

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 14, 2019

Bill Self

Marcus Garrett

David McCormack

Kansas Jayhawks

Kansas 65, Texas 57

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin with the Kansas Jayhawks, Coach Self and the student-athletes are Marcus Garrett and David McCormack. Coach, congratulations on your victory tonight. Your thoughts?

BILL SELF: I thought it was, you know, kind of a typical March game when you played somebody for the third time. Not many easy baskets. I thought both teams guarded the first half. The second half, I didn't think we guarded great and we got lucky that they missed some good looks. We made 4 shots outside of 3 feet for the night. So to come away with a win when the ball didn't go in the basket, certainly I'm happy with that and happy that we get to spend another night here and play a much improved and tough West Virginia team.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for our student-athletes?

Q. David, could you talk about the difference between the last game against Texas and the job you did on Jaxson Hayes trying to guard him tonight?

DAVID McCORMACK: Just playing them for the third time, you know, you get a really good feel for your opponents and I know we have to get physical with him. As far as getting inside of them because he likes to be a shot blocker, so I used my size and strength to my advantage as far as playing against him.

Q. David, do you feel like you are able to push it inside and then on defense just force them to take perimeter shots that you would win this game?

DAVID McCORMACK: I definitely think so. Having the presence inside and making them take outside shots is definitely an advantage that we had, and it was the right things we did to force them to take bad shots.

Q. Marcus, what do you think of KU's defense tonight and the challenges that Texas presented?

MARCUS GARRETT: I feel like we guarded great



tonight knowing that when we played at Texas our ball screen defense wasn't great at all. I feel like they got anywhere they wanted to go on the court. We played great defensively.

Q. Marcus, how important was it for you to mix it up on the glass today, 8 defensive rebounds?

MARCUS GARRETT: Coach tell us to rebound before the game and I just trying to help out and put all the rebounds on the bigs, help out the bigs. Not just put all the rebounds on the bigs.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, we will let you get back to the locker room. Congratulations. Questions for Coach Self?

Q. Bill, how much do you think Jaxson Hayes getting into foul trouble changed the complex of the game for Texas?

BILL SELF: I thought it did. He got two so fast and he got his third if I'm not mistaken to start the second. But Lawson got two fast, too, not as fast as Jaxson. But we have to have Dedric in the game, offensively. So I thought it probably kept both teams from being their very best. Candidly. Certainly I don't know what happened after the game, did they take him to the locker room? You haven't heard anything, but I hope he's okay. He's a tremendous talent and got a great future. That was a break for us for him only to play 14 minutes. Although Jericho did play well.

Q. Coach, you mentioned West Virginia briefly in your opening remarks, certainly a team you scouted during the season and played twice. I don't know if you had a chance to see them earlier, but how much different do you view them now with the run they've gone on as opposed to maybe what you saw a couple of weeks ago?

BILL SELF: Well, they beat us at their place, obviously, and that was basically to start the league. That was around January 20th, and then we played them, I can't remember, eight games ago, maybe, and that was right when they had just let some guys go and they obviously weren't together like they are now. So we caught a break by playing them at maybe one of the lowest points. And every team goes through ebbs and flows and ups and downs, but the team I watched play tonight is hungry. They're playing with a free mind. The basket looks big to them and certainly they're

rebounding the ball like Huggins' teams have historically done at West Virginia. Forget about the records when Kansas and West Virginia play you usually get your money's worth as a game and I'm sure it will be that way tomorrow night as well.

Q. Did Roach seem too timid to you and how did you plan to attack him on defense?

BILL SELF: We didn't have a game plan to attack anybody. I was asked that question earlier, what I would expect and I would expect nothing different than what we have known for the last four years. I assume he's been practicing with them. So that's a little bit different than an injury where you have been out and you worry about conditioning and those sorts of things. But, you know, he didn't have a great game numbers wise, but he's a really good player and he played 20 minutes and he made a big three late when we totally screwed up, defense coming off a missed free throw. But I like Texas' team talent, and I certainly love Kerwin's talent and I've enjoyed competing against him the last four years. You probably wasn't, you know, maybe had his A game maybe because of a little rust. But we didn't try to game plan for that at all.

Q. Bill, I know you're focused primarily on the games, right, but how much thought if any have you given to sort of what this weekend could do for you guys staying closer to home next weekend, the weekend after that?

BILL SELF: You know, Sam, in years past I've given it a lot of thought. If we can do this or win two over here or one over here that solidifies something. I have no idea where we are right now.

I obviously think and maybe people will disagree with me, but a great showing this weekend, I think we could at worst be a three with a great showing this weekend, with an average showing this weekend. I don't know, 4 or 5. I have no idea.

