

TEXAS TECH 71, GONZAGA 69



Dan Pelle/The Spokesman-Review

The game is over, but the tough day for Gonzaga continues as Adam Morrison, coach Mark Few and Ronny Turiaf head to the postgame news conference after the loss to Texas Tech.

Keeping it in perspective

Gonzaga's clutch performer, Morrison, says final 3-point try 'didn't quite happen'

ZAGS NOTEBOOK

From staff reports

TUCSON, Ariz. — There wasn't much mystery where the ball was going to go. Gonzaga trailed Texas Tech 69-67 with 19.5 seconds remaining. The Bulldogs diagrammed a play in which sophomore forward Adam Morrison, who carried GU's offense throughout the postseason, got the ball out front to work off a Ronny Turiaf pick. Morrison had the option of shooting a 3-pointer, creating off the dribble or looking for Turiaf on the pick-and-roll.

"Their (forward) didn't show off the screen and Adam got a good look," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. "He had made a lot of huge shots for us."

Morrison pulled up for a 3-pointer, but it was too long. When Texas Tech grabbed the rebound, the Red Raiders were on their way to a 71-69 victory Saturday.

"The 3 was there so I took it and it didn't quite happen," Morrison said. "I want to be the guy that takes the shots. If I miss it, I miss it. If I make it, I make it. I'll take the blame for it every time because I took the shot, that's how it works."

"I just didn't get enough rotation on it or something, but people have to realize there's a ton of problems in the world. People are dying, people are starving. It's a big loss, but we have to put it in perspective. I missed the shot, but I'm still going to live. I'm not going to jail or anything."

Gonzaga relied heavily on Morrison in the latter stages of the game. Texas Tech erased a 13-point second-half deficit to pull in front 55-54 with 9:40 remaining. Morrison scored Gonzaga's next 10 points, with his tip-in giving the Bulldogs a 64-61 lead with 3:12 left.

"Coach (Bob Knight) told me to just make him work as hard as he could," said

Texas Tech's Martin Zeno, who guarded Morrison much of the game. "He's a good player and he's going to get his points. What I did was make him run harder and cut and work to get the ball."

Morrison finished with 25 hard-earned points on 10-of-22 shooting, including 1 of 6 3-pointers. He scored 27 points in Thursday's win over Winthrop and scored 25 and 30 points, respectively, in Gonzaga's two WCC tournament wins.

"For the most part (late in the game) we were trying to get me or Ronny the ball and try to have the other guys work off us," Morrison said. "We delivered, until the end."

One last time

Brian Michaelson, one of two seniors along with Turiaf, spoke to his teammates during GU's traditional postgame huddle at center court.

"I was the only one that really felt like speaking at that time," Michaelson said. "You could see it in the guys' faces and obviously everybody was disappointed, but it's important to focus not just on how the final game ends."

"It's important to realize how far we came as a team, how much we improved and what a great year we had. ..."

"Some people felt like if they'd done one more thing it would have been different, but I told them that's not how it works. Win as a team, lose as a team."

Knight's big first half

Almost lost in the despair and the details of how Gonzaga lost was a spectacular first-half performance by guard Erroll Knight.

Always Gonzaga's defensive stopper, the 6-foot-6 junior took it upon himself to stoke the Zags' offensive engine with 12

first-half points on 6-of-7 shooting and some amazing acrobatics on the offensive glass.

His tip-in with six minutes left before intermission and a fast-break layup moments later allowed the Zags to make their first break away from the Red Raiders, starting an 11-2 run that produced a 37-25 lead.

"I was just playing like it was my last chance," said Knight, who finished with a season-high 14 points. "I'm pretty sure that's the way everyone felt out there. I had a couple of shots fall and a couple of opportunities, but every shot isn't going to fall and it's all about keeping going, keeping playing."

His offensive contribution was more muted in the second half — he had a thunderous fast-break dunk early on — but came up with what looked at the time like a huge defensive play when he tracked down Tech's Ronald Ross on a breakaway and forced him into a travel.

Seen this happen before

NCAA Tournaments have not been particularly kind, of late, to Gonzaga University point guards.

First-team All-American Dan Dickau made only 7 of 24 field-goal attempts — including just 4 of 14 3-point tries — in a first-round loss to Wyoming in 2002. His successor, Blake Stepp, was a paltry 23 for 94 from the field and 13 for 61 on 3-point tries in the eight NCAA Tournament games he played.

