



NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S TENNIS THIRD ROUND – (1) FLORIDA DEF. (16) ILLINOIS, 4-0

Florida Head Coach Bryan Shelton

On tonight's match...

"We got a lot of respect for that team. They are the grittiest team that we see outside of our conference. Brad Dancer, Marcos Asse, those guys coach those guys up, and they get better throughout the season. To win a Big Ten championship, when you're going against Michigan, Ohio State, that says a lot. So those guys had a great season. For us to come out here tonight and have a comprehensive win like we did says a lot about our team, about the character of our guys and just how hard we've worked as well. We're just so fortunate to be in this situation. Our commissioner in the SEC and all of our universities did so much work to get us playing in the fall and being able to play in the spring, so we're just really thankful to our administration, to all the people who have worked so hard to put on an event like this. We're just happy for the opportunity to be here."

On the maturity of the team...

"This I feel is a team that has great leadership with our two captains, Duarte Vale and Sam Riffice. They lead the way. They lead by example. They do it every day in practice. I feel like they just help us get really prepared for match days, and even our younger guys are just so amped up and so ready to play, but at the same time can focus in. That's what you want. You want the physical attributes to come out and shine, but you also want the mental skills – the ability to focus and the ability to play the right shot at the right time in the big moments. I thought we did a really good job of that tonight."

On the quarterfinal matchup vs. Texas A&M ...

"We've played them a couple times this year already. We know them very well. They know us. Every time we play those guys it's a battle. They're tough from top to bottom. They've got a lot of experience on that team. They've got some senior leaders in Vacherot and Habib and Aguilar. They're just a tough, gritty team as well, so we know we'll have our work cut out for us, but I like my guys. I like my guys a lot."

Florida Sophomore Blaise Bicknell

On tonight's match...

"Well from the beginning these guys came out with a lot of energy and they were showing like they were ready to go. We didn't let any of that bother us and we really went after them from the beginning. In

doubles, Duarte, Jo, Ben and Sam were great. And then just from there we kept the momentum going and it was a great team effort overall.”

On his mindset heading into the quarterfinals...

“Stay the course. We know what we have and we know everything we can use. Just go as one team and go through them.”

Illinois Head Coach Brad Dancer

On tonight's match...

“The biggest thing is hats off to Florida. They've got a great team, great players, and great coaches. I was really impressed with their squad tonight and it's always tough to lose but I think the better team won tonight and they have high standards, no question about it.

I'm so proud of this team and group of guys that have a legacy of their Big Ten Championship and regular season and conference just so many great memories that we've had with this group. I'm proud of their resiliency, I'm proud of their growth, proud of everything they have been through and I'm proud of the season. Finally, our fans were amazing. We come down here to Central Florida and everybody is talking about the Gainesville crowd and our crowd was just magnificent. I think that anybody who is here tonight, they see that if you come to play for the Illini it is a special place where people travel, and here we are in Central Florida and we absolutely drown out all of the Gators fans and that is a testament to our amazing fan base. I couldn't be more proud of all the people that made the effort to come down here and scream and yell. We love Illini nation. It's just so cool for these guys who didn't have fans all year long and now we get down to this moment in enemy territory and our fans showed up and I'm just super happy these guys got that experience.”