

2019-20  
KANSAS MEN'S BASKETBALL  
**BILL SELF PRESS CONFERENCE  
QUOTES**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2019

### **KANSAS HEAD COACH BILL SELF**

#### ***On the best way to figuring out how many forwards and guards to play:***

"I think games. Practice is one thing, you can put them in situations where you can try to simulate how people guard you and stuff like that, but the reality of it is you can find out more in games. We are not giving up, by no means, on playing two bigs. That is not the case at all, but I think the thing that has heightened the attention is the fact we know we don't have to. That should elevate everybody else a sense of urgency knowing that you go from three bigs splitting 80 minutes now three bigs splitting 40, which is a huge difference if we can't find a happy medium which I'm sure we will. I don't doubt that. Usually, Duke was the exception, during most non-conference games you're playing against mid-major opponents, which don't have the opportunity to recruit as many bigs so naturally, they are going to play smaller so that forces you to do the same in our situation if you want to be able to defend the arc. I don't think it's anything we have to be concerned about or decide what we are going to do come conference play right now because, I think, we will end up doing both."

#### ***On the development of playing with four guards:***

"I honestly think our offense looks better with four guards in it right now. The thing about it is you can play two bigs. Bigs are different. Brian Cook (at Illinois), he played 6-10, but he was our best 3-point shooter. Even here, you play Markieff and Marcus (Morris) both of them could always be a threat and they are both great passers. It's just our skillset with these bigs is more bangers than they are passers and perimeter shooters to keep defenses honest. It can still look good, but I don't see a huge reason to play two bigs unless we are better on the glass, unless we are better rim protectors, unless we are better screeners and things like that, that we can control from a physical standpoint. If we do those things we can live with the things we wouldn't do as well if you played four guards, but there has to be something to bring to the table. If we don't dominate the glass and can't defend the arc, then why play two guys. Those two guys that are out there need to dominate as far as being able to rebound and protect and be good ball screen defenders. That's not anything Earth-shattering, that's just how it is."

#### ***On how Isaiah Moss has looked and his confidence in him...***

"I always have confidence in every player. Always. Isaiah is doing well. He is doing well, moving fine. I still don't think he is 100 percent, but he is closer to it. Obviously, he is a guy you stop and think about it, using Isaiah as an example, if we are as good of a rebounding team with four guards as were with two bigs, Isaiah is obviously a better offensive threat. That is the kind of stuff I was talking about."

#### ***On what the team looks like defensively with two bigs...***

"Our two bigs, who are true bigs, it's not like they are really tall guards or perimeter four-men, our bigs are big. It is the same thing that I said earlier, how are we going to guard ball screens and if we switch can one of those guys, Silvio or David, stay connected and be a good perimeter defender and if we don't switch how do we get back to shooters. That would be the thing if we played four guards we can switch. It shouldn't be quite as difficult. That is the kind of stuff we are still working on. In defense for those guys, they have never done it before. Silvio has never played on the perimeter and David has never played on the perimeter, so this is new to them as well. I think they are getting better at it."

#### ***On the three new players that signed Wednesday:***

"We signed three yesterday and we got the last one in today. I said this on the show last night with Brian, there has been a lot of years during the fall period we are not even, what is thought to be, a highly nationally ranked class. I'm not saying Jo (Joel Embiid), Wigs (Andrew Wiggins), (Wayne) Selden, Frank (Mason) and those guys, but I do think considering everything that has happened, I think it is a terrific class. Their all three were our main targets. I don't think we could have recruited better than what we did at the respected positions that we were recruiting. Gethro (Muscadin) is one of those guys kind of like a Markieff Morris. How good can he get? His ceiling is high, he can run, he can jump, he made two or three threes the other night in his high school game and he plays in a highly competitive situation. He is going to be really good. He is an active shot-blocker, but he is not ready yet, but he is going to be really good. Bryce (Thompson) I've known for a long time and we couldn't have recruited a better ambassador slash player than Bryce Thompson for our program. He is terrific. He is a combo guard. He will be able to play some on the ball and certainly off the ball and we have always had our most success with combo guards, it seems to me, play multiple ones out there. I think he has a chance to be a special player. He has to get stronger, obviously, and improve in some areas, but he has some things that you can't teach from an IQ standpoint. Tyon (Grant-Foster), to me, if he were here now he would be playing all the minutes now. He is a really good player and to think that he just grew up down the street and has just blown up like this over the last 12 months is pretty amazing. I don't know if you guys have been followed it, but what people are saying about him that follow that game are raving about him and deservedly so. He is a six-foot-seven, long do everything guard. I don't think we could have done a lot better than what we did based on our situation and really proud to have all three in the fold because all three are going to be terrific players."

