

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Texas A&M vs Houston

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA
Paycom Center

Houston Cougars Coach Kelvin Sampson Emanuel Sharp Milos Uzan

Media Conference

Houston 88, Texas A&M 57

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Houston student-athletes Milos Uzan and Emanuel Sharp and Coach Kelvin Sampson. We'll start with an opening statement from Coach.

KELVIN SAMPSON: I just thought we had a good plan. Our discipline was outstanding, our spacing. Did a good job in knowing where to go with the ball.

Everybody's got a style. We have a style. Texas A&M has a style, but it doesn't come down to what you are doing versus them. It's how you do what you do. You know, we really focused on us in the scouting report more than anything else and where I thought we could hurt them. I thought our guys did a great job of attacking the rim. We didn't want to take as many threes today, although the ones we got were really good looks. We didn't do a very good job of making many of them, but getting the ball to the rim. I thought if we get to the rim, we could get second and third shots.

Started to offensive rebound long misses. You're shooting tons of long threes, if you miss them, they're going to bounce out towards the free-throw line. But if you get the ball to the rim in the paint, even if you miss, you're in a great position to offensive rebound. We've been one of the best offensive rebounding programs in the country for a lot of years.

How many offensive rebounds did we have? We missed 38 shots and had 19 offensive rebounds. It was spread around. I thought Kalifa came off the bench and was



effective. Our bench was good. Mercy was good. Chase was really good, and so was Kalifa.

Proud of our discipline. Proud of staying together and giving us a chance to advance.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for our student-athletes.

Q. Emanuel, this was another collective win. You guys had four players in double figures and at least five players with five rebounds. When you look at the stat sheet and look back at this game, what's something that sticks out the most and you're proud of what you guys did today?

EMANUEL SHARP: I mean, first, like how Coach said, we had 19 offensive rebounds, and I feel like we weren't getting close to 50% of our misses, you know, it shows that we're playing hard as a whole. Seven turnovers. You know, they're a heavy pressure team, and our coaching staff did a great job with the scout, and our white team did a good job of simulating their pressing and getting us ready for this game. We only had seven turnovers. I feel like that's the game right there since their game is built on turnovers.

We didn't shoot it well from the field, but we were still able to score and generate buckets, which is big, because you know, once our shots start falling, we'll be even better. Just great all-around effort. I thought it was 40 minutes of hard-playing basketball.

Q. Emanuel, just what was it about that 18-0 run in the first half that you felt like you guys were able to really capitalize there and take control of the game?

EMANUEL SHARP: Yeah, I think it's when the coaches told us to stop settling and get to the basket. We have guys that can get in the paint, and I think we used that to our advantage. We were also getting stops on defense. You know, once we -- we were flying around. Everybody was stunting, everybody was getting out to the shooters, taking away the three, making them drive and take hard shots over JoJo and Chris.

We just had great effort. I really felt in the first half we were playing harder than them. Usually when we would



playing harder than the other team, we're going to win. So, you know, I felt really good about our effort tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach Sampson.

Q. Congrats on a big win. Are you paying attention to what other teams are doing right now, like Florida, for instance, or are you just focused on your next game?

KELVIN SAMPSON: Next game.

Q. Agee has been such a big key for A&M's success this season. What did you do to limit him, especially on the boards tonight?

KELVIN SAMPSON: We're really good at taking away short rolls. In our league Kansas plays a lot out of short rolls. Arizona plays out of short rolls. We play against a lot of teams that play that way.

I don't know if we were No. 1 or No. 2 in defense in the league. Arizona has a really good defense, but you know, we just didn't really have to do a whole lot scouting report-wise on what we wanted to take away. We just pulled up video of other teams that short rolled.

We made some mistakes early. We had a couple of guys that got extended when they didn't have to, but we just corrected them. You know, we're always fiddling and teaching and getting our guys in the right places. But defensively we just played Cougar defense. Nothing really that out of the ordinary tonight.

Q. What was working the most defensively for y'all that allowed y'all to hold a pretty competent offense down to just 57 points?

KELVIN SAMPSON: I mean, I've been watching our defense all year. I don't know that anything we did was out of the ordinary. We keyed on their shooters. You know, we're No. 1 in the nation in fewest turnovers. We don't turn the ball over, so you're not contributing to your demise.

We have three ways that -- and this is what we teach. It's not this year's team. This year's team is no different than last year's team. It's just we have different players on this year's team. We got four freshmen that had to learn how to play Cougar basketball.

Don't turn the ball over. When they shoot and miss it, rebound it. Make sure the right people are taking the shots. It doesn't matter who we're playing. Tonight it was Texas A&M. The last game was Arizona. The game before that was Kansas. The game before that was BYU.

Nothing changes with how we play. Just the team we're playing against.

And they all have something they're good at, but you know, we don't have a lot of highs and lows in what we do. I think tonight was our 30th win. We've lost six times. Could have played better in some of those games, but you know, when you win a lot, it's because you have good players, and they're pretty consistent with their effort and their discipline. We're pretty good at both of those.

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