

American Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Legacy Arena At The BJCC

Tulsa Golden Hurricane

Coach Eric Konkol

Tylen Riley

Postgame Press Conference



Wichita 81, Tulsa 68

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Tulsa head coach Eric Konkol and Tylen Riley. Coach, let's start with general comments from you and then we'll open it up for questions.

ERIC KONKOL: Yeah, this is a really hard moment. Fully had aspirations that you worked really hard for and you've got a group that you believe in, it's really difficult. This has been a fantastic group to coach. We talked way back in the summer about what our goals were and of course playing tomorrow was one of them.

We were dealt some adversity today in a number of different ways. Of course Wichita State created some of it with the way that they played and the shot-making and the rebounding, but I'm really proud of our group for playing Tulsa basketball.

For us, that's playing with a great amount of grit. We didn't give up. Got down big, kept fighting, kept trying to mix different lineups with foul trouble and injury and these guys kept battling.

Those are the types of things you can control, and I thought our guys didn't back down and just kept going with it.

Q. Starting with that second half, just going down 20 and then coming back 10, you're smiling going into the huddle and telling the guys, go get another three. After those free throws with Jaylen, what makes you tell these guys they're not going to quit?

ERIC KONKOL: I just really believe in them, number one. These guys can tell you I like telling them stories about March Madness. It's the greatest event in the entire world, the greatest sport, of course, in my opinion.

We provide examples through video or stories of our own of great come backs and it starts with belief, having a great amount of talent, which we do, and having a bunch of competitive dudes, as I like to say.

These guys just kept going. Was trying to infuse some confidence and infuse belief in them, which is totally genuine. We just need a couple of more plays to go our way.

Q. Do you feel like the extra 15 minutes of basketball yesterday contributed at all today? What do you think the energy was like?

ERIC KONKOL: I thought our energy was good. These guys are in tremendous shape. They're young. We got a lot of reps in this building. I have great belief in him to compete like crazy and do that.

Q. Tylen, same thing but from a game perspective, what kept you guys going when you were down 20?

TYLEN RILEY: Just staying together through adversity. We showed it yesterday we can face any type of battles. It's just tonight they just made a lot more than they missed, made a lot more tough shots.

A couple plays could have went our way, but you know, that's just basketball and they just played really good basketball tonight and they just wasn't missing.

Q. Coach, you had a really good season. What do you believe should be next for this team this year?

ERIC KONKOL: I hope there's an opportunity to play post-season. I think these guys deserve it. They've worked really hard. They've sacrificed for one another. I think post-season basketball is reserved for teams at the top of their team and you look at some of the metrics these guys have put together, there should be opportunity for them to keep playing.

I told them for several weeks that our goal is to get better



and our goal is to play basketball as long as we can. I would coach these guys any day of the week, any time, just name it. Let's go. I would love to keep coaching these guys. Thank you, everybody.

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