

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

## TCU Horned Frogs

### Jamie Dixon

#### Postgame Press Conference

Kansas State, 71 - TCU, 50

**Q. Coach, not the way you wanted it to end obviously. There was a stretch in the second half where Kansas State simply could not miss.**

JAMIE DIXON: Yeah, we looked tired, to be honest. I thought we fought pretty good in the first half, had the lead, and then got away from us. Two threes at the end of the half really got their momentum going into the halftime.

We stated off slow, did some good things, really defended, forced some turnovers, really played hard, and got into them and got some transition opportunities.

But we just didn't seem to have the legs, again, in this one, as you sure hope you would and you hope you sustain it. I thought we played really good minutes there for late stretches of the first half, but they came out and got a couple transition baskets and broke it open. We just had some banged up guys that just didn't seem to have legs that we needed.

So congratulations to them. Disappointed in how we finished. Lost our last four. But we're going to keep battling and trying to figure it out as we get ready for next year. So that's what we're going to do. We had some good performances throughout the season, but tonight was not our night. We had some stretches, as we have all year long. You feel good, you get a run there, I think we get up three, four points, and then we just go dry. Miss some shots, good shots.

And then again, these two threes at the end of half really hurt us.

**Q. Jamie, I was going to mention, you would get on a little bit of a run and then all you a sudden just do dead cold. Is that fatigue, do you think?**

JAMIE DIXON: Again, you know, sometimes our turnovers



really do hurt us. The 17 turnovers, they oftentimes for us seem to lead to baskets. They come in critical times. Also too seems like there are opportunities that we could score in transition and we seem to not convert them at a high enough rate. That's really cost us a lot this year.

I think we're -- we've played guys too many minutes all year. That's a known, Francisco, that other guard that you needed. You keep thinking he was going to come back, but not.

So I look back at what we could have done better as far as getting a different rotation if I had known Francisco was going to be out.

**Q. In all your post-season history, coach, you've talked to us before about when you have experienced guards how much that helps a team, and you kind of saw that tonight from Mike McGuirl, the senior from Kansas State. There was a point in the second half where he was kind of willing his team to continue.**

JAMIE DIXON: Yeah, the guards hurt us, no question. Him and Pack, and obviously Pack at the end of the half got it going. Those were the guys we emphasized we couldn't let them go, and they got 40 points. They got a lot of lay-ups too between other guys and 12 offensive rebounds. We had to limit that.

But it just wasn't our night. We shoot 4 for 19 and don't defend well enough and they just seemed to wear us down. They're not playing a lot of guys either, but they got good minutes out of their guards, made some shots, and I'm disappointed that I didn't put our guys in a better position to win this game.

**Q. It's been a weird year, strange, with postponements and dealing with COVID. Now the off-season is going to be a little bit different from what you're used to. Take us through that. What happens over next month?**

JAMIE DIXON: Usually be out on the road recruiting the next day and that's not going to be the case this year, so to do it differently, Zoom calls and however that's going to be.

But certainly we've got to be better next year and that's what we're going to start working on right now. We'll have



some workouts. We got to give them a couple weeks off as per NCAA rules. Obviously all kinds of things talked about and discussed. We're in a state of flux with the rules, as we know, the NCAA rules, and all kinds the discussions.

So a lot is to play out coming up here. We know what we have to do better next year. We certainly know that. We emphasized it this year. We were clear we had to get more physical, defend better, and just honestly could not get it to the point we could be successful doing it.

Just was not doing it. Again, I'm wondering if we played guys too many minutes as we went. Just didn't seem to get the things going.

**Q. Coach, you've been a head coach for a decade and a half and been fortunate to never go into an off-season like this with a losing record. Does that change the off-season approach, do you think?**

JAMIE DIXON: Well, I mean, we're going to have a different off-season anyway. I don't know, this was a different regular season, so I think everything is different right now. We're in a whole new world in college basketball right now. It's all transfers and the best teams seem to have those guys. The guys that recruited like McDonald's All-Americans now. Those are the guys that everyone is fighting over. That is the battle.

Certainly no year like this, and certainly for me. Been doing this a long time, but we knew going in this was going to be a different year, less practices. I don't think any team had less practices than we did this year. I guess it showed.

But we had our opportunities. I thought there were some times as the year we were on we were coming together, starting to get it right, and then we would take a step backwards. So we'll have to grow and get better as we try to get this program to where I want it to be.

**Q. Let's end on a positive. Eddie Lampkin I thought gave you a lot of energy late in the ballgame.**

JAMIE DIXON: He played hard. He does have a lot of energy. Obviously we've got to keep getting his body better. He's made some tremendous strides, but certainly he's got some tools and we just got to keep doing a better job with him.

**Q. Jamie, you talked about Pack's two threes at the end of the first half. Were you surprised at how sluggish you came out in the second half where they were able to score early and really pull away?**

JAMIE DIXON: Yeah, obviously we talked about that because we seemed to have all the momentum until that last minute and a half in those plays. We would miss a couple shots, we don't convert in transition, and then they get the two threes.

