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

Scott Drew
Al Freeman
Johnathan Motley
Baylor

Kansas-70, Baylor-66

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin with the Baylor Bears and Coach Scott Drew. His student-athletes, when they come, will be Al Freeman and Johnathan Motley.

COACH DREW: The good thing about the Big 12 tournament, it's run just like the NCAA tournament. It's not going to hurt your seeding, it's going to do nothing but help your seeding with the teams you play. And I was proud how we finished the game compared to at our place when we're up 1, down 1, in that five-minute stretch at the end of the game we didn't execute as well.

Pretty consistent with us, we should free throws, we win close games; if we miss free throws, we don't. Yesterday we were 20-23, and that's a big part when you got close games. I'm proud that our guys didn't quit at the end.

Kansas really executed well in the second half, and I've told Coach Self this team really guards you well. It's hard to get easy buckets, and I think they'll do really well in the NCAA tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

Q. Coach, Ish had four fouls pretty early and you put him back in. What was the calculated risk about putting him back in when you did?
COACH DREW: At that point we were trying to make sure we had a chance down the stretch, and it didn't really make sense to save anybody. There's nine guys in our rotation we feel comfortable with, and that's why we left him in.

Q. Scott, how frustrating was it to see them get all those dunks?
COACH DREW: Well, actually the dunks don't bother you as much as the threes. I think that's with our team, if our three-point defense can improve, that makes us a much better defensive team and we'll last in the Big 12 with that. You're going to give up something defensively. The threes have hurt us worse this year than the dunks. Obviously nobody likes getting dunked on, the crowd gets into it, they get a lot of momentum. The frustrating thing is a lot of times you can see it coming, but you couldn't relay it fast enough.

Q. Coach, Jake hit another big shot, you guys go up 2 at half and they ripped off the 8-0 run to start the second half. Did they do anything different or did shots start falling for them?
COACH DREW: We didn't execute well. We had three turnovers, I think, in the beginning of the second half and some of that was self-inflicted, especially in a game where it's 23-21, nobody is scoring in the first half, you can't give people easy buckets. Their fastbreak points of 14 and we only had 5, that's a big difference in a close game. It allowed them get some separation.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go to our student-athletes first to Johnathan Motley and Al Freeman.

Q. Jonathan, Perry Ellis was pretty quiet in the first half, scored 8 of their first 10 in the second half when they kind of made that run. How difficult a match-up is he when he is rolling like that?
JOHNNATHAN MOTLEY: It was pretty tough. He can shoot and also kind of handle the ball a little bit. Just always takes somebody who's versatile. And we made some mistakes on defense, allowing him to get open shots, also.

Q. Al, when Kansas is doing those kind of dunks, especially the Selden dunk, they're trying to break their opponent's will right there. But you guys -- clearly that did not happen for you guys. What was some of the mindset on the court, in the huddles, as you all started to pound your comeback?
AL FREEMAN: We've been in enough wars all year. The Big 12 is the toughest conference in the country, so every night is a battle. At the end of the day, the dunk gets the crowd hyped, but it's just 2 points and it's not the end of the game. We know there's a lot of time left in the game. We know that they made their big plays, they hit big shots and had big transition dunks, but we know that we can come back and make our own big plays and go on a run ourselves.

... when all is said, we're done®
We just have the ultimate confidence in ourselves that we know that the game is never over with us. And we all got confidence in each other and we know that everybody -- nobody on our team has quit in them. So we are going to play every possession like it's the last. We're going to play hard until the end of the game.

Q. Al, with the way you guys shot the ball yesterday and during the regular season, were you surprised that the shots weren't falling tonight? And why do you think that was?
AL FREEMAN: I'm sorry. Ask that again.

JOHNATHAN MOTLEY: What was the question again?

Q. During the regular season, you shot the ball well and yesterday also. Were you surprised that the shots weren't falling tonight and why do you think that was?
AL FREEMAN: I think it's basketball. Sometimes the ball goes in the hole and sometimes it doesn't. And that's why you have to figure out different ways to score and different ways that everybody has to help the team. Getting second-chance points, points in transition, points at the free throw line.

At this time of year, everybody's playing as hard as they can for life or death. This is some of the seniors' last few games of their college career on both sides, both teams, and everybody is leaving it out there. So, you know, I think defensively and energy-wise, it all ramps up. And I think this time of year, teams can get hot, and, of course, that can kill you. But I think, at this time of year, it's more about guys that -- the teams that can draw fouls and get to the free-throw line and dictate the game in that type of way.

Q. For both Al and Johnathan, curious with the way you guys finished the season and going 1-1 in the tournament, what is your mindset now going into the NCAA tournament?
AL FREEMAN: I think every team's mindset going into the tournament is to win it. I don't think anybody plays the game to lose. So every game, we're going to take it one game at a time and we're going to -- the coaching staff does a great job of prepping us for our opponent, so we're just going to get ready for the next team that we play and spend time in practice preparing for it. And give it all out there on the court, you know, whenever we play. And just take it one game at a time, winning one game at a time, that's our mindset.

