

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2019

KANSAS HEAD COACH BILL SELF

On what he remembers about Tad Boyle:

"Tad and I were the two slowest guards in the Big Eight Conference from 1981-85. I say that in all seriousness to be honest, but Tad graduated in 1985 and I did too, and he did not want to go into being a (GA) grad assistant or coaching at that moment. I was able to sneak in and get that position. In many ways I probably owe Tad a lot."

On if he watched the Colorado game Wednesday night:

"I have not seen the game yet. I know that they were played tough. Marymount had the lead at halftime, if I am not mistaken, then Colorado played tough in the second half. I have not had a chance to look at that particular tape yet."

On how the team has rebounded so far this season:

"I don't think it has been awful, but I don't think it has been great by any stretch. I cannot remember if we have been outrebounded this year or not. If we had it was a very minor amount. We are about plus six, plus seven, but when you look at it if we play small a majority of the time, it is a tiny team out there with many lineups. You would not think it would be a dominant team, you think it would be if we had two bigs in. I think we have done okay, but it is certainly an area we can always get better in. Always."

On getting teams to play inside the arc:

"Trying to press out a little bit more. If you play flat which in basketball terms, is a common mistake that defenders make when the ball moves they jump to the basket as supposed to jumping to the ball if they don't have it. That makes it a longer distance, whether it is three to five feet to close back out to when he catches it next on the perimeter. Trying to get our guys to play higher on the floor when their man does not have the ball. I am not saying total denial of the ball, but to where it forces the offensive player to catch the ball a few feet further and it is easier to get to them to contest the shot. After they catch it, make them put it down although we don't want to put Dok (Udoka Azubuike) in situations to draw fouls. I think based on what I have seen so far is if we can make teams play inside the arc and we play inside the arc, then our chances our pretty good because we have a big body and guys who can drive it a bit. That would be a goal that we could play better perimeter defense although we have actually done much better than this year than we have in years past of defending the arc up until the last game against Dayton. Another part is that we need to start scoring the ball behind the arc ourselves; two of the best games we've played (BYU and Dayton) we haven't shot the ball well at all. We need to obviously become more consistent beyond the arc; we can't be outscored by 36 points consistently and have a chance to win."

On if this team's progress is where he expected it to be at this point in the season:

"Yeah; I wish we had Jalen (Wilson). He'd be a guy we could certainly work in and would give us some additional options. And I don't think Isaiah (Moss) is himself yet, but I think he's gaining on it. If we could get Isaiah shooting the ball and us knowing how to better get him open, and the staff doing more things to get him open, I think that we can become better offensively, without question. We're a long way away from being a good team. We're a pretty good team, but based on how we played in New York, I will say that we have improved a lot since then, in a lot of areas."

On needing to score more from behind the 3-point arc and where that production is going to have to come from:

"Yeah; look at our shooting statistics. Devon (Dotson) hasn't shot it well yet. Och (Ochai Agbaji) hasn't shot it well yet. Marcus (Garrett) has made a few, but he hasn't exactly been on fire. Isaiah has been our best 3-point shooter, but it's been inconsistent because when he gets looks, he makes them; but when he doesn't get looks, he doesn't get them off. So we've got to do a better job with that. I think Christian (Braun) in one of our better 3-point shooters, he just hasn't played much. We're not going to make 10 (3-pointers) a game. We may have some games where we made 10, but I still think we can average seven 3s a game – I think that's basically what we're averaging now – but we had two games where we made 22 (3-pointers) combined, so it's a little bit misleading."

On Colorado's personnel, especially having two all-league players:

"They're good. Tad's group is obviously still undefeated and I think they are ranked 20th, I think, in the AP (Associated Press Poll). (Tyler) Bey is a hard matchup four because he's a perimeter player who's tall; kind of like Toppin (Obi of Dayton), to be honest. There are some similarities there; he's not as tall, but he can really rebound. He rebounds the ball about 12 (times) a game and he scores the ball. McKinley Wright is one of the fastest point guards in the country. I didn't realize this, but I think he's been on a lot of the preseason watch lists, as far as (being) the premiere college players in the country. We knew he was good, but he has a chance to be one of the very best point guards in America. That will be a good matchup with Devon. He can score the ball. They've got good personnel and they really defend. I think that's what they do best, is defend."

On what has impressed him the most about Dok's play so far this year:

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"I'd say he's been hot and cold. I don't think he was nearly as impressive starting out, I thought he was a little hesitant, maybe a little rusty, maybe lacking a little bit of the same confidence he has now. (He) Was hesitant before he went to score and allowed double teams to take place. Against Dayton, he was great. And I also thought he was a presence in the other games, even if he didn't score the ball or get the ball a lot. Dok, I think, is going to have a great year, but our perimeter players have to do a better job of getting him the ball. I thought that in the Dayton game, it was a step in the right direction. He (Dok) played a lot better, but our perimeter players allowed him to look good too because they got him the ball on time and on target when he was posting. He just needs to keep being aggressive."