We just didn't do what we were supposed to do. We tried to foul, use a foul at the end as they ran that last play and we just couldn't do it. We weren't in the bonus. We had -- made it very clear and just waited too late.

You know, certainly we talked about it in the halftime. It was like, Hey, they went in with those two threes at the end, but we've got to get it done from the start. It was their ball to start so we had to get a stop and certainly that wasn't the case, if I remember correctly. I know they got two threes right after that.

But it's disappointing because as good as we played for that stretch we really defended, got loose balls, we got transition, still didn't convert at the rate you want to. So I thought we could have had a bigger lead at the end of the first half, but then didn't convert, didn't finish, and then they get the two threes that give them the momentum.

We just -- I mean, I was concerned we took Sunday off -- or Monday off because we played Sunday as far as legs, I was concerned about our fatigue. I've been concerned about it all year long. We talked about how many practices we have and so few, so it's almost like you try to bunch them all up in a shorter time frame.

But yet we always had two days off between games seemed all year long, and certainly our last week, which you never want to have in this situation. But it's just maybe playing the Sunday night game and just seemed to wear us down. We just didn't have the energy we needed to play against a team that was playing this aggressive and playing this good.

We beat them obviously earlier in the year, but they are confident now, they've won three out of four, I guess now four out of five, so we're a little -- we played three games, all the road games down the stretch and obviously a Sunday going into a Wednesday tournament which is never done.

So you hope you respond, you hope you handle it better. We thought it would be an opportunity for us you but we didn't do it, we didn't get it done. So did it for stretches, so it was possible, it was doable.

Again, the defense we played for that stretch in the first half was I thought as good as we've played. We really got

some deflections, some loose balls. Again, just didn't convert at the rate you want to.

**Q. Brian was talking about McGuirl and the way he lead down the stretch. Do you feel like you guys lacked a leader like that tonight, and does that have to do with you not having any seniors, or why do you think that was?**

JAMIE DIXON: You know, they've kept fighting all year long and been through some adversity. I think they 13 in a row, so they've got some -- they've maintained, they've fought through it, they got better.

But he was really good tonight and I think he's a guy that's been converted to the point, and -- but he went five assists and no turnovers and 17 points in a Big 12 tournament game, so credit to him for playing like he did and Pack.

We really stressed those two guards, we couldn't let those two guards get going. We really let them get going, and certainly second half McGuirl, Pack, got it going pretty early in the first half, those three threes right in front of us, pretty much all three of them.

Disappointing, but again, we've had a pattern of breaking down, not so much by giving you up threes, but this was the way this team could hurt us. They got a lot of lay-ups, too. A lot of lay-ups. So that's where we are lacking.

**Q. On the radio you were talking about big picture in the program getting it to where you want to be. How far off do you think you are from -- obviously the Big 12 is so tough -- to build a program to start with? Do you feel next year --**

JAMIE DIXON: No, I mean, we're in a whole new world now. There is no really building programs. It's just kind of you're filling with transfers and stuff and it's not the same thing. So I think it's year to year now is what you do and we got to get better. There is no question about it.

We have a young group. Obviously everybody knows how young the team is. Probably not the right year to do it in the Big 12, but that's where we are. We've got to be better. Whatever you want to call it, we've got to get better.

Obviously this is not what I'm used to, but I knew this was a challenge coming here. I mean, there was no question about it. We got to get better. In same ways we have improved, but certainly not -- in a lot ways we've improved it -- but certainly not to where we want to get it to.

**Q. Coach, you've got a really young team and they've gone through it unprecedented season. What do you**

**do in this off-season to keep the guys locked in and focused, which is kind of the way that the season ended?**

JAMIE DIXON: Well, I mean, we've got different rules that we've got to follow as far as when we get started, what we can do. Then of course we're in the COVID situation still. So I think we're be figuring things out just like this year. I think it continues. Like we said, all year long it's been you make a plan and then usually the next day, for us any way, the next day it was changed. First thing in the morning I would usually get a phone call and something would disrupt that plan.

So that's really how we've been. I don't know if that continues, but as of now, I would think we're still under some adjustments and not your typical off-season. I think obviously the rules and all the different things that come forward here, that's going to have an impact on the game, as it already has as people have jumped the gun I guess to some degree, but not really.

But there is going to be obviously a lot of changes going on in college basketball, as there already has been.

**Q. Just you mentioned how young you guys were. Do you expect most of these guys back, like Kevin Samuel and -- because I know he could probably flirt with a potential pro career. Do you expect a lot of the guys to come back?**

JAMIE DIXON: Yeah, I think we're all looking to see what the rules are going to be and how things play out. So I think there is -- not one to speculate and put things -- there is a whole new world of college basketball coming at us and we've kind of already started that process with the waivers and the different things coming.

It is a new world and we'll adjust and do the best we can, and that's what we got to do. We've got to adjust, got to adjust in a variety of ways.

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