**Q. For any of you guys, what was the issue in the first half, especially on the offensive end?**

KEVIN PURYEAR: I think we just struggled to move. I think we were a little stagnant. Of course, our open looks, I think we had some good looks at the rim. Didn't go in. Just one of those games for us.

But like Coach said, I thought we fought really hard in the second half. Things were flowing a little bit better, and proud of our effort. Credit to Florida State. They played a great game, made shots down the stretch and really just put a complete game together. So credit to them.

JORDAN GEIST: They put the ball in the basket more than we did. That's what it comes down to.

**Q. For Kassius, I wonder if you could describe what Coach Martin tried to get across to you guys after the game. I know it's early and raw. But can**

**you sort of sum up the ups and downs of the season and what you're going to take away from this?**

KASSIUS ROBERTSON: It's a tough question. There's so many things. After the game, it's more about trying to keep our heads up. And in the second half, we showed some fight. In the first half, thank God we didn't -- we didn't do the same thing in the second half but it would have been a really hard thing to swallow if we went out like that.

I think we showed some type of fight in the second half. Credit to them. It wasn't enough. The season overall is moments like this where it hurts and highs. Just being here obviously is a pleasure and making it to the tournament is a huge accomplishment for us.

Of course, we had higher expectations to go further, but that's not what happened. So, you know, there's so many positives from this season and joyous moments and playing with these guys and learning from the coaches and experiencing the atmosphere and the fans of Missouri and the support.

So all those things are takeaways for me.

**Q. Kevin, kind of a similar question. Coach has talked a lot about how he's told you guys you can be remembered as the group that got Missouri kind of back on the right track. Is that something you can appreciate now, or do you have to get a little bit further away from this to have that be the main takeaway?**

KEVIN PURYEAR: Yeah, I think this team will be remembered as far as turning things around, given our past few seasons.

But, you know, I'm beyond proud to call these guys my teammates and beyond proud to call these coaches my coaches. We fought a lot of adversity this season and people counted us out at times during the season.

For us to make the runs that we did and play basketball the way we did, I think it's pretty remarkable and I think that's something that everybody in our locker room should be proud of.

**Q. For Kevin again. Two years in a row now losing and leaving Nashville and ending the season here.**

**Talk about the mindset and emotional difference going back home to Columbia this year versus last.**

KEVIN PURYEAR: I mean, I think losing is the same. I mean, I've never, never taken losing lightly. I mean, last year, of course, it was in the month of March, wasn't really much for us to look forward to. The stakes were higher this time. To me, when the season ends, it all hurts the same. It's all extremely emotional for me.

But, you know, you live and you learn from it. And I got one more crack at it with Geist. I'm extremely thankful for everything that Kash, JB, Rau, all of our seniors have brought to us. They've been a huge blessing to our program and nothing but great things to say about them.

**Q. Cuonzo, all the energy you guys had to expend to get it back to six. Mike looked worn down at the end. Did you sense that there was some fatigue and exhaustion there in the last few minutes?**

CUONZO MARTIN: Yeah, I knew it would be that. But, I mean, this is it. I think maybe in Mike's case, not Kash. Kash is fine. Kevin and all those other guys were fine.

But probably outside of Mike, no. I thought we were okay. I think we cut it to six and had a couple breakdowns and it went over from there. Not at all. We battle, we lift weights, we work hard. I wasn't worried about it.

**Q. Cuonzo, a little bit along the lines of what I asked Kash. I know it's hard to see the big picture right now. What are you going to think about when you think of this team and all the ups and downs of the season that you navigated to get here?**

CUONZO MARTIN: I thought these guys had a great year, in my opinion. Of course, you want to win. Not that you settle for anything. And just show resiliency and perseverance, determination as young men.

So I'm very proud of them. I don't get too down about losses. That first half, I was very angry, because we didn't show fight. I don't -- like I said to the guys, you fight, I don't have to worry about what the score board says because I can see the effort. I can sleep at night. Yeah, we lost the game. But I can sleep at night with that second half. That looked like us. We learned from it. We moved forward.

These are exceptional young men. This is a ball game, and we went into the game feeling like we could win the game. It's wasn't about having this many guys. We were trying to win a basketball game and they outplayed us in the first half and, unfortunately, caused us to possibly lose the game.

**Q. Just sort of a follow-up regarding Michael. Was it in some ways just too much to ask to think he'd be able to get in the flow and be in the right basketball shape? Just seemed like he was never quite able to be in sync.**

CUONZO MARTIN: One thing I said when people ask about Mike, I say if he scored 30 points tonight, zero points, five points, he'll be a better player a month from now. That's just what it is, when you're coming off of injuries, getting the rust off your body, getting the flow of games, getting the flow of situations.

But for us, it was just asking to be part of the team. It wasn't necessarily to score this many points because we play as a team and we flow as a team. Whatever happens, happens. He scores ten, scores zero, scores five, it's all the same, as long as he put forth an effort.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. Best of luck.

CUONZO MARTIN: Thank you.