

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Kansas State Wildcats

Mike McGuirl

Postgame Press Conference



Kansas State - 71, TCU - 50

Q. Mike, tonight it just seemed like everything was clicking for you guys, which, unfortunately, has been something that hasn't been very consistent for you guys, but when things are clicking that way and things are really continuing to fall your way, how do you keep your young teammates focused and get them to not let up?

MIKE MCGUIRL: I wouldn't say that we haven't been consistent because we just started off like -- when it wasn't there, it wasn't really there at all. So it's hard to get consistency when it's not there. We've really built up to this point and gotten better.

Man, we've got a lot of young talent on this team, a lot of really good young players, on offense and defense. They've taken pride in learning and growing, and this is really fun to be a part of.

Q. Then just for you tonight, to look back -- and I know we've talked about the similarities between last year and this year and playing TCU again after this whole crazy year -- but looking back at it all, to be able to get that same result and find yourself in the same situation, but this time you know you're going to get to play tomorrow, what are your emotions right now?

MIKE MCGUIRL: Excitement. I'm very excited to play tomorrow. This is like -- as a basketball player, this is what you dream of, March Madness. I mean, we're about to play probably the best team in the country in the Big 12 Tournament tomorrow. So this is very exciting.

We're going to prepare tonight and tomorrow morning, see what the coaches have to say, and we're going to be ready to play tomorrow.

Q. Hey, Mike, three quick ones for you. First off, congrats on the win. You've been a part of some

special March moments with this team, with previous teams. Does this feel like that at all, that you're playing that well?

MIKE MCGUIRL: Yeah, any win in a tournament situation is big in this country, in this conference. It's big. It's exciting. It's something you can't take for granted in life. So this is fun, and we're just looking to move forward and do what we can to get the win tomorrow.

Q. What did you think of the atmosphere tonight? It's quite a bit different than what you've seen, but did it feel like the Big 12 Tournament? How would you assess it?

MIKE MCGUIRL: It's like it did feel different. I can't lie. It felt different out there, not too many fans, rather quiet. But it had that Big 12 Tournament intensity out there, and that's what's most important. We're grateful to be able to play and have this opportunity, and we had a lot of fun tonight.

Q. And just looking ahead to tomorrow, Baylor is a team that had its way with you twice this year. What's it going to take to close that gap and compete with them?

MIKE MCGUIRL: Yeah, we're a much improved team since then. It's going to be locking in on the scout report, listen to what the coaches have to say, listen to the game plan, and going out there and competing. We've really picked up our defense, and that's what's really been our mainstay since we've gotten going. We're going to fall back on our defense and be ready to play on defense and do what we can to get that win tomorrow.

Q. How long had it felt like it had been since you guys have won a game that comfortably and in that kind of fashion?

MIKE MCGUIRL: You know, I did think about that. It's been a while. I don't know if we've had one like that all year to be honest, like all year. So it has been a while. You know, it's just a testament to the hard work we've put in. Now we're just focused on tomorrow now. Tonight is behind us now, and we've got Baylor ahead of us.

Q. How different do you feel like this team is right now

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than the one that lost by 48 in Waco the last time you saw them?

MIKE McGUIRL: A lot different, but talking about it isn't going to do much. All we can do is do and be about action tomorrow, and that's what we're going to do.

Q. You led some of the defense. What was it that lit the fuse under you guys tonight?

MIKE McGUIRL: I think, in our previous match-ups and over the previous years, we sort of figured out how to contain TCU's offense. Shout out to Coach Southwell, great scout. He gave us the game plan and everything we had to do. We did mess up a few times on some switches in the first half, little things. We could have even been better, but still we did a great job tonight and looking to carry that forward.

Q. Did you all run some specific plays out at halftime that got you loose and got you to the rim on two different occasions?

MIKE McGUIRL: We're just out there playing basketball. Like a play isn't really necessarily for one person, it's for everybody because you never know what's going to happen and you never know when the ball is going to be thrown to you, what position you'll be in. Really I was just the beneficiary of some good passes, some good plays, and we kept executing, kept getting to our next action, and that's what happened.

Q. What has been your mantra, your consistent message to these guys, these young guys that you feel like you're giving on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis?

MIKE McGUIRL: Just stay positive and have fun and keep improving. That's what we've been doing. It's just being confident. I mean, we can play with anybody, I truly feel that. These guys are starting to truly feel that too. Tomorrow we're going to do our best to show that, and we will.

Q. How long has it taken that confidence to kind of start to really manifest itself?

MIKE McGUIRL: I've been telling you guys all year we were falling short a lot and we're improving. We had to go through a tough journey to get to this point. Along the way, we felt -- we started to feel it more and more through every game. We've gotten better in every game. So to this point, we've gotten better, and we're going to try to continue to get better in this tournament.

Q. I wanted to ask, what did it feel like there during that 16-0 run that ended the first half and then started there in the second with your three-pointer and then your three-point play?

MIKE McGUIRL: It felt like playing basketball the right way, playing hard, playing the right way, sharing the ball, playing good defense, talking to each other, and having fun. That's what we were doing, and we're going to look to carry that forward.

Q. Something that Coach Weber brought up when we talked to him before this game as just how, time in and time out, when you and TCU play, it's usually a close game, so were you a little surprised about the margin of victory for you guys in that regard?

MIKE McGUIRL: I'm not too surprised, honestly. We've been getting better. Tonight we were able to show that we've gotten better. TCU, they're a good ball team, and they're well coached, but we've made a lot of strides. I'm not surprised at all by how we were able to beat them tonight.

Q. Mike, I can't let you get out of here without you telling me what happened on that block.

MIKE McGUIRL: It was my help, and usually I'm in there to try to take a charge or something, but I'll just -- he laid it up. I was like -- I felt like I could block it. So I just went up there as high as I could and tried to block it, and I did. Appreciate you.

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