

# American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

## Tulsa Golden Hurricane

## Eric Konkol

## Jared Garcia

## Dwon Odom

### Postgame Press Conference



Tulsa - 75, Temple - 71

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

ERIC KONKOL: Well, it was a great college basketball game and one that was really representative of this league, two teams really giving it everything they have got. It was a game of runs. I was just looking at the stats. The one basket was 0-17 from three. I don't know if I've ever seen that before. Neither one of us could hit one on that side, but luckily they had that one in the second half.

I told our guys at halftime, nothing's ever won in the first 20 minutes. These guys really got together as a group and came out in the second half with a great amount of resolve and determination and executed very, very well on both ends. Give great credit to Temple. I think Coach Fisher and his staff does a remarkable job and we were very fortunate to make enough plays down the stretch and get this one. Very proud of our guys.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. What did you feel like was different for you guys defensively in the second half?**

ERIC KONKOL: Yeah, I thought that we did a better job of taking away some of the dribble penetration. We were trying to trap Stanford early, get the ball out of his hands, and then we went to a different coverage to try to just keep them off balance. But I thought we did a much better job of limiting them to one shot. Temple's one of the best in the country. They're third in the entire country in scoring points

off the free throws. They shot a lot of free throws tonight, but I just thought we did a better job of limiting some of those easy baskets. They didn't hit any threes in the second half and that was big.

**Q. What did you tell your guys at halftime when they faced that deficit?**

ERIC KONKOL: Well, I just, number one, said that, Hey, we've got to understand that nothing's won in 20 minutes, and there's so much that's within our control to get back into this game. It really we started on the defensive end. That was the most important thing. We gave up a 1.25 points per possession. We were playing offense against a set defense the entire half. We needed to get grittier and I thought our guys did.

**Q. Talk a little bit, Jared Garcia has two big threes in the end. What about his performance?**

ERIC KONKOL: I'm really happy for J.G. He had not been making threes and we talked about it, and I said, Hey, just keep shooting them. Stay ready, find the best ones. And he did and made some big ones. And Dwon was saying the same thing to him, just how they were playing pick-and-roll, that there was going to be an opportunity, and we called his number on a little pop play, and he was able to knock it down, and that really ignited our team. But I just thought these guys found a way and that's a big part of this whole thing.

**Q. Dwon, how do you feel?**

DWON ODOM: Really good. We were able to get a win. We were down. Coach told us after the first half we were playing like little boys. We were not being tough at all. But I think second half we came together. We were able to be tough and we played like men. We played good basketball. I'm just excited to be able to keep playing this being my last year, just taking it one game at a time, and I'm excited to play with this team and be a part of Tulsa.

**Q. Speaking of playing like men, you had a couple chances in the second half where you got to the**

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

**basket and scored key baskets. What were you seeing from them in the second half?**

DWON ODOM: I was just taking what the defense gives me, as usual. Coach called certain plays and in transition, if I see an opening, then I'm going to take it. I was just trying to make the best decision for the team, whether that's getting to the basket or making the right pass. But I always try to get to the rim or either get my teammates involved.

**Q. Jared, what were you seeing from three tonight and what made them go in tonight?**

JARED GARCIA: It was just as our guards were just going to the basket, they were biting heavy. And as I was screening, they were just crowding the ball, and I would just be open, and I would just shoot the ball.

**Q. When you came in in the first half, you gave them a little energy early. What were the things that you were seeing early on?**

JARED GARCIA: Just opportunities, opportunities to rebound, opportunities to -- the middle floor was wide open and just making our shots.

**Q. Jared, when you decided to come back mid-season, how much were moments like this where you're hitting two triples with the game on the line in the back of your mind and how sweet is it to come through like that?**

JARED GARCIA: It feels great to be able to come back to the team and just help contribute, get these wins, and just to keep playing as well.

**Q. Of course you guys have North Texas coming up your next game. What's your thoughts going into that matchup?**

ERIC KONKOL: We need to play a lot better than we did the first time around. Of course, they're a gritty defensive team. They've got a deliberate offense where they're trying to get certain things that you've got to be able to guard certain things one-on-one. Of course, Atin Wright, he's dangerous from three, but we've got to be able to play a cleaner game on the offensive end than we did the first time around, for sure.

**Q. Seemed like really 14, Sissoko, the big guy, had a particularly good game against you, that was his best game of the season, 27 points. What can you guys do to maybe counteract him a little bit the second time around?**

ERIC KONKOL: We got to do a better job of not letting him catch it so deep near the basket. We got to be able to mix up some of our coverages, whether it's trapping or digging or a couple different things. But yeah, Sissoko, he had a great game, he was very physical that particular game, but we feel fortunate that we got another chance at this one.

**Q. Thoughts on playing North Texas again?**

DWON ODOM: You know, they beat us pretty good the first time, and I didn't think we played well at all. But now we have another chance and I think we have improved as a team and gotten better since then. So we just got to take one possession at a time, one play at a time, and just play hard and give it our all. And as long as we do that, I think we'll come away with the win. I believe in our team.

**Q. I want to ask about, throughout tournament play you have such a strong bench presence, you have to have fresh legs throughout an extended amount of time. How do you use that to your advantage making a run here?**

ERIC KONKOL: I guess that's for me, unless these guys are subbing.

**Q. Yes, sorry.**

ERIC KONKOL: (Laughing). We play nine in our typical rotation. We have a couple guys that we have some faith in and trust if they need to be called upon. I keep telling them to be ready. Of course, that's not an easy position to be in. But we feel like we've got a couple different waves, that's what we call them, and we want to just get maximum effort from all those guys. Of course, we came here with the intention of trying to play four games, but it starts with just one game. We got one, we're just focused on the next, and having maximum effort and doing everything we possibly can to play well tomorrow. And that's going to take everybody. It's got to be a total team effort.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports