Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship  
Friday, March 11, 2016

Bill Self  
Perry Ellis  
Devonte' Graham  
Kansas

Kansas-70, Baylor-66

THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by Kansas Jayhawks, Coach Bill Self, two student-athletes tonight, Devonte' Graham and Perry Ellis. Coach, we will go to you first, and congratulations on your victory tonight.

COACH SELF: I thought that we didn't play very well the first half. Offensively we guarded them pretty good and didn't execute well at all the first half.

Second half, I thought for 16 minutes or so, I thought we played really well and really attacked their zone much better and we rebounded the ball well for the most part the whole game. And then, of course, made things extremely interesting late.

But all in all, I thought we did some really nice things, especially there in the key moments of the second half.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go to questions to the two guys.

Q. For both of you, just why do you think the team's performance picked up in the second half, like coach talked about?
DEVONTE' GRAHAM: We knew we were playing flat, kind of dead, with not a lot of energy in the first half. We knew we weren't playing to our capability, so in the second half we just decided to tried to change it and come out and be aggressive.

Q. Devonte', career high with eight assists, a few of which were off alley-oops. Is that something you practice a lot? How did you feel about that?
DEVONTE' GRAHAM: Getting in the lane and making plays. If Rico stepped up, because he was the main one on the back line, trying to find Perry and those guys. The coaches kept telling us to attack the zone, so I was just trying to get in the lane.

Q. Devonte', how would you rate Wayne Selden's dunk there?
DEVONTE' GRAHAM: His dunk? Oh, man, it's got to be Top 10, at least No. 2 or No. 1. Crazy athletic play. That gave us a little spark, so he needs to make more plays like that.

Q. You guys were able to create a lot of havoc on the defense, picking up 12 steals. What were you seeing on the defensive end?
PERRY ELLIS: I would we were pretty active defensively. Getting after it, switching, switching up well. And I would say that.

Q. The two players here, what are the challenges going into this championship game, either Oklahoma or West Virginia? What are the challenges against those two teams?
DEVONTE' GRAHAM: I mean, both of them are good teams. If we face West Virginia, you've got to deal with the press and full-court man-to-man the whole 40 minutes. You've got to be ready for that.

If we play Oklahoma, you know, they shoot the lights out of the ball, so you have to be ready to guard the three-point line, but also contain the dribble-drive. The same with West Virginia with the dribble-drive as well.

PERRY ELLIS: Yeah, each team has great things they do, so each one will be a which challenge. Whatever one it ends up being, we have to come prepared.

Q. Perry, how important is winning the tournament title for you personally?
PERRY ELLIS: I think it's real important just from a team standpoint, getting a lot of momentum going forward. So all of our guys are trying to win this, we're trying to get through it.

THE MODERATOR: Perry and Devonte', we will let you return to the locker room. Congratulations on the victory and good luck tomorrow in the championship game. Questions now for Coach Self.

Q. Coach, the first half was it two good defenses playing really well or do you have a different definition of what happened in the first half?
COACH SELF: I thought they guarded us well, but I need to watch the tape. I thought we attacked their zone miserably. I thought guys were wide open and didn’t get against the defense where we could make the plays. I think we were stuck on 18, had to be stuck on 18 for five or six minutes, so it wasn’t great.

The way the half ended, obviously didn’t sit real well in the locker room. But it was fine. We’re going to have other flat halves, and hopefully we play long enough where that can happen. But I thought the second half, the first 10 minutes, 15 minute, I thought we played really well. I thought we attacked their zone a lot better and had a lot more movement.

Q. Bill, does the last two minutes of the second half take away anything at all from what you guys accomplished for the first 18 minutes?
COACH SELF: No, no not at all. You know, I had one guy in here yesterday asked me, hey, when you get a lead in the last two minutes, why don’t you play your bench? I did, and it didn’t work out great (laughter). So much for listening to the media (laughter). I wanted to leave them all in there, in all honesty, because I wanted them to feel some pressure. It looks a little easier from the sidelines. I can do this and I can do better and all these things. But they had a chance to perform, when all honesty Baylor wasn’t really coming at us real hard. We just helped them so much. And they had a chance to perform. I know it’s embarrassing to them when you have to put your starters back in, but they’ll remember that hopefully.

Guys, we didn’t finish the game at all. And you guys can see easily how important it is to have both of those little ball handlers in the game for us.

Q. Have you ever had an experience like that? I know it’s sort of like a worst nightmare for a coach where you had to put your starters back in.
COACH SELF: No, the worst nightmare would be if we lost, so this was just a bad dream, okay (laughter). So yeah, I have, I wanted to play the other guys. It looks so easy. Well, I could do this and I could do that. And those that have coached know that.

I said coming into this tournament, if we won the first game, I promise you I was going to let those young kids play in crucial situations in the second game and we really didn’t get a chance to do that, but the last two minutes we did. It didn’t turn out very well, but in Baylor also, the law of averages start prevailing. They made a couple of shots that they’d been missing earlier, but that doesn’t take away anything from us being excited about playing tomorrow.

Q. Coach, can you talk about the way that Perry

kind of started out that second half? Because he was fairly quiet and then he scores 8 of your first 10 points.
COACH SELF: We tried to do something different, but Perry was passive in the first half. We had four lobs that we had and bad passes or guys not jumping to get ‘em, and he was guilty on two of them. And, you know, he’s got to be more aggressive.

But the second half, I mean, we played through him the first four or five possessions. When we got the lead, it felt comfortable again, and that was important to get the lead back.

Q. Coach, same question I asked the guys. What do you think made your team so effective tonight with the steals? And furthermore, why were you guys so effective guarding Prince tonight?
COACH SELF: Well, I don’t know. Sometimes guys miss shots, and sometimes you do a pretty good job of taking them out of stuff. I think he is a terrific player and we actually did a pretty good job defensively the entire game. We didn’t rebound the ball during certain stretches.

For the most part, I don’t know if it was anything we did, maybe it was a combination of us being pretty good and maybe him just having a bullet of an off night.

Q. Bill, how did Wayne’s dunk look from the bench? How do you rate it?
COACH SELF: I’ve judged a lot of dunk contests, I thought it was great. I thought it was an athletic play. Certainly he more so than anybody else can give us confidence through physical plays, and that was certainly one of them. But I don’t know how I’d rate it, but Mari’s at Texas and probably this, probably the two best we’ve had this year.

Q. Coach, how difficult is it to prepare in two very different contrasts of styles here with West Virginia and Oklahoma on one day’s rest?
COACH SELF: It will be difficult, but everybody in the tournament knows the other team because we’ve all played each other twice. I may look at this a little bit differently, but I don’t think it’s overload tonight or tomorrow to get them ready. I think you just go out and try to have fun and play and be aggressive and see what happens. But certainly, you know, there’s certain things you need to probably do against Oklahoma to have a chance to be successful, and with West Virginia there’s no difference. You have to handle pressure, in which one game we did an average job of it and one game we weren’t very good at all. But either way it will be a fun game for us, at least that’s how I’m looking at it and what I’m going to tell my guys.
THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.