

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 15, 2019

Bill Self

Ochai Agbaji

Dedric Lawson

Kansas Jayhawks

Kansas 88, West Virginia 74

THE MODERATOR: Okay, we are joined on stage now by the Kansas Jayhawks, Coach Bill Self, and student-athletes are Dedric Lawson and Ochai Agbaji. Coach, congratulations on the victory tonight.

BILL SELF: Thank you. We didn't get off to a really good start and didn't guard very well to start. Certainly West Virginia played better than we did the first 15 minutes or so, but then we got hot and Quentin carried us in the first half and we were pretty efficient in the second half. Certainly looking forward to playing a talented and a red hot Iowa State team tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for our student-athletes?

Q. Dedric and Ochai, what does it mean to play for the title tomorrow, and how do you think you played today in beating West Virginia?

DEDRIC LAWSON: I think we played okay. It wasn't our best game. There are definitely things we can improve on and looking forward to tomorrow and getting a championship, looking forward to winning something meaningful for the season.

OCHAI AGBAJI: We're all excited for tomorrow and our guys are all going to be ready. Coming off this game we weren't, you know, ready to go from the start. But I think tomorrow we will be ready.

Q. For both of you, kinda going back to what Coach touched on a little bit, do you feel like y'all played with more energy the second half than you did the first half?

DEDRIC LAWSON: I guess to a certain extent we went out big and got lackadaisical with turnover and stuff and we could have put them away and we got easy baskets to get our guys more confident. So we just gotta keep our foot on their neck when we got them down.



OCHAI AGBAJI: Like he said, we got a lead going in the second half and I think that kinda got us going, but later on in the second half we made some mistakes and we gotta clean that up.

Q. Ochai, what did you think of the way Quentin played today?

OCHAI AGBAJI: He played great. He is shooting with confidence. That's something we need moving into tomorrow. Definitely in the second half when he got hurt I think he will be fine. But I think we need that going into tomorrow.

Q. Dedric, what do you think of his four-point play?

DEDRIC LAWSON: It was pretty impressive. He made one like that at practice the other day.

OCHAI AGBAJI: Did he?

DEDRIC LAWSON: Yeah, doubling fist.

Q. (Away from mic.)

DEDRIC LAWSON: The two walk-ons.

BILL SELF: They foul a lot.

Q. Gentlemen, thanks for coming. Questions for Coach Self?

Q. Talk about the match-up with Iowa State?

BILL SELF: You know, we played 'em both so early. I can't remember the exact date, but I think it was the first week in February, our second game with them. So it's been like six weeks since we played 'em. They handled us easily at their place and we had to fight and scratch to eke out a win at our place. They're the best offensive team in our league. They've got more weapons. They create problems for a lot of folks and we're also one of them because they play small. So they got shooters at all four spots around the perimeters. We've been playing big, so we will have to make adjustments there and try to figure it out. I love their personnel and they always play good in Kansas City it seems like.

I'm sure that they'll get a ton of support here tomorrow and it should be a fun game. I think it will be one of more fun games we've played this year.

Q. Bill, how is Quentin, and where has this been all

year?

BILL SELF: Well, he just got a cramp. So he's fine. I mean, I guess he needs to drink a lot of water and he should be fine. But he shot the ball ridiculously well the first half and there was absolutely no hesitation. He was so confident. Second half his looks were good. The last one he didn't get close because I think he cramped in his shot. But it's a weapon that we desperately need and certainly something that, you know, we need a guy to catch fire like that, that can carry us for a four or five-minute stretch. If it weren't for him over a four or five-minute stretch, West Virginia controlled the first half and we ended up going 8 just primarily because of Quentin.

Q. I don't know if you saw the first game, really, really loud in favor of Iowa State. You obviously have a big crowd. What kind of energy do you expect for tomorrow night?

BILL SELF: I hope our fans are creative, but I bet you Iowa State has 70% of the building tomorrow. The reason I say that is because when you play that first game and you win, now you're able to hustle the tickets off the team that didn't win. And they're pros at hustling tickets in Kansas City. I would say that it will be the first time in a long time that we probably won't have a comparable home court is what I predict. But, you know, our people show up and they'll compete just like we will tomorrow. It should be a fun day and certainly a game in which I think will be a fun game to play. There will be good players out there on the court.

