



2019 - 20
KANSAS MEN'S BASKETBALL
POSTGAME QUOTES

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#3/3 KANSAS VS TENNESSEE
SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2020
LAWRENCE, KAN. // ALLEN FIELDHOUSE

KANSAS HEAD COACH BILL SELF

On the team's performance:

"I thought our guys played tired. I think this last week has kind of gotten to them from a fatigue standpoint, but we had enough to win. One thing I know is Monday (against Oklahoma State), let's not play without Dok (Udoka Azubuike). We were obviously not very good when he wasn't in the game. We couldn't defend the paint, we certainly couldn't rebound and we had a hard time scoring because they could switch everything. I thought we played pretty well, but we didn't play smart today."

On Udoka Azubuike's performance:

"I thought Dok played well, I'm so proud of him. The whole thing is when you don't have depth you play conservatively. Defensively he probably wasn't as good as he has been."

On Devon Dotson's performance:

"I don't think that he was quite 100% defensively, he said his hamstring was bothering him some and he really couldn't get out and pressure. He also had some brain lapses too defensively which really hurt us, but when you're playing 38-39 minutes, sometimes it happens."

On the 300th-consecutive sellout:

"I told them after the game I thought this was the perfect setting to have the best building because it should be the easiest game to get up for because of everything we went through Tuesday and then what's happened in the aftermath and College GameDay on top of that. I didn't think we played with that energy like we should've and that usually starts on the defensive end. We did enough and certainly the guys may have been a little more fatigued than I thought they were."

SENIOR CENTER UDOKA AZUBUIKE

On how much fun the game was today for him:

"It was fun. It was a great game. I was glad I was able to get that stop because I wanted to pump the team up and pump my teammates up."

SOPHOMORE GUARD DEVON DOTSON

On how much he was looking forward to playing again:

"I thought it was big given the week we had; we were so down but we wanted to challenge ourselves in practice coming off of it and really just try to get out and compete to the best of our abilities. I feel like the team did a great job of bringing some energy and making some key plays. It was good for us to get it back (at it)."

On how difficult it was playing with five guards when Azubuike was on the bench:

"It can be challenging because you know how much of a presence he (Azubuike) brings out there on the court. He can help everybody; block shots and - even on the offensive end - if you drive, you can throw up to him and he'll catch it. It was an adjustment, but it's something that we worked on in practice. He's been sitting out in practice. When he comes out, we have to know how to play. It was a little bit of an adjustment, but I feel like we did a pretty good job. We could do better."

On how much of an emphasis the guards have on getting the ball to Azubuike in practice:

"It's an emphasis because you know the attention he brings out there on the court each and every day. If we just keep finding him, keep getting touches, it can open up different things. If they (the opponent) don't bring a double, then we can go to work. They've had an emphasis on that."

On his hip injury and how it affected him during today's game:

"As long as I'm playing, I'm not going to make excuses. I'm fine."

SOPHOMORE GUARD OCHAI AGBAJI

On his thoughts of Udoka Azubuike and Devon Dotson's performances today:

"When we had Dok in the game, obviously we were at our best offensively and defensively, so he had a big impact. We needed him in the game; subbing him in and out was key. Devon played well. He was hurting throughout the game but he pushed through it."

On Dotson's "toughness" to play with his hip hurting:

"Obviously a lot. Every single day at practice he's hurting, but he's out there for us and for the team."

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AGBAJI (CONT.)

On how much he was looking forward to playing again:

"I have to say same. Adjusting to what our team is now - going through practice like that was kind of new - but we adjusted and came out today and played, so it was good."

On how much of an emphasis the guards have on getting the ball to Azubuike in practice:

"I have to say same. When he (Azubuike) gets an angle, it's pretty much two points. When you look for that and you find him down there, it's always good."

On one of his shots:

"It was a good pass. I knew it was coming the whole time. I was just thinking in my head 'Man, I've got to knock this down.'"

TENNESSEE HEAD COACH RICK BARNES

Opening statement:

"In a lot of ways I am really proud of our team and all that we have had to go through and we felt like this group is headed in the right direction. To come in here and play against a team like Kansas; Bill's (Self) teams are always hard to defend and do a lot of very sound, fundamental things. The first half went the way we wanted until we had to make some subs and our freshmen didn't handle some situations. We helped them by some of our breakdowns in the game, not to take anything away from (Kansas), but when it got down to it at the end, you had to make plays to win, which they did. (Udoka) Azubuike stepped up and made some free throws, (Devon) Dotson hit a big jump shot. We had a chance with a lob, we tried to throw it up there, it wasn't very smooth or smart on our part. John Fulkerson, Yves Pons did great. Santiago Vescovi settled in and has been the best he has been all year in terms of his presence on the court and not turning the ball over, which is a first for him. We had a chance to beat a good team, but we need about three more guys to give us more than they did today. We will get back into conference play on Tuesday and continue to try to grow this team and work through some of the things that we didn't do well today."

On how his team has grown throughout the season:

"I go back to the last couple of games, I think defensively we are getting more sound. They are a very difficult team to defend; Kansas moves the ball well, they see it. I thought we were hanging on there at the end of the first half and then we got down. This group, they didn't flinch. We kept guys in who felt like they knew what they wanted to do out there and play through those guys. We were going to go after Azubuike from the beginning, that was our game plan and we did that. We kept doing that because he is a difference maker when he is out there. In many ways, they have those four guards out there around him, they are a really difficult team to guard because they can space you out, they drive the ball well and are unselfish with it. They're a very hard team to guard. We got a lot of good things. I told our guys that we have a chance to be a good team. We are not there yet. We feel like this group is headed in the right direction now."

On how difficult it is to guard Azubuike and create a game plan:

"It is difficult because they know what they want to do with it. He's got some length and they can throw it up there and we never thought we could compete with him one-on-one. We were trying to fight for space to get him where we wanted and maybe surround him a little bit. To get the ball there, it is a commitment from the perimeter guys too and they need to know that when you have a guy like that, all they have to do is get the ball close and he can get it. He had some big blocks at the end (of the game) and I really respect him because we played him a year ago and he has really improved. I love watching tape of him and watching how he has tried to improve. Bill's teams have always been terrific at knowing what they want and they play with a real sense of purpose. I think it is Bill's philosophy and he has a guy that he wants to get it to and they do some sneaky things that they can get you with. They know what they are looking for and they attack it hard that way. They are very precise with what they are trying to do."

RS-JUNIOR FORWARD JOHN FULKERSON

On the effect Udoka (Azubuike) had on the game:

"He is seven-feet tall and weighs 260 pounds, so he is just a big body. Regardless of Udoka being in or out of the game, we still tried to execute our offense. We did not alter our offense because he was in the game. He is a great player and he does affect the game on the defensive end, but if we run our offense, we can get the shots that we want."

SENIOR GUARD JORDAN BOWDEN

On Devon Dotson's speed:

"Coming into the game we knew he had a quick first step. He is good at driving the ball and being aggressive. He showed that in the second half."

On this difference between this Kansas team than last year's team:

"This year's team has Azubuike, who is a big man that can score the ball well. They still have great guard play with Devon Dotson, Marcus Garrett and those guys. They are a great team and they will continue to get better each game."

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