



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

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TULANE GREEN WAVE (13-11 • 4-8 American)
at HOUSTON COUGARS (19-5 • 9-3 American)
Sunday, Feb. 11, 2018 • Health & PE Arena • Houston

HOUSTON HEAD COACH KELVIN SAMPSON

Opening Statement

“This time of year, you really have to have good leaders in practice, because practice is important. Most freshman have no clue what it means to know how to practice and for people who don’t understand that, you just don’t know what you don’t know. When I say they have no clue how to practice, I mean in every sense of the word “no” and every sense of the word “clue”. They had no idea the intensity level and how hard you have to play every possession just to get where you can compete at this level.

With that being said, I just thought that this Thursday, Friday, and Saturday were three of our best practices all year and that tells you how much this team has grown. We’ve learned how to practice. When you learn how to practice, that gives you a chance to have great carry over in games. You have a bunch of kids who try to go easy or don’t want to play hard in practice and just flip it on for games, you aren’t going to win with those kids. I don’t care how talented they are. There’s a lot of talented teams in America that are losing, so if all you have is talent, that’s not good enough. You have to have talent, toughness and the culture that permeates throughout every kid in this program and that’s what we have.

On the defense?

“We have a scouting report, so usually you’re trying to take something away. In all their big wins they hurt you by posting their guards. We worked hard on that the last three days. We worked hard at 11:45 this morning. We were prepared. When we were prepared and our kids come with the right mindset, then we can guard. If you can defend and you can rebound, those two things will give you a chance and those two things are the things we focus on the most.”

On if he thought the offense was balanced?

“Yes. I don’t really look at these stats a whole lot, but I noticed that Rob had eight points. Rob could have had 28 points. I could have said ‘Rob go score’ but Rob moved the ball the most he has all year. Rob could have scored. Don’t judge Rob on the amount of points he’s scored, because I told him, ‘don’t judge yourself on that, it’s unfair to you. You’re too good of a basketball player to be just a score’. If someone says, ‘What happened to Gray? He only scored eight points’, that’s when you’ve got to let some stuff go in one ear and out the other. Let’s play basketball the right way and make the right play.

Of all things Damyeon Dotson learned in this program, that was it, he learned how to make the right play. Shoot when you should shoot and pass when you should pass. Don’t force bad shots. We could have shot 16 for 25 tonight. Corey had six wide open shots that he missed. We got good shots all night. We didn’t make them all, but we had good shots. I thought our offense moved the ball. We didn’t make a lot of shots tonight but, our sharing, our unselfishness and our ball movement was good. Rob sets the tone with that.”

On Armoni's rebounds

"I talk to these guys all the time. We talk about rebounding a lot and watch edits on rebounding. Rebounds are a big part of our program. We had nine more rebounds than Tulane tonight. Armoni is a good rebounder, but like most kids they don't understand they were good at it until they got somewhere where it is a point of emphasis. They realize what it takes to be a good rebounder, and if you get 10 rebounds that meant you went up for 17. If you get two that probably means you went after five."

On how soon you will focus on the Cincinnati game

"Their score against SMU today was irrelevant, because SMU had some injuries. We have already played them once, it's not like we have to go and study them hard. They aren't a hard team to prepare for. They are just a monster to play against. They don't try to trick you with fancy stuff. They line up and have a 100 mile per hour fastball, with movement on it and they say hit it."

On how you will prepare for the Cincinnati game

"Same way we prepare every game. We don't have different ways to prepare. This game will be a big game to a lot of people outside our program. For us, we have played them and it's another conference game. We are not going to make this game any bigger than our next game."

HOUSTON SENIOR GUARD ROB GRAY

On becoming the all-time leading scorer in the AAC

"I didn't know I was approaching that until one of the AAC staff members informed me. It's crazy that I achieved it on a night where I felt like I didn't score a lot, so I guess that was God's plan. I'm proud of our defense tonight more than anything. I'm glad we won, so now we can focus on getting our 20th win this season against Cincinnati."

On if he concentrates on his other roles besides a scorer

"I'm proud of being a leader, taking this program to new heights and bringing it back. My focus at the moment is to improve myself. I feel like I am one of the best scorers in the nation, but it's all about us scoring not just me. I can't play mind games on myself for not scoring a lot. It's not a good evaluation on basketball."

On if this game was payback for their loss at Tulane

"Payback is the word we used all week. Yesterday we had the best practice of the year. When we ended practice, we thought 'That's how you go to war'. Some teams know when their season is going to end and we're planning on something special. We'll have another payback match on Thursday against Cincinnati."

On how he feels about playing his last games as a senior

"I want to go 5-0 and extend those games as long as possible. I will give it my all defensively and use my basketball IQ and instincts to help my team."

HOUSTON SENIOR FORWARD DEVIN DAVIS

On his thoughts on the game

"It was a defensive game for us. Anybody can be a lead scorer on our team and it was a good scoring night for me."

On what he learned from this game

"We can't let having a lead slow us down. We have to stay hungry, disciplined and last the whole 40 minutes."

On how he felt about Armoni Brooks's performance

"It's great to know that he's a good rebounder. I don't have a problem with it as long as we can get the defensive rebound and run with it."