On how the team reacted to winning the tournament in Maui:

"We enjoyed winning it, don't get me wrong. But we don't make a big deal out of that (type of thing). That's not something we're going to hang our hat on or anything like that. Any time you play, you want to win, and anytime there's a tournament, you like to take home the trophy. I do think that the way we played, the last game especially, should give us some confidence moving forward in many different respects. I don't think when we play on Saturday (vs. Colorado) that tournament win (Maui Jim Maui Invitational) is going to be on our minds in any way, shape or form on how it impacts us moving forward. It probably gave us a springboard for having a decent week of practices, but past Saturday, we won't even remember Saturday (vs. Colorado), we won't even remember Maui."

On what it was like to give the team a couple of days off:

"It Thursday and Friday off over there (Maui) and then we traveled and we've basically been going since then. We took the day before yesterday off. We give them the allotted time off that we have to, but it hasn't been a 'rest week' at all. We're trying to get better."

On the potential of this team defensively, compared to his past teams:

"We actually show them tape. A lot of it is just recognition. First of all, it's hard to be great defensively when you're not tough. I think this team has potential to be a tough physical and tough mentally team. It's hard to be really good if you don't communicate and I think we're bad communicators, so that's an area that I can potentially see us getting a lot better in. I think if you can't defend a ball screen, and not be exploited that way, I think you're always going to have a chance to be exposed. We're not great at that yet, so there's another place we could get better. I'm just talking off the top of my head ... I'm sure there's more. The last thing is everybody has heard of 'help the helper'; if your man helps, you have to cover for the guy who went to help. If you're really good, you're kind of like 'help the helper's helper.' You can see things two or three passes ahead. That was one thing that I've always been so impressed about with good defensive teams, if one guy's beat, and a guy helps, you've got to cover for his man. But when you cover for his man, that leaves your man open and someone's got to cover for you. When you have confidence that you just always have help behind you, I think that really allows teams to become good defensively as well."

On the team's point guard play, especially Marcus and Devon and how they've helped each other:

"He's always going to get to the (free throw) line because he's fearless driver. He accepts contact about as well as anyone, and he's a good finisher. I think Marcus allows, and we'll allow moving forward, to let Devon play without the ball. You're guarding the other team's point guard and you're bringing it up every single time and you're going to play 38 or 40 minutes a game ... that's a lot to ask. So we need to let him, not rest, but maybe get a shot off a catch, or some things like that that he's very good at. We haven't really given him an opportunity to (do yet). I think getting the ball in Marcus' hands more, even from this point forward, I think will help Devon. I think sometimes we are oversaturated, thinking that we can keep doing the same things over and over and over and we need some more versatility on different guys making plays for us. I do see Marcus having the ball more moving forward."

On explaining what he meant when he said he believes his team is 'bad communicators':

"I would say on-court, verbally. There's some non-verbal cues; you can raise your hand or call something out, but the reality of it is that you've got to open your mouth. You have to talk. Even when we talk in practice, and this is a problem with a lot of teams, we may tell someone that a screen is coming, but we're telling them too late, so they don't have time to move their feet. You've got to let people know early and often and we need everybody 'chirping.' Kevin Young was the best. The best. Landen Lucas was unbelievable. And we just don't have someone like that to do that (right now). I actually think we're gaining on it, but this is not a very talkative team. At all. I do think that will hurt us, to keep us from becoming really good, especially defensively, if we don't start communicating better and more often."

On the Devon Dotson versus McKinley Wright IV matchup:

"Fast on fast. I think Devon's averaging 19 (points) and McKinley's averaging 12.5 or something like that. That will be speed on speed. That will be fun to watch. Colorado's stats are a little misleading because you look at numbers and you think, 'but we're scoring more points than them' but their opponents are scoring 54 points a game. They really hang their hat on being a good defensive team."

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On attempting to trap the bounce against Dayton:

The way that we practiced; it's not their fault, it's my fault. We don't practice trapping the bounce very often. So we did try to trap the bounce in the span of a five-minute walk-through. So we did try to trap the bounce some when Toppin had the ball. What they did was, which was kind of clever, was that they had four guys around him who could always shoot. Usually, when somebody traps, there's somebody that dives to the basket. Well, we covered that, but they didn't dive anybody. They kept the court spread so that when the pass came out to the five-man, Dok's man, the naturally tendency is to go guard the open guy. But in that situation, we screwed it up like three times; we want that guy to be open, don't go guard the open guy. Stay with your man and stay connected. But we had it where Marcus would run to him and then someone would run to Marcus' man and then Dok's just in the middle of the lane (saying), 'Who do I have?' That's on me, because we haven't practiced that enough. I think that created as much of our problems than anything else. We may have just been better off just saying, 'Unless Obi catches it on the block, don't trap him.' But then we thought he could just turn and shoot over Marcus or Ochai. That was probably my fault more than anything else."

