

# American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

## USF Bulls

## Ben Fletcher

## Jayden Reid

## Kobe Knox

### Postgame Press Conference



Wichita State - 73, USF - 68

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

BEN FLETCHER: To God be the glory. Man, I'm extremely proud of these guys. The effort that these guys gave all year long, you know, along with the circumstances they were under, man, just so super proud of 'em because people don't understand. You see 'em at games, and it's an everyday thing that you have to go through. So I commend them for their effort. Was it always pretty? No. But, man, just super proud of 'em.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go right to questions, please.

**Q. For both players, another tough beginning and you were digging yourself out of the hole. You almost got there. How hard was it to play catchup all game?**

KOBE KNOX: I feel like it wasn't unfamiliar territory, that we've been in that position a lot of times this season. That's what we tell each other. We knew that we could come back and fight and we been fighting all year. We fought back into the game in the second half. Myself missed a couple free throw, could have came up with a couple more loose balls, but we were right where we wanted them. Unfortunately, we didn't play out at the end, but we definitely showed that fight that we showed all year.

JAYDEN REID: Yeah, we knew at halftime we were never out of it. Obviously, we didn't get off to the start that we wanted to, but we've been in that position all season, so we were comfortable with that position. We made a run

throughout the second half and we got it to where we wanted to. I think we got it to four at one point and, you know, it was just a key couple possessions that we let get away.

I let 55, Cortes, get a straight line layup, Washington got a layup, so just key possessions down the stretch that maybe we were, would have been able to cut it to two and then hopefully take the lead after that, that we just had to lock in, but we didn't complete.

**Q. I think the whole key to the game was they had either nine or ten blocked shots and most of it were point blank layups. That's a lot of points right there, isn't it.**

BEN FLETCHER: No doubt, no doubt. Ballard does a really good job of being an anchor for them inside. They do a really good job of kind of posting him in there, not offensively, but defensively, to protect the rim. So he did a really good job of that tonight.

Then on some of those offensive rebounds, we talked about it, we thought we should have kicked it out for spray threes. But that's just guys trying to play make a play inside. So, yes, he did a really good job of protecting the rim.

**Q. All season you guys had, your players had a chance to fold the tent and just quit. I mean, being down 16, being down 20 at Texas and coming back. You got it to three tonight. How proud is it that your guys just stayed the course the whole way?**

BEN FLETCHER: Super proud. Like I said, that was my whole message to 'em. Not just because they came back today, it's what they had to go through all year. If you're going to put a blame on somebody, put it on me, I can carry it. I can carry it. But don't blame these guys for what they have had to go through. They deserve some grace. They do. I think everybody involved in this situation deserves some grace. I think President Law deserves some grace. She didn't see this coming. I think AD Michael Kelly deserves some grace. He didn't see this

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coming. So, please, let's have some grace in this.

**Q. Thank you for you picking up the anvil and basically carrying it when you didn't expect to do it either.**

BEN FLETCHER: That's my brother. I would do it again if I had to.

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