

# Allstate Maui Invitational

Monday, November 20, 2023

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

SimpliFi Arena

## Kansas Jayhawks

## Bill Self

## Hunter Dickinson

## Kevin McCullar Jr.

### Postgame Press Conference

Kansas - 83, Chaminade - 56

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started while we wait for Coach Self. We're joined by Kevin McCullar Jr. and Hunter Dickinson from Kansas. We'll start with questions for Hunter and Kevin.

**Q. Kevin, second straight triple double. How do you feel about that performance? And, Hunter, what did you think of his triple double?**

KEVIN McCULLAR JR: Yeah, it's a blessing. Super fun out there today. Credit to my teammates helping me out, getting assists and boxing out and different things like that, so it's a collective unit effort.

HUNTER DICKINSON: Coach calls him the best all around player in college basketball, and I think he's just going out there and proving it night-in and night-out. You know, when he's just going out there, he can score, he can rebound, he can pass, he can defend. Coach is right. I don't know if there's a better player all around that does a little bit of everything than Kevin McCullar.

**Q. What did you guys think of KJ Adams making it back? That's pretty impressive. And what did it mean to the team?**

KEVIN McCULLAR JR: It meant a lot. For him to fly out this morning, fly 11 hours out here, hop off a plane, and play in a college basketball game and play the way he did is amazing. He's a guy I look up to. That's my brother, and I can't imagine what he's feeling, but we're just trying to be there for him right now.

**Q. How much did you guys expect Chaminade to just fire away from outside and how important was it for**



**you guys to keep contests on their outside shooting?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: Yeah, we knew that they average, I think, about 28 three-point attempts a game, and so we knew that they were going to try to come out here and do that. That's one of the best ways for a team that's the underdog to come in and try to keep the game close. So we knew that that was going to be something that they do, especially with their three guards and also their five men being good shooters. So that was a point of emphasis for us.

I think just doing a better job of switching up, having some of the guys just guard up a little bit more, and then with those long rebounds from those long shots, just trying to corral those a little bit better. I think that would have helped us out a little bit more. But we knew that they were going to come in and shoot a lot of threes.

**Q. Kevin, I know that by design you guys are trying to get Hunter the ball quite a bit. Describe what it's like to have somebody with his pull of gravity with a defense around him, what does that do for you guys and your offense when you have everybody focused on him repeatedly throughout the game yet he still has 31 today? What's that do for you and your offense?**

KEVIN McCULLAR JR: He's the best big I've ever played with. He makes the game easy for everybody else. Once he gets going inside, the defense has no other option but to go down there and help. When you're a defensive player and you see him catch it, that's going to make everybody collapse and look at the ball, so it gives myself and other guys opportunities to cut, get open shots, and he's a willing passer too, so it makes it a lot easier for us.

**Q. From a stamina perspective, how do you think you'll handle the two tough games coming up in two days?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: Coach just said it in the locker room. No excuses. We came out here with the mindset of going 3-0 and, you know, whatever that takes. We try to pride ourselves on being the toughest, nastiest team, and we're going to try to play Kansas basketball for three straight days, regardless of how many minutes I have to



play or Kevin, KJ, anybody has to play.

When you go out there, especially when the tournament's this loaded with this competition, if you can't get up for playing the No. 3 or whatever rank UCLA is or Tennessee or Purdue, if you can't get up for those games, then why are you playing this game?

**Q. Kevin, on the triple double, did you have a sense that you were getting there tonight? Because I know at Kentucky it seemed like it was more of a surprise to you.**

KEVIN McCULLAR JR: Yeah, they were both kind of surprises. I'm just out there playing. I'm trying to win. I'm trying to make winning plays for the basketball team, and yeah, I ended up getting it, so...

**Q. Hunter, your thoughts on your game tonight, and how did you guys keep the motivation, keep the composure? Because Chaminade seemed to be keeping up with you guys on a lot of the statistics.**

HUNTER DICKINSON: Yeah. No, the game was probably a little bit closer than we wanted at the end of the first half. My teammates did a really good job of finding me. When you got a player that has 11 assists in a game, that just goes to show you how -- or 10 assists and then one has eight, so that's 18 combined, you know, a couple of the plays are ran for me, so you would assume that I'm going to get some of those.

But obviously Coach has a pedigree of running some pretty good plays for his big men, but it's really the guys out there being so unselfish, willing to pass me the ball when I'm open and stuff like that. So it's just more on those guys just being unselfish and finding me in good spots.