And the disturbing trend continued this year with sophomore Derek Raivio going a combined 4 for 17 from the field and scoring just 12 points in the Bulldogs' two-game tournament run.

Raivio, who came in shooting 44.1 percent from the field and a splendid 47.8



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Gonzaga's J.P. Batista reaches past Martin Zeno, left, and Devonne Giles for a loose ball.

percent (75 of 157) from 3-point range, made only 2 of 11 3-point tries during this year's tournament. But following the loss, he wasn't ready to beat himself up over his performance.

He said he had trouble getting into a rhythm against Tech after picking up two early fouls and playing only 10 minutes in the first half.

"That definitely sucks," said Raivio, "because I wasn't able to compete the whole game. When that happens, I get kind of frustrated. I got out of rhythm a little bit, but my shot, this whole weekend, felt good. It was just off the back of the rim every time."

"All players go through that. Not every shot is going to go in. As long as it's on line it's not to the left or right, it's still feels good to me, and it's a good shot."

Few said he had no problem with the shots Raivio attempted against Tech — even a couple that seemed a little bit rushed out of transition.

"Those are great shots for Derek," he said. "He's made those all year. They've

been a big part of us blowing people out in games, and they've been a big part of us stepping up and winning games (late), as we did the other night against Winthrop."

Free-throw woes

The Bulldogs didn't do themselves any favors at the foul line, making just 9 of 18 free throws.

Senior forward and co-captain Ronny Turiaf, who had made 163 of 234 free throws (69.7) coming into the tournament, converted only 3 of 9 attempts against the Red Raiders. He missed the second of two foul shots that could have given GU a 66-63 lead with 2:27 left in the game and then clanked the first shot of a one-and-one free-throw opportunity with 49 seconds remaining.

When asked if he might have let his four earlier misses get into his head, Turiaf said, "Not at all. I just stuck to my routine. I just missed my free throws. That's it."

Staff writers Jim Meehan, Steve Bergum and John Blanchette contributed to this notebook.

Fish earn one-week reprieve as Knight reels in win



Dan Pelle/The Spokesman-Review

Bob Knight made a few emphatic points with his Red Raiders on Saturday.

RAIDERS NOTEBOOK

By Jim Meehan

Staff writer

TUCSON, Ariz. — Texas Tech coach Bob Knight's fishing trip will have to wait.

Knight will be busy next week after his Red Raiders ended Gonzaga's season with a 71-69 NCAA Tournament victory Saturday at the McKale Center. The victory sends Knight back to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 1994.

"If we had been beaten today, it would have been disappointing," said Knight, who has coached three national championship teams. "I would have been disappointed that they would not have been able to

go to the Sweet 16. I would be out fishing — I won't be now — and I would have been reflecting on what a wonderful experience it has been with this team, picked by nobody."

Knight was fairly agitated for the last 10 minutes of the first half as Texas Tech struggled on both ends of the floor and fell behind by as many as 12. When an offensive set started incorrectly, Knight barked at his players and sat back in his chair with his hands folded on top of his head. Forward Damir Suljagic missed twice from close range — and heard about it from Knight when the forward came to the bench.

After another ineffective offensive possession, Knight grabbed his son Pat, an assistant

coach, on the shoulders in disgust. Knight was constantly in the ear of the officials, stalking one off the floor after the half ended.

"I'm like a lion-tamer," Pat Knight said of his sideline role. "This means a lot to us. I would have given anything to be the type of player to win him games, but I wasn't. I was a role player. But I think as an assistant coach I'm good enough to help him win games. This is my sixth year with him and we've won 20 every year."

Big toss for Ross

The player nobody wanted coming out of high school hit the biggest shot. Senior guard Ronald Ross, a former walk-on who has developed into a first-team All-Big

12 Conference selection, connected on a crucial 3-pointer from the corner to give the Red Raiders a 68-67 lead with 1:04 left.

Like many of Tech's baskets, it was created by a guard — this time Martin Zeno — driving into the lane.

"When I penetrated, I just saw their man step up and I saw Ronald standing out there because he was hollering my name," Zeno said. "When I saw him set his feet I knew it was going in. So I just ran back down court."

Ross, who played at Hobbs (N.M.) High, will return to his home state for the Sweet 16. The Red Raiders face West Virginia on

Continued: Texas Tech/C9