

American Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Legacy Arena At The BJCC

Wichita State Shockers

Coach Paul Mills

Kenyon Giles

Dillon Battie

Postgame Press Conference

South Florida 70, Wichita State 55

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Wichita State head coach Paul Mills, Kenyon Giles, and Dillon Battie. Coach, let's start with some general comments and then we'll go to questions.

PAUL MILLS: Props to South Florida. We knew whoever won the rebounding battle would have a really good chance to win that game; they did.

And to outscore us by eight on second-chance opportunities, thought we had some shots around the rim that we just weren't able to convert.

And then obviously the turnovers just dug us in. We just had a lot of empty possessions. I thought their tenacity on the ball and their ball pressure was really, really good.

We were solid defensively and did a good job, specifically. I just think if you can keep Pinion and Enis to 3 for 14, you did a solid job. It just didn't translate from a ball security perspective, and that had a lot to do with South Florida and their tenacity.

Q. KG, probably not the result you were looking for, but I guess what can you say about this season as a whole?

KENYON GILES: Really good year. Went through a lot of adversity at the start of the year. To get where we are, it took a lot of work. I know a lot of people didn't expect us to be where we were right now and we just played through all of it.

Didn't get the result we wanted, but proud of us and our



team and coaching staff just staying locked in even when things weren't going our way.

Q. What does it mean for you to finish your career here at Wichita State?

KENYON GILES: It means everything. Really wanted to win so bad for my teammates, coaches, and for the community. I know what it means to play for Shocker basketball. I put a lot of pride into it, so I'm really proud. Really honored for my last year.

Q. Coach, you spoke before we left for Birmingham about winning on the margins. Did it feel like tonight some of those weren't going the way that when you guys were winning, you were winning on the margins and tonight it just didn't happen?

PAUL MILLS: Yeah, you're a minus six when you just look at turnovers minus four, rebounds you're minus two. You're minus eight on the glass. You can't be minus in all three of those categories and then if you just look from a transition standpoint, you're a minus 16.

You can't just have that many lapses and give yourselves a chance. We've been good at ball security all year.

Again, I think a lot of it just had to do with them. They were denying KG touches. We've kind of seen that this year and we have been able to use him as a screener, but then those shots that we were getting just, they were falling short so then we couldn't offensive rebound.

When you're a top five team in the country, being able to offensive rebound, you just can't go away from the basket.

There's a physical commitment that's required in order to really impact a game like that, and I just thought their physicality really hampered us.

Q. Looked like they were blitzing ball screens. How tough was that to kind of find a way to get KG shots when it looked like they were doubling him even when there wasn't a screen? How many were changing the



offense with the way they were selling all out?

PAUL MILLS: Yeah, and the other thing is they're plug in with their five, so even if you can get by your first defender you kind of got to see a second defender.

And then I thought there were some actions basically off of corner reads on account of their trying to keep it there in the corner that we got good shots. I tell you that a large portion of them fell.

Yeah, we've seen this this year where teams have really turned up the pressure. You know Wes Enis is a Division II Defensive Player of the Year, and you can see that his value and his tenacity.

And I thought we did a good job defensively. I don't want to be dismissive of that. You just going back to KG just there was a lot of plugging.

So it wasn't only the on-ball defender, and we needed some other opportunities from those corner drives that just did not materialize.

Q. KG, I'm sure that had to be frustrating when you're seeing two on the ball. I know you have seen that a lot this season, but how tenacious they were, Was it just a frustrating evening because of that physicality and how aggressive they were being?

KENYON GILES: I feel like my team and my myself already knew that coming in. It's a championship game. I didn't expect guys to be soft and not try to touch me at all. Expected it. Shout out to USF and Wes Enis, man. They were really being aggressive on the ball.

It did bother me a little bit, but at the end of the day, it was all about the win, trying to get the win. So I didn't really think of it too much but they did a good job of defending on and off the ball. Hats off to them.

Q. Dillon this one is for you. You led the team in scoring today with 15 points. Your production early season versus second half of the season, night and day. I feel like you became a Shocker fan favorite. Do you feel like you blossomed into the player you wanted to become this season?

DILLON BATTIE: I just want to help us win. It's not really about me but getting better for the team. But, yeah.

Q. And then Coach Mills, tell me about Izaiyah Nelson and his impact in the first half.

PAUL MILLS: Yeah, I mean, there was a segment there

where he turns around and blocks a shot that E-man has at the rim, and then goes down and is able to get an offensive rebound, tip out the offensive, rebound and then he hits a three.

I thought, again, when I watched that segment - and like there's a reason he's Defensive Player of the Year and there's reason he's Player of the Year. That was a heck of a sequence there just being able.

But given a guy his size, his mobility, he's really impressive and you know what's most impressive is we did a good job today but he finishes with three steals. He had seven at our place. You just don't see that level of tenacity out of fives and he has a lot of it.

He's able to get his hands-on ball but his twitch is really good. It's impressive and it's really impressive just how he can impact a game given that he's not the biggest guy on the floor. It's his mobility that kind of separates him from a lot of other players.

Q. Coach, unlike last year where you guys didn't know if you were going to play in the NIT. It seems like this team should be a pretty good candidate to maybe host a first round S. that something you guys would be interested in to keep the season going?

PAUL MILLS: Yeah, basketball players want to play basketball. I know that there's nobody who wants to go out on a loss.

I've been fortunate to play in a couple of NIT championships. If you can win your last game of the year and find a way, those were really, really memorable experiences.

We'll see what kind of opportunities get presented to us and we'll examine it, especially with the two seniors, Karon and KG and get there and put on everything. But I don't believe our season's done.

Otherwise it would have been a different conversation in that locker room.

Q. Last one from me. Kenyon, you got some youngsters here on the team. Some players with a lot of potential moving forward. Noah Hill, the guy sitting here on the left. Tell me about some of the underclassmen you think have a lot of potential?

KENYON GILES: We still have Ty, Lil' P, all these guys, they be in the gym. I'd say we're a pretty good team. And then, you know, Dillon got way better just as practice went on.

So Ty, haven't seen Ty. You haven't seen him as much. You got Lil' P, Pierre. You got Ty. Those guys are going to be big-time for Shocker basketball. You can tell -- you're not there in practice. Noah Hill as well.

So a lot of promising basketball coming back to Shocker basketball, hopefully back in this situation here but on the right end of it.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, Coach.

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