

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - St. John's vs Kansas

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San Diego, California, USA

Viejas Arena

## Kansas Jayhawks Coach Bill Self Melvin Council Jr. Kohl Rosario

Media Conference

St. John's - 67, Kansas - 65

THE MODERATOR: For the Kansas Jayhawks, student-athletes Kohl Rosario and Melvin Council Jr. We'll begin with an opening statement from head coach Bill Self.

BILL SELF: Well, the tournament is, one of the things that makes it so great is that it can be great, but it can also be cruel. We obviously put ourselves in a position to play from behind the whole game, and then really competed and played great down the stretch and just didn't finish what we had started down the stretch.

But certainly disappointed, sad for our guys, because they tried so hard. But just a tough afternoon.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Kohl, you didn't play on Friday, but when you came on today, you played a big role in bringing Kansas back into the game. Can you just talk about the preparation you did to be ready upon being called, not knowing whether you'd see the court?**

KOHL ROSARIO: Yeah, everything I do I'm just trying to help my team win. When I'm on the bench I'm cheering my guys on. And when my name was called, I was just ready. I never really checked out of the game, knowing what defenses were and then what plays we're running. So it just happened to be my moment, and I was ready.

**Q. Kohl, can you just talk about the offensive rebound and the score that really seemed to spark the guys on that run? At the time it was a big moment in the game.**



KOHL ROSARIO: I forgot who shot the ball, but the ball went up and I saw my guy turn his head. I acted like I was going to go back. As soon as he turned his head, I just went and grabbed the offensive board.

**Q. Melvin, you love this team, you kiss the Jayhawk on the center court. What are you taking away from your entire season, being a Kansas Jayhawk and wearing this jersey?**

MELVIN COUNCIL JR.: Boot camp. Started in the summertime. Dealt with the guys early morning, working out and just being around them a lot.

**Q. Melvin, the comeback was pretty impressive. What was different during that stretch?**

MELVIN COUNCIL JR.: We were just being more aggressive on defense. We didn't do that the first half. That was the game plan, to be aggressive and keep fighting and hit first.

**Q. Describe the last play, that bucket. You made the comeback all the way back. Describe that layup? Was it just a great play by him?**

MELVIN COUNCIL JR.: St. John's is a good team. It was a great layup. If it was a ball screen, we would have switched it, but he rejected it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

**Q. When Flory has those two early fouls, what did you guys have to change defensively considering how good of a rebounding team St. John's is?**

BILL SELF: We really didn't change. We put Paul in. Actually, I thought Paul played great. I thought he played big.

They kicked us on the glass to start the game. Couple of them were, we got our butts whipped, but a couple of them were kind of unfortunate bounces, too.

But I thought defensively for the entire game we played the scout report. We didn't want Hopkins to shoot set shots,



but he's averaging -- I think he's made, what, 20 on the year, something like that, .6 a game. We would probably live with that for the most part.

I wish we would have bluffed at him a couple of times. But he just made shots that basically our scouting report said if he takes them, he takes them.

**Q. Kohl had not seemed to the call until the last three games. After that nine-minute stretch, can you just talk a bit about his impact and your reasoning for subbing him out on the last play?**

BILL SELF: Well, yeah, we tried to get our best defensive team in there. So that was why we did that. Obviously it wasn't a very good effort on us the last, what was it, 3.9? We had to guard four bounces, and we didn't guard four bounces. Yeah, that was really disappointing.

But Kohl did a great job. That's hard not to play and then be inserted in and do what he did in a short amount of time. I thought he was great.

**Q. A lot has been made about your coaching future. Given what you've gone through on and off the court, how much time will you take to reflect upon what is next on this stage of your career?**

BILL SELF: I haven't really gone through much on the court. I've gone through some stuff off the court. So I'll get back and get with family and visit and see what's going on.

I love what I do. I need to be able to do it where I'm feeling good and healthy to do it fairly well. I'll get back home and it will all be discussed.

**Q. You talked a lot about the physicality going into this game. How do you feel like your team matched up in that regard?**

BILL SELF: I thought great after the start of the game. I thought the first five to seven minutes we didn't, and then after that I thought we did very well.

Zuby made the two plays late. Catches the ball in the dead corner with 3 on the shot clock, drives it and shoots a right-hand jump hook and scores. And then he makes the really good spin move late.

Other than that, I thought, until the last play, I thought we defended them soundly. We rebounded it well. We offensive rebounded. They were playing a little bit like we were on Friday, just trying to get to the finish line. And we were more aggressive. And I wish we'd been that way earlier in the game.