On help defense and it being more his 'fault' than the players':

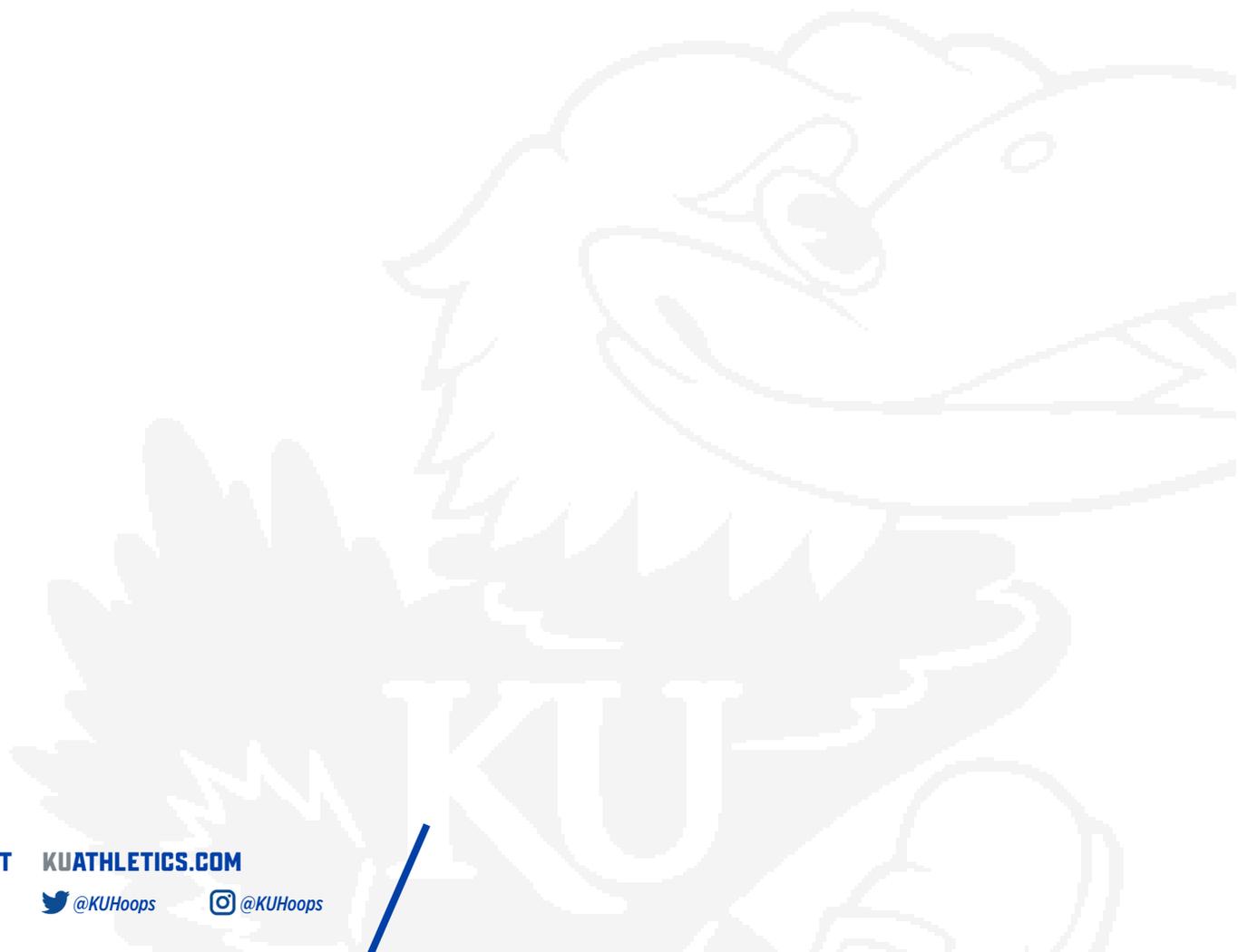
"The best thing is to guard your man, if you can keep your man in front of you, then you don't force help as much. He's (Toppin) a unique player in that even though he didn't score all the points, they wanted everything to run through him. He was an unselfish passer, he could also shoot it, stretch it. We probably helped them on four or five possessions by the way we tried to guard them. But there's also things that go into guarding it, because you've got to try, especially after Marcus has two fouls because you've got to help him. If you do that, then naturally that opens up other stuff. Was it more important for Marcus to be in the game? Or was it more important to let him play one-on-one? If you're going to let him play one-on-one, then you've got to take Marcus out. That's the kind of stuff I was talking about, about it being more on me than on the guys."

On what he remembers about the last game against Colorado:

"Was that the one where Booker made the shot? I remember we tied it; didn't we tie it? There was about four seconds left, or three, and they had three-quarter court and Booker got inside half court, we kind of backed off of him and he threw one in. So, the last time we played Colorado, they beat us and I do remember that. So, thanks, Gary (Bedore, The Kansas City Star beat writer)."



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