Q. Bill, I don't know whether it's Quentin or Marcus' ankle, is there anything big picture that you've taken from these games or that you want to see tomorrow heading into next week?

BILL SELF: You know what? I don't know. I think if anything I would like to have our core group, meaning our nine guys all contributing in a way where they have confidence going into the next week. If you look at it, hey, Devon has had two games. Dedric has been solid. David has been solid, and Ochai kinda came out of it tonight, which I thought was really good. Marcus obviously is playing at a, moving better than he has in a long time. This has been a good weekend for us. But, certainly, we need to learn how to close something out. We get opportunity to do that tomorrow and of course they have the same opportunity. But it's just going to make for a fun game. The winner of the game will celebrate for a span of about 20 hours, and then it's over. It's not like, it's over. Who cares after that, once the pairings come out? That's how everybody will view it, but tomorrow I think it will be a highly competitive game where both teams are really hookin' up.

Q. Coach, what were some things that you saw from David McCormack tonight or maybe some

things you didn't see?

BILL SELF: I thought David was not as good as he has been, being candid. I didn't think he came ready to guard and that was his main assignment, obviously, was to cover, and we subbed him early. I thought that did he a much better job in the second half defending. I thought he was pretty good second half. He's a guy that gives you points but they're bonuses. He doesn't have to score for him to play well, but he has to defend and rebound to play well. Derek Culver is a load, and he's still got his numbers. But I thought David did a pretty nice job, second half.

Q. Coach, talk about the effort and the presence that Mitch Lightfoot has had over the past few games and especially tonight.

BILL SELF: Mitch does some good things. Mitch, I guess you could describe him as a head scratcher from him because he can do so many good things and then you just remember what we're thinking about on some other things. But I thought his activity blocking shots and everything were terrific. He's got to rebound. He didn't get any rebounds tonight, three turnovers in limited, guys shouldn't be turning the ball over.

So he does do some really good things and his activity level is really high for the most part, but he can tighten up some things as well. I love Mitch, but sometimes I think that he can get a little bit more done than what he does.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you.

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THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by the Mountaineers from West Virginia, Coach Bob Huggins, student-athletes, Derek Culver and Brandon Knapper. Questions for our student-athletes?

Q. For either player, guys, take me through Kansas' 11-0 run right before halftime. How did they take charge of the game right before the break?

BRANDON KNAPPER: Like Coach said, we just didn't get back on defense. Our transition defense wasn't good enough, and they were getting the rebound and pushing the ball up court. We just made simple mistakes, basically, on getting back on defense and that's what hurt us.

DEREK CULVER: Yeah, to piggyback on what Knapp said, we failed to get back in transition defense. We weren't talking. Just little mishaps like that can make a big difference in the game. Like I said, we didn't get back on defense. We weren't talking or communicating and we weren't knowing where we were supposed to be. When you don't execute things like that it's kinda hard to make the game go in your favor.

Q. Follow-up to that, is it lack of execution or fatigue? You guys have played so much basketball at a high level over the last few days, which is it?

DEREK CULVER: I don't want to make any excuses and say it's fatigue, but it kinda just comes down to lack of just paying attention to what's going on around you. Like I said, I will be the first one to blame. We just gotta go back to the drawing board and try to fix it.

Q. Either of you, potential to play more basketball, is that an exciting prospect to try to continue to build off of what you guys have accomplished here over the last few days?

BRANDON KNAPPER: Of course. I mean, this team will be here next year, and like Coach said, we just gotta stay together and stay positive. We've got to continue to work. We don't come out and basically



play the game that we learned how to play and just learn from this and basically build on to it for next year.

DEREK CULVER: Like he said, we have to go back to the drawing board and figure things out. It's always going to be fun to go out and play with my brothers again. Like I said, blood sweat and tears, I would give everything for these guys. Like I said, it's always fun to get another opportunity to get to play basketball with them.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, Derek and Brandon, we will let you go back to the locker room. Thank you. Good tournament, guys. Questions for Coach Huggins?

Q. Coach, what defense miscues happened? Derek mentioned down the stretch there in the first half, how was Kansas able to pull in front and stay in front?

BOB HUGGINS: Grimes got hot at the end of the half. We had our hands down and he just jumped up and shot it in. I think he was the biggest reason or maybe the only reason for the run. He was very good.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you for coming.

BOB HUGGINS: My pleasure.

THE MODERATOR: Good luck.