But I do think that, you know, the ultimate goal of being in Kansas City, if you could win two games, I think that's a little bit of a reach to be candid. I don't think it's a reach that we could still play in Des Moines or Tulsa. But I think things will have to happen positively for us to do that because right now I would say the chances are we would probably be out of our area, but I don't know. The way I understood it, or understand it is if you're a top 4 seed they try to keep you in the area. So we've got a chance to be that if we play well the rest of the weekend. So I think that could happen, but I think Kansas City would probably be a long shot.

Q. Coach, another strong game for David McCormack, 13 points, 9 rebounds. Have you placed emphasis on getting him touches, getting

him in the rhythm, getting him going early to keep his confidence up, or is that something that just happened in the flow of the game tonight?

BILL SELF: If you followed us at all for the last 20 years, we love throwing the ball inside early in the game. That's how we've always played. He's the beneficiary of that usually. But we did want to give their bigs something to guard. That was something we wanted to do. David has scored the ball better of late and he's getting more and more confident and obviously playing at a much higher level now that he's had more opportunities in the last month, month and a half.

Q. Bill, are you surprised Shaka has had more struggles getting wins, momentum? Is there any way you could make a case for Texas getting in the NCAA Tournament?

BILL SELF: Well, I can make a case for Texas because I really think Texas is one of the more talented teams in our league, without question. I think that they played a really good schedule and they've got some wins that I could be wrong, but was Purdue and North Carolina? So they have two of the best nonconference wins that anybody's had all year long as a nonconference situation and going 8-10 in the league certainly in a year where you could have as many as eight get in, I think for sure, seven. But I think that's very respectable without question.

So Shaka hasn't had some great luck in some games. They've had some, I'm thinking of the Baylor game. That was a game down there that they played great in and it just kinda got away late and every team has a game or two like that. But it seems like to me that's kinda bit them a little bit. But from a talent standpoint nobody is going to see Texas when they're in the tournament. I think they're positively a tournament team. The thing you are probably looking at from a one-loss standpoint how many teams historically have gotten in. But you have to look at now teams who are considered bubble teams whose conference record was 7-11, 6-12. So if you look at it that way I think there is a strong case to be made for Texas being in the tournament.

Q. Dotson and Grimes only had one turnover. They scored a lot of points. What do you think of your freshmen in their first tournament game?

BILL SELF: Quentin didn't have a great start early. He had maybe one point at halftime and maybe one or two from the line. But second half he got his free throws and made a big 3 and he got a run out. I thought he played well. I thought Devon was solid the whole game. He played a lot of minutes. He accepted the challenge to guard Matt, and I think it wore him down. So he needs to get some rest, but I thought they both

did well. I've got to get Ochai playing like he was playing before, but certainly those two did well. I thought Marcus gave us a nice lift off the bench as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.
Congratulations.

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Shaka Smart

Jase Febres

Dylan Osetkowski

Texas Longhorns

Kansas 65, Texas 57

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin with the University of Texas. Coach Shaka Smart, student-athletes Jase Febres and Dylan Osetkowski. Coach, thoughts on tonight's game?

SHAKA SMART: I thought our guys fought a lot down the stretch, and we got stops at the latter part of the game. But we didn't score enough points, earlier in the half we didn't get enough stops, particularly in transition. I think the difference in transition baskets is one of the key factors that led to Kansas winning the game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for our student-athletes?

Q. Dylan, there were times where a lot was clicking for you out there. What did you feel against their defense when it wasn't working for a lot of other guys?

DYLAN OSETKOWSKI: Nothing really that their defense was doing. I was just playing aggressive. Yeah.

Q. Jase, how hard was it for Snoop to find rhythm in the game tonight, and the how much may that have hurt you all offensively?

JASE FEBRES: Can you repeat the first part please?

Q. With Snoop missing the last five games it seemed he struggled to get in an offensive rhythm. I wondered how that set your offense back tonight?

JASE FEBRES: When you haven't played five games it's going to set back your offense a little bit, but regardless he came in and contributed what he could. As for what he could have done better, I'm not the sure, because I'm not him. But I know he gave it his all and that's all I could ask for.

Q. In your heart, have y'all played well enough to get in the NCAA Tournament?



DYLAN OSETKOWSKI: Absolutely. Absolutely, no question about it. Regardless of our record, every game that we've played, it was there for us to win, and we've been in every game. It's a tough place leaving it up to the Committee now. But I think we've definitely done enough for them to see that we are a NCAA Tournament team.

JASE FEBRES: Same. I think we've given our all every game we've played. We've had our ups and downs during the season, but regardless we have stacked up enough wins to put ourselves in a good position to get deeper into March.