JOHNATHAN MOTLEY: Definitely, we always want to do better for our seniors, especially. Because we have a sour taste in our mouth the way we left the seniors last year and we're going to do our best not to do the same thing.

Q. Al, just talk about the way you guys did finish, how much momentum does that create for you guys going into the tournament?
AL FREEMAN: I think it just gives us more confidence that we're never out of the game. And I think that the game of basketball is all about runs, so we're going to make our runs. They're going to make their runs. But at the end of the day, you just have to have confidence in your teammates, confidence in yourself. Everybody has to be bought in and know that the game is a 40-minute game. It is not a 38-minute game, not a 37-minute game, it is a 40-minute game. So we just take that into the next game.

You know, we've had a few games like this throughout our year where we were down and we made late comebacks. So we know that, you know -- I think we were down like 16 tonight or something like that and we cut it to 3. So, you know, we know that we're never out of the game, so that doesn't matter what the score is or, you know, how the game's going, we know that we've got the guys that can put the ball in the hole. We know we have guys that can get stop. That's just our goal.

And going forward we don't want to be in these situations, we want to play a full 40-minute game. You know, we're trying to win every possession, so that's really our goal. We like to play ahead and jump out in front, that way we dictate the game.

Q. Al, I know this one stings tonight, but you can't dwell on it. Being out of the Big 12 conference now and seeing new opponents you haven't seen before, is there a sense of excitement, refreshment? Are you relieved? How do you describe not having to play any more games inside of this conference unless you meet somebody later on in the tournament?
AL FREEMAN: I think it's definitely a different type of game playing against teams you never played before, different styles that you probably don't match up well. I mean you don't -- you haven't matched up against in the season. It's a different experience for everybody in the tournament, and that's what makes the tournament so special and so great is that it is just teams competing and giving their all on the court that haven't played against each other, and some that have.

I think that we're a match-up problem for a lot of different teams. I don't think they see teams that play... when all is said, we’re done®
defense the way we do, and so I think we give a different look that a lot of schools and teams aren't use to, so we try to use that to our advantage as well.

THE MODERATOR: Al and Johnathan, we appreciate you coming. Good luck next week.

Q. Scott, we've obviously seen your program come a long way over the course of the last decade, but do you feel like that this year is the most all-around athleticism, tenaciousness, attitude, like Al talked about, that you've had going into the tournament at Baylor?
COACH DREW: Those two Elite 8 teams were pretty good. We lost to national champions and I thought we were as good as anybody in the country in those years. So I think this year is a good team, has a lot of great qualities, but I wouldn't say that -- if we win a national championship, then I can say it. So I guess that's some motivation.

We do have different weapons, but, again, I think each team's different. So I don't want to knock or say one's better than the other. I would have a lot of guys tweeting me tonight if I said that (laughter).

Q. Scott, just curious for the second straight game you kind of got a Rico Gathers-like performance out of Rico, the kind you're used to. Does he seem to be most of the way back, if not all the way back from the infection?
COACH DREW: Yeah, pretty close. And I think the big thing is when people come back off of illness or injury, just because they're back, it doesn't mean they're back. When they're back, they've had time to practice, get some reps, feel comfortable, get in game shape. I mean, when you're missing practice like he was doing for awhile, you get out of sync not only with your teammates, but just with game conditioning and everything. And it's good to have him back, it's good to see the smile.

Q. Scott, with Lester and T.P. as seniors, did you feel they were maybe pushing a little too much or maybe just had off nights? Both struggled shooting the ball.
COACH DREW: We took some shots early that we wish we could take back. I think we wish we would have gotten the ball inside more on the drive or on the pass and got on easy ones to get people going. But I think that's where you really have to credit Kansas, too. I mean, it's one of the better defensive teams.

Q. Coach, you talked about number one conference in America. How big and how does this help you guys get prepared for the NCAA tournament to face teams like other teams in the ACC and so forth?

I think last year we didn't like how it ended. We had a lot of success in the tournament, and the first time we really got stung. I know the returning players and coaches are motivated to make sure we do better.

Q. Coach, you said this year's divided into four different seasons. You've now finished three of the four and heading into the fourth one. What do you do to kind of get your guys ready and motivated for the final stretch here, the NCAA tournament?

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COACH DREW: The great thing is the hoopla goes along with the selections show, and that day it's a special time. I mean, a lot of teams wish they were part of it. A lot of teams are nervous. Are they going to be a part of it? The great thing is we know we're going to be there and now it's who we're playing and where we're playing at, and just the excitement that goes in that.

Tonight people won't sleep, but tomorrow's a new day and that's going to have everyone's attention. We'll do some things like have them project where we'll be, who we play, fun things like that to get them thinking about the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much. All the best next week.

COACH DREW: Thank you.