**Q. Hunter, when you saw KJ, what was the emotions of the team? Did they rally around him immediately?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: I would say just happiness for him to be here with us, just for him to know that he's not alone, that he's got a team full of brothers that are here for him. I was very happy to see him here. I think that it puts a lot of it into perspective when you see, like Kev said, a guy that just flew 11 hours after having some devastating news, probably the most devastating news you can possibly have, and for him to be able to come out here and play with us for 26 minutes is incredible. I don't think a lot of people understand how hard that is to do. My legs were pretty messed up, and I've been here for three days.

So for him to come out there and play with that energy and that emotion that he always has was super big for us. That

just goes to show you the kind of person KJ is, the kind of player he is, just so unselfish and for the team, trying to do anything for Kansas to win.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, guys. You can head back.

So we are joined by head coach, Bill Self. We'll get started, Coach, with an opening statement, and then we'll turn it over for questions.

BILL SELF: Well, I thought there were times and stretches that I thought we played pretty well this evening, and there were times where I didn't think we did at all. But it was good to get the first win, and I think Chaminade's hard to guard because they got three little guys that can spread it and drive it and shoot it. I thought for the most part we defended 'em pretty well. It's good to get the first one.

**Q. You guys had two official triple doubles as a program prior to these last two games with Kevin McCullar. What does that say about the kind of player he is?**

BILL SELF: I don't think they did triple doubles back when Will played, so that probably would be more than two.

But, yeah, Kevin, I didn't think -- offensively, he wasn't great against Kentucky and came away with a triple double, and then today wasn't great offensively and came away with 22, 11, and 10. He's playing at a really high level. To me, he's as good an all-around basketball player as there is in the country when you include what he does when we're on the defensive end. I think he can really play.

**Q. You guys had to play the starters a lot of minutes. How do think from a stamina perspective they will handle the next two games?**

BILL SELF: Well, I'll put a positive spin on it. We didn't want to play our guys that much. Our bench wasn't any good today, so we didn't want to play our guys that much. But I will say this, whoever we play tomorrow will play their guys at least that much, so it's not going to be an excuse.

**Q. You talked about Chaminade. What were they doing out there that kept 'em scrappy and competitive throughout most of the game?**

BILL SELF: I thought they were quicker than us a good portion of the game. I think they beat us off the bounce too much. But, you know, statistically we did -- our defense statistically wasn't the issue. I thought we got in our way offensively a lot. If we were just patient enough to throw

the ball to Hunter, we probably would have been a little bit better off than casting up some of the shots that we did.

But at the end of the day, we can play a lot better, but maybe that's not a bad message to get through to a team in the first of three days, knowing that we got to be better.

**Q. Talk about just what it was -- I mean, it was 10 steals, they overpowered you guys on the free-throw line by 80, and it was eight offensive rebounds. Was it just falling a certain way or just what seemed to be the issue?**

BILL SELF: Well, if you give up eight offensive rebounds and they miss 41 shots, that's pretty good. So that wasn't the issue. But to start the game, they got five offensive rebounds in the first seven minutes or so. So the last 33 minutes to get three offensive rebounds, that's pretty good.

I don't know what your other stats that you threw out there that they got. 10 steals. Yeah, a lot of that was just poor ball handling on our behalf. But, you know, we played well, we played good in stretches. We just didn't play -- have enough good stretches.

**Q. You guys obviously fed the ball to Hunter quite a bit. He took 18 shots and he was really efficient. Describe what it's like to have somebody who demands that kind of attention for what it does to the rest of your offense when you have somebody inside --**

BILL SELF: Well, I didn't think we ran good offense tonight. I thought we ran good plays, which to me is a big difference. The thing about Hunter is he draws attention and he's a terrific passer. So if guys made shots out of some of the passes he made today, he would have had four or five assists himself. So he got up 18 shots today, and I'm sure the majority of the people on our bench thought that number could have easily been 23 or 24. So he's a very unselfish great scorer.

**Q. What did it mean to you and the team to see KJ make it in time and could you go through the scenario, when did he get here and stuff?**

BILL SELF: Yeah. KJ left us Friday morning around 6:00 a.m. to get home to see his mother in time and stayed there in Austin until Sunday night, and then they went to Dallas, and they were on the plane this morning by 6:00 to get here and had a lay over, I think, in Oakland. So it was a long day for him. He landed here at 11:53 and was on the team bus at 2:30 coming here.

I was thinking I would play him 15 minutes and we're just so much better with him in the game. I thought he played

really well, especially considering the circumstances.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, coach.

BILL SELF: Okay. Thank you.

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