**Q. Can you help us with the fouls at the end? What's the strategic plan of having your guys foul in that moment?**

BILL SELF: Use the clock, that's what I was thinking. I wish that when Kohl fouled the first time, he fouled in one second. I wish he could have just let him hold it and foul with five seconds into it. So now you've got a situation where maybe there's not 3.9. Maybe there's 2.0 or 1.5.

But our whole deal was, with only two team fouls, why wouldn't you go ahead and foul in that situation?

We left them too much time. But irregardless of that, gotta guard three or four bounces, and we didn't do it.

**Q. The previous answer you had, I just want to make sure I interpret it correctly. You haven't decided about whether or not you'll coach next year yet?**

BILL SELF: No, I haven't decided. I'll get back and visit with family. I've had obviously some issues off the court health-wise. And that will be discussed.

But I love what I do. I want to feel good while I'm doing it, though. We'll get back and we'll discuss that when we get back.

**Q. Wonder if you could speak to the uniqueness of this season, about, in March not having played a whole season with your full group and just the difficulty of getting to the rhythm you wanted to by this time of year because of that.**

BILL SELF: I didn't think we ever got rhythm offensively the whole year. It's one thing to get rhythm, but it's another thing, when you go against teams like Houston and Arizona and St. John's that guard differently than the other teams guard you.

So it is easier to get rhythm when you're comfortable. And the key to having rhythm is doing it when you're put under duress. And I didn't think we handled that very well at all. At the end, we were aggressive and play to athletic ability and went and made athletic plays, which was great.

But certainly a -- frustrating year would be probably too much to say. But it's certainly a year that didn't seem like it was nothing about it was very smooth. Seemed like, to me, we were having to adjust on the fly quite a bit.

**Q. How do you feel Darryn played tonight? Looking back at the season, how would you describe Darryn's one year in college?**

BILL SELF: I thought he played well. I thought he played really hard. The thing about it is, when you guard as well and as hard as what St. John's does, those shots are hard shots. And you switch coming off every screen and all that stuff. Those are hard plays. I thought he competed hard. I was really proud of his effort.

He's had moments where he's looked great and moments where obviously his health didn't allow him to play like we all know he's capable of playing.

But I hope the year was enjoyable for him. I know I enjoyed being around him an awful lot.

**Q. We haven't asked you in a while, how are you feeling? Are you going through anything now? Are you completely healthy?**

BILL SELF: I don't know about completely. But I'm feeling -- I feel as good as I've felt in a long time. I'm not making any statements whatsoever. But every year, I think -- it used to be you work -- when you get to be doing it as long as I've done it, I look at it in five-year increments. Now I'm probably looking at it in more two-year increments, so to speak.

So I try to focus on this season and try to get us to a second weekend, which we failed at. So I'll go back now and break it down and see where that leads.

**Q. This is now the fourth year in a row that you guys have failed to make it past the second round. Looking forward to next season, what do you think needs to be changed, maybe identity or aggressiveness?**

BILL SELF: No. You're right, the first year we were a 1 seed, and I had serious health issues and I didn't finish the season.

The last two years hasn't been -- well this year included -- it's been inconsistent and not as good.

So obviously it's disappointing. I really feel that we had a team this year that could have been a higher seed if we would have played better in other games. And if you're a higher seed, you don't play St. John's in the second game, arguably the hottest team in the tournament.

But a new identity, no, no. That's not it. I actually believe that we need to do a really good job evaluating and recruiting.

**Q. Coach, it wasn't the way how you wanted to end the season, but how proud are you of this group this**

**season?**

BILL SELF: I think they hung in there, through the ups and the downs. I thought they hung in there and stayed together and played hard for the most part all year long. I thought they competed hard.

The thing about this group, as you guys saw, our margin for error offensively isn't that great. So you've got to be really good and competitive defensively in rebounding the ball. When we did that, we could make other teams play poorly to the point where that was enough.

We actually did that fairly well tonight, but obviously, Hopkins made 6. We didn't score the ball or take care of the ball in a manner in which you need to to beat a team like St. John's.

**Q. How much history do you have in these high-stakes games with buzzer beaters, and on the wrong end tonight, wouldn't that be a terrible way to go out of your career?**

BILL SELF: Yeah, you missed my point earlier. My career ain't going to be based on one game. Whatever. I said I was going to get back and evaluate my health situation. So I think you kind of missed the point on that one.

**Q. When you talked about just getting back and evaluating and recruiting, I wonder if you mean a distinction from how you've been doing it, or that's just part of the process?**

BILL SELF: Well, you know, you're going to have to figure out who's staying, who's not staying, portal. I just think in today's time, the next four to six weeks will be indicative to the question that was asked earlier is, how can you improve yourself moving forward? The next four to six weeks will be the most important time to do that.

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