

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Illinois vs Iowa State

Thursday, March 28, 2024

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

TD Garden

**Iowa State Cyclones**  
**Coach T.J. Otzelberger**

**Tre King**

**Curtis Jones**

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Illinois 72, Iowa State 69

T.J. OTZELBERGER: First of all, I would like to give the credit to Illinois to Coach Underwood, their program, their players. They've had a terrific season that will be continuing, and they are very well-prepared, very well-coached.

They play well together as a team, and they deserve the credit for the win tonight. I'm proud of our guys for how we continued to fight back after a slow start. I thought we showed a lot of competitive spirit, but for us to be successful against a really good team, we've got to do some things in the margins better in terms of scoring off turnovers. We've got to rebound a little better and some things like that that could have put us in a different position.

So proud of our guys. A lot of credit to Illinois for the job they did.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Coach, you talked about needing to be a little bit better in the margins rebounding, points off turnovers. Does that kind of tie into your opinion of needing to be the aggressor team from the start on each end of the court?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: We certainly take pride in being that team. Felt like didn't do the job we needed to do from the jump.



Seemed like we came out a little tight, for whatever reason.

We're at our best when we're dictating and pressuring the basketball and when we're chasing down rebounds and we're attacking off turnovers.

We weren't able to do those things to the level that -- or the standard that we try to uphold today.

**Q. You guys get within two a couple of times late in the second half there. What was Illinois doing to kind of make it tough to get over that hump?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: They play very hard. They have great effort going into the offensive glass. They're going to make you earn it. We had some opportunities, and I think mentally you get over that hump, and you tie the game. If you are fortunate enough to take the lead, it has a whole different mental effect on because our guys know they've continued to battle back.

You know, unfortunately, we weren't able to take advantage of opportunities when they presented themselves, and Illinois also did a very good job of not allowing anything to come easy for us.

**Q. For Tre, you obviously don't have any eligibility left. How do you want your last season at Iowa State to be remembered?**

TRE KING: I just want to be remembered as one of the guys that did everything right. I want to be remembered as an every day guy, a guy who led not only on the court and off the court as well in everything that I did. I want to be remembered as a person of great character and not just a great basketball player.

**Q. They went age 22, 23, 23, 24. They're an old team, a veteran team. Obviously they had some physical imposing qualities that I think showed up early. Can you talk about the challenge that combination gave you early tonight?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: They start 6'6" and bigger at every position. They did a good job of being the aggressor I felt like defensively. They did a great job kind of pushing us



out where we were running our offense. That physicality also on the glass played an impact on both sides.

Then they were able from an offensive standpoint, especially in the first half, to be the aggressor driving the ball at us, and we didn't do the job we needed to do. They're definitely older, experienced, veteran group with some bigger bodies, and they were the more physical team for a large part of the game.

**Q. Obviously going in the locker room, guys in tears, upset at the way that the season has ended. How will you look back on how successful the season was for your program as you continue to build it?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: Yeah, I think a lot of those guys, hopefully those are tears that they have a tremendous sense of pride in the work that they did every single day. We challenge them from the time they arrive in the summer how we will do things on a daily basis. It's not for everybody, but they've done as well in embracing that job and hitting it head-on as anybody could.

If you look at how they will be remembered, they've elevated our program. They've continued to move our program forward. To do what we did on our home court, to do what we did in the Big 12 Conference, to make the run we've made late and to play the way we've played, they should be remembered as a group that was extremely hard-working, that made each other better, and a group that the unity that they had allowed them to play at a higher level as a group maybe than the parts because they were so committed to one another.

Really proud of them. It's a very fun team to coach and great guys to be around every day.

**Q. On Shannon, 29 tonight. Obviously he had been doing it for a while. On a streak of seven straight games of 25 or more. For you guys particularly, what types of problems did he cause, and what makes him such a hard matchup?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: We didn't do a great job from the start. He got some clean looks early and got his confidence going. We need to be more intentional closing out to him, and then he is so fast in space, especially that left hand, and we let him get left.

Again, he's a really tough cover. He's as aggressive of an offensive player as there is in the country, and he is playing at such a high level. You can't let a guy like that get the opportunities that we allowed for him early where he got his confidence going.