

American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Temple Owls

Adam Fisher

Zion Stanford

Hysier Miller

Postgame Press Conference



Temple - 64, UTSA - 61

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

ADAM FISHER: Really pleased with our guys. I thought we played really well in the first half, but you know in March every game is going to come down to the wire. So really proud of our resiliency. We didn't fold when things weren't going our way. I thought we kept our focus. We have to clean up some stuff for tomorrow night. But just really proud of our togetherness. That's something we've talked about all year, so really proud of these guys for their togetherness and happy that we'll be back here tomorrow night.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I wanted to ask about the events of the past week. Is the investigation by U.S. Integrity, is that something you addressed with the team?

ADAM FISHER: I know our university has put out a statement. My focus is on my players. I love my guys. We've been just trying to prepare for each game and just making sure we do exactly what we've done to prepare for each one.

Q. Did the existence of that event, has it led you to do any doubt or any thinking about games?

ADAM FISHER: I'm focused on my team. I love our players. We're trying to get better each game and that's been our focus.

Q. The end of this game was unique. I think there was 24 seconds left, three-point game, neither team had a timeout left. So how much can you try to coach on everything that might happen at the end in that situation?

ADAM FISHER: I think we work on these situations in practice, we prepare for these situations with a drill we call red zone and there's certain things that we do where it's up or down, you have one timeout, you're in a 1-1, hey, there's no timeouts. Sometimes players got to figure it out and they did that tonight and I thought finishing that last possession was really big tonight.

Q. There was a point during the second half where neither team had a bucket from the field for, like, four minutes there. What do you as a coach do in that instance and how much of it was your team's leadership in staying on track and not falling apart, for lack of a better phrase?

ADAM FISHER: I think, again, you got to have the trust in your guys that are out there. I thought we had some really good looks that we knocked down the first half, but as the game goes on, you get a little bit more tired. So I believe in these guys and they fought, they stayed together. I think during those stretches, sometimes you look at the looks, were they contested or uncontested, shots like that, and we liked the shots that we were getting.

Q. A month ago you were in the middle of a historic losing streak and now you've won 5-7 and you got to put your name up on that second-round board. Can you take me through just sort of the emotion of getting to do that and seeing how well the team has done down the stretch.

ADAM FISHER: It's a great credit to our guys. We've tried to stay as consistent as we can be all season long, get better with practice, get better with film, get better each game. During that stretch -- thanks for reminding me again about the stretch, but you know, it's are we getting better. That's how we judged it. I thought we really were in certain circumstances. So we were getting there.



We talk about the stone cutter. You got to keep hitting that rock. You don't know when the rock's going to break, but if not that one hit, it's all those ones before it. And I think when you can learn from the games, and it's these guys, I mean, they're making big-time plays, they're talking, they're having fun, it's a game. So really proud of our guys. I think they figured it out.

Q. Zion, you had a massive game today too. Can you take us through what you were seeing on the floor and what does it mean to have this in such an important time of the season?

ZION STANFORD: I just feel like all the work that we have been going through the beginning of the season we just got to keep stay poised, do what we, don't change. When we get on bigger stages, we got to do what we've been doing from the beginning of the season. Don't switch up too much just because of the stage. I feel like if we do that, then we can keep winning.

Q. Hysier, you were struggling from three, but how good was that to knock down that last one to put you guys over the hump?

HYSIER MILLER: I feel good about it. I was extremely happy that the shot went in. I had some good looks prior to that and they didn't drop, so I feel good that it went in, especially because it was late too, so we needed it.

Q. From an energy perspective, it seemed like the first half was one of your best halves of the season. Could you talk about what you saw out there from the first half.

ADAM FISHER: Yeah, I felt we were really connected. Someone just told me we just played this team for the third time in 20-something days. So your preparation, we know what they're going to do, they know everything we're going to do. It's a team that really likes to shoot the three a lot like us, so I thought we did a great job of guarding the three and just our activity. And, look, he's a great coach. I have great respect for Coach and they made adjustments. Their adjustments, they were doing a good job with that, so we just had to keep grinding it out throughout the game. I thought in the first half our activity and I thought we also had some really good looks that we knocked down.

Q. In that second half stretch, what did you do as kind of like a veteran as a leader on this team to help keep your teammates together?

HYSIER MILLER: I think not only myself, but just credit to my teammates, we all kind of just pitched in at times if we

see things aren't going our way. But just trying to tell guys to stay together, keep pushing, because we've been in these circumstances many times this year, so just trying to understand, like, maybe still got an opportunity to win this game. Let's just close it out and not really worry about all the past possessions.

Q. What's it like for you to see such a performance from a freshman like Zion?

HYSIER MILLER: It meant a lot. I'm extremely happy for him. This is my roommate right here, so I get to spend a lot of time with him. But seeing him on this stage, being a Philly kid coming from the Catholic league like myself, it mean a lot, especially the way he doing it, efficiently passing the ball, he's drawing attention, he's doing so many things for our team that we truly need, so I'm just happy for him and his progression and all the steps he done took so far.

Q. It's your first American Conference tournament win ever. Is this like your biggest game yet, proudest moment yet?

HYSIER MILLER: I would say my biggest game is tomorrow night, but I'll take it. I'm grateful for it. But we definitely got to shift our focus for the quick turnaround.

Q. Could you describe sort of the defensive scramble on that last possession for that?

HYSIER MILLER: No threes. Honestly, no threes. Kind of switching 1 through 5. No threes. We kind of got lost. I think I got lost. I got to watch the film, but kind of got lost. But offensive rebound try to get back out there and close out to the shooter, so just trying to force everything downhill and no shots.

Q. On offense, how big is it -- are you recognizing now matchups? It seems like when Tucker, who is listed 178 pounds, when you saw that one-on-one, that was like, I'm going to get to the block. Are you recognizing that a lot better or just your offensive game has developed in that respect?

ZION STANFORD: I feel like during the game you definitely got to adjust to like who is guarding you. If I have somebody smaller than me, I'm going to take 'em under. If I have somebody bigger than me, I'm going to take 'em up, try to break 'em down, go to the rim, go past 'em. So it's definitely good to know your personnel when people are guarding you and if you do that, then nobody can stop you.

Q. Just looking at the American Athletic Conference this season and how there's obviously been change



and been addition and subtraction from the conference, the level of competition that you've experienced so far.

ADAM FISHER: I think this is an amazing league. Obviously it's my first year in the league, but you look at the teams that we've brought in and the success that they have had, historically, and then the teams that were already here, it's a challenge. Every single night you see it's a battle from top to bottom. So it's a really good basketball league.

Q. To the student-athletes, this historic moment for Temple and for your program moving forward, I know you said the most important game is tomorrow night, but just reflecting on the fact that you have some history under your belt now as you step forward just what it means to you.

HYSIER MILLER: It feels good. I've been here -- it's my third season here. We haven't been able to get a conference win, so it kind of feels good since we have been through so much this season. Losing streaks are not really having the success that we really like, so just being able to advance to that second round is just a plus, so it's just trying to get to the quarterfinals now.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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