

American Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 13, 2026

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Legacy Arena At The BJCC

Tulsa Golden Hurricane

Eric Konkol

Tylen Riley

Ade Popoola

Postgame Press Conference

Tulsa 90, North Texas 84

THE MODERATOR: We are joined on the podium by Tulsa head coach, Eric Konkol, Ade Popoola, and Tylen Riley. Coach, let's just start with a general comment from you.

ERIC KONKOL: Well, we talked about and, of course, at this point in conference play you know your opponents very well and had two very highly contested games with North Texas in the regular season.

Their physicality, their defense, how they test you even with their offense, with their screening and their driving. We knew that we were going to have to come out with a strong start and we didn't. Get down 17 and finally started to get into a rhythm to cut into that lead, but then I thought our guys just got ignited.

Sometimes this can happen when you have a bye and short warmup and you just kind of get in there. It takes a little while but give a lot of credit to North Texas but give a ton of credit to these guys, their teammates for sticking with it.

Even when we had moments, felt like we could have won it and then it just keeps going in regulation and that became an absolute battle of will.

Just really proud of our team for finding a way.

Q. Miles only hit one shot that entire game and it was the three that really swung it. Did you just have a lot of confident in him to take a shot in that spot?

ERIC KONKOL: Yeah, we all have great confidence for



him. It wasn't exactly his night, even at the free-throw line but you can ask anybody in our program from coaches, players, if Miles Barnstable has a look at it, we want him shooting it every time.

Q. And Tylen, they kept coming back at guys. They managed to get downhill and got Je' Shawn Stevenson down the line a couple of times to extend that game. What did you see from North Texas with their continues pressure on you guys to get that game going?

TYLEN RILEY: Obviously, that's a good basketball game. We've seen them two times so we knew the third time was going to be hard. It was a tie breaker. We just had to stay solid. We have been there before. We just had to look adversity in the you ands just fight back.

Q. Coach, this is not your first triple overtime. You had one last year in the regular season. I was curious if you learned any lessons about what it takes to keep your team either focused or from collapsing when you had one of those last year to tonight.

ERIC KONKOL: I think every team is different. This is a competitive group. I told them, actually, last night that there's nothing like playing. You want to play as much and as long as you can.

I didn't think that meant three overtimes in a game, but this group loves to play. They enjoy very much playing for each other and together. So we just kept reminding them of that.

There were some times that we felt we could have executed better. North Texas made a play. It's easy to put your head down and kind of not give up but just kind of lose your momentum or lose your strength, but credit to these guys for sticking with it.

Q. And for Ade, they showed after the game on TV that when you were putting your team's name on the bracket you put it in the wrong spot. After you played 51 minutes, is it more exhausting physically or



mentally?

ADE POPOOLA: I think it's kind of both because like we said, we were down 17, had to fight back.

And with our teammates and coaches, everybody and the staff, everybody, We got it done.

Q. Coach, talk about the opportunity that awaits you tomorrow.

ERIC KONKOL: Another great opportunity. The way the conference tournament is built this year, Wichita State has been waiting, waiting to figure out who their opponent is and, of course, we've played them twice. Had two good games with them, an opportunity here in Birmingham to try to advance again, but really good team. Crashes the glass. We're going to have to rebound at a high level. We're going to enjoy this for another 10, 15 minutes and get a lot of rest and recovery and get ready for a very good Wichita State team. Thank you, everybody.

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