Q. Dylan, how much did y'all feel hamstrung with Jaxson's foul trouble and the few minutes he played tonight?

DYLAN OSETKOWSKI: What do you mean by feel hamstrung?

Q. One of your best players, he played 15, 16 minutes.

DYLAN OSETKOWSKI: I mean, he had, whether he had 2 points, 2 rebounds. Forget about what the stat sheet says. When he's out there he makes a difference. So he only had 2. Matt didn't have any. Regardless of the points, guys are out there and they affect the game and Jaxson definitely affected the game on the defensive end as well.

Q. Guys, how aware are you, I assume you are by now, that a 500 team has never made it into the NCAA Tournament and I guess, again, how would you state your case to the Committee that you're deserving?

DYLAN OSETKOWSKI: I actually didn't know that. I mean, like I said, look at our games, early on in the season, North Carolina, Purdue, Michigan State. We couldn't finish that out in the second half. Kansas at home, at Kansas, every game in the Big 12. I think Big 12 is one of the toughest conferences in the nation. Look at the Texas Tech-West Virginia game, team that won four or five games in the regular season comes out and punches Tech in the mouth. Every night in the Big 12 is a dog fight. All that war. Not to say you don't get that in other conferences, but every night is a fight. Like I said, I think we've done enough to put ourselves in a position to play in March and go win games in March. I think you get to a one-game situation, teams

don't want to see us. Teams don't want to see us out of our league.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, guys, we will let you go back to the locker room. Thank you. Questions for Coach Smart?

Q. Shaka, you touched on it a minute ago, but their transition points and just how much of that was a killer, do you think? Do you think that may have been the game itself? Transition buckets?

SHAKA SMART: That was definitely, defensively that was the biggest key and going into the game we knew we needed to do a good job on them in transition. I thought for most of the first half we did. Lawson got loose and got a 3-point shot in the first half. There was one or two others that were caused by turnovers. But the second half they were able to get out in transition too much. Particularly there was a 3-point shot that Quentin Grimes hit midway through the half that was a big one for us because it was after one of our makes. That's unacceptable. We can't give up a three after we make a shot. Our guys got confused, got their wires crossed in terms of match-ups and defense. That was a big factor in the game and I think defensively that was the biggest factor because in the half-court possessions we guarded them pretty well.

Q. Shaka, how did you present this game to your guys as far as the significance? Did you present it as, hey, we need to win this to make sure we get in?

SHAKA SMART: Yes. Absolutely. We talked about the fact that this was a game that I didn't necessarily tell the guys that it would get us into the NCAA Tournament, but I told the guys that it was a game that we had to win if we wanted to play in the NCAA Tournament.

I thought our guys "want to" was definitely there from the standpoint of, like, they really wanted to win the game. You can see the looks on their faces after the game. They told that story. We just didn't do enough to win the game, particularly on the offensive end, didn't make plays and down the stretch we missed some good shots that didn't go in that could have made a difference.

Q. Shaka, does it leave you a hollow feeling? It seems like you have a patent to the close loss. Seems like you played well enough to be right there at the end?

SHAKA SMART: We put ourselves in a position where, you know, we were within 4 points. Matt missed that three in the corner. That's one way to describe it. Hollow. There's a lot of different areas where we could have been better tonight. Somebody mentioned

Jaxson obviously having him on the floor more makes a big difference. It was not Matt's night. He didn't play particularly well. Then, again, as a team there was a lot of things offensively that we needed to work together to do better. But Kansas deserves a lot of credit.

Q. Shaka, two things, do you have an update on Jaxson? I know it's early. And two, what would you tell the Committee why you deserve a bid?

SHAKA SMART: Jaxson hurt his left knee. Don't know the extent of it. We will evaluate him when we get back to Austin. Hopefully it's not, you know, extremely serious. But he was in some pain.

In terms of talking to the Committee, we don't get that opportunity to speak directly to them. But, you know, if you're going to evaluate teams based on the quality of their wins we definitely, I think, deserve strong consideration. But, you know, for us, our focus is on our guys and helping them process this game today and understand what we can learn from it.

Q. Shaka, I know the game just ended, but how are you going to approach the next 48 hours until Selection Sunday with the guys knowing the 500 team factoid and all that. Are you going to keep their hopes up? How are you going to approach that?

SHAKA SMART: We'll spend a lot of time together as a team. You know, we know that we will obviously, the season is not done. So we will practice and work on getting better. We've got a lot of young guys that need to learn a lot from this game, from this experience up here.

That's what we will do. No different than what we do any other time. It just happens to be a couple days before Selection Sunday. Certainly you want to control your own destiny and that's the most disappointing thing about tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much. Good luck.