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***On the advantage of having almost a full the class signed:***

"I thought it was more important this year than most, just because of the unknown that waits out there. I don't mean 'unknown' as being bad. 'Unknown' could be positive but you just don't know when this will be concluded. If its concluded in the summer, then you are under the same situation as in spring as far as trying to bring guys in, you're not any closer. I thought it was important to get guys in early, just to have three good players in the fold that you didn't have to worry about when it was going to end. To have three guys like this jump on board now is a pretty strong move on their part but more importantly it helps us out and changes, in my opinion, what has been a fairly negative narrative that has been put out about us."

***On talking to the three signees about the NOA and that they have been reassured about the situation:***

They have been reassured that we're being honest with them. They haven't been reassured what the outcome is going to be. Not at all. We've been straight with a lot of people. Playing at Kansas is a pretty good deal the vast majority of recruits out there. Playing at a place of this tradition, this history, this interest level, this recent success, there is a lot of things that go into attracting kids to come here. We're dealing with a situation that we don't know what the outcome is (going to be) but those other things that I just mentioned do not go away. That's why I said over time the Kansas basketball program will always prevail over time. There may be some situations in the short term that obviously could be considered a loss but over time, it's a 120 years, your not going to totally set something back that has been so successful for so long over something that over a span of that time is such a small span. Although it happens to be now, that makes it huge to us. But the Kansas basketball program will always prevail and I think this recruiting class is evidence of that.

***On the situation impacting recruiting last year; did receiving the NOA help in being able to talk to recruits:***

There's not question it has and we've missed out on guys this year. I don't think receiving that, in any way shape or form helped because obviously of what was in it. I do think it is a step that is closer to finality than what it would be if we had not received it yet. I don't know that it helped but I do think in some ways it gives the appearance that a least, hopefully not to distant future, we can move forward.

***What have you thought about your team icing ball screens this year***

I actually think against Duke it was awful. I thought the other night it was pretty good. In practice, we work on it a lot. It's something that I think would be best for us if, in fact, we were able to do it rather than having Dok (Udoka Azubuike) or whoever get out to hard hedge or whatnot. I'm not saying we couldn't do it but we've practiced it and we weren't very good at it all. I do think downing, we call it downing, or icing the ball screens is something that will be good for us and even more importantly for that, it will help us play against teams that do the same thing. There are some teams in our league that are very good at it.

***What has led Kansas to playing it (icing ball screens) more this year***

"So that our bigs could stay connected. If you look at it, Villanova for instance. Villanova did such a good job of overloading one side of the floor and setting a ball screen on the single side and the guy that pops out of that is Spelman and he shot nine threes against us. So in one game, a center did. They just played to Dok, hedging the ball screen middle, throwing the ball back and being naked. You can be in a full rotation and things like that but I think with our team, without getting into it too much, is better just stay connected, big-big and little-little, as much as they possibly can. Whereas their team was more comfortable with these guys can slide and guard whoever. As long as we have the bigs that we have, we have to try to keep them as connected as possible. That was the biggest reason for that."

***On Silvio De Sousa's limitations because of not playing in a game last year***

"I think that he's rusty but I also think the things that made him good as freshman; you guys need to understand, he didn't play a lot as a freshman until Dok got hurt in the Big 12 Tournament and then he just took off and was great in the Big 12 Tournament and the NCAA Tournament. He got 10 rebounds against Duke in the Elite Eight game. He had a gear that he could get to. And so much of that gear was just having inner confidence that he can just go out there and play instead of think. Right now, I don't think he's at that point. We're trying to get him to do some things are different than what he did as a freshman. Freshmen set a ball screen and run to the rim. He was Dok's back up. It wasn't that complicated. And this year he's got to learn to play with Dok or David and I think that's more difficult thing, guard a guy that can shoot and all that stuff. That's a bit different than his responsibilities two years ago. I've told Silvio if you just play with unbelievable energy and attack the ball and things like that, that will cover up the things that maybe you don't quite as good two months from now or a month from now. But if don't do that, then it will magnify it. I just think he's got to let it go."

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***Did you watch the Monmouth game (vs. Kansas State) and is it easy to get your guys attention since they led by nine at half:***

"I actually have not watched the game, yet. It's on my computer and I'll watch it (later). I wanted to watch it last night and I hate to say this, I couldn't get it. I don't have Big 12 NOW. I've got to figure out a way to get it. Everybody that is out there that is frustrated, yes, I am too because I wanted to watch it last night. We did get it the way we record games and I'll watch it today. I planned on watching but instead I watched them play other games. They were up 39-30 at halftime and K-State locked them up pretty good in the second half. That tells you K-State is a terrific defensive team. For them to get that many points in the first half and control it for at least 20 minutes tells you they are more than capable."

***On the Monmouth matchup:***

"I see them playing four around one. I told our guys, most non-conference, mid-major games you're going to see that, where you get into the league and you won't see that quite as much. I do seem them playing four around one more. We're still going to start two bigs."

