

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

## Iowa State Cyclones

## Steve Prohm

### Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma, 79 - Iowa State, 73

**Q. You want to make a statement or should we just fire away?**

STEVE PROHM: You can fire away. I mean, the statement I would just make is I told the guys in the locker room through all the adversity and things they had to deal with, and especially the way the game was going tonight, you know, they could have folded many times.

I think we got great kids in our locker room and great character guys. They've done the right things all year, and so that's as a coach and a leader, that's why you're disappointed in yourself, because you're not -- the best part of coaching is to be able to sit back and watch your kids have fun and enjoy these moments, especially in March. That's the best part of being part of championship teams and winning big games, is seeing smiles on those kids' faces you coach.

Oklahoma was good and we made it a game at the end, but we just didn't do a good enough job sharing the ball and running good offense at times, and then -- you know, they are a very good one-on-one team, you know, and just being able to stay in front of guys.

**Q. Steve, can you speak to your Iowa State job future going forward?**

STEVE PROHM: Really nothing for me to say. One thing I can tell you -- so I know there is probably a lot of questions. I'll meet with Jamie next week and we'll sit down and talk.

**Q. Next week, you said?**

STEVE PROHM: Yes, Thursday, yeah.

**Q. When you look at the trajectory of the last six seasons, how do you feel like the program has gotten**

**to this spot with the record that it is right now?**

STEVE PROHM: You know, there are a lot of factors. I'm not going to go into everything, but you and I both know and we all know this record is unacceptable for this program. I've said it a hundred times, I've said it since I got here. We've got an incredible fan base, got great leadership.

Ames is an unbelievable community. It's the best league in the country. We're playing a 7 seed, top 25 in the country. But with that there is expectations to be in the NCAA tournament and play deep in the post season, that Sweet 16, Elite 8s.

You know, I think that's the next step obviously, but I mean, there is a lot of factors you could talk about. The biggest thing I'll say is we all know this program can't be in this position and it's got to get back right.

**Q. We've asked you a number of times if you know what your future holds. If you're not meeting with Jamie until next week, do you imagine going through this weekend still not knowing?**

STEVE PROHM: I would think so. Jamie and I have had conversations. Like I said, we talk all the time. Jamie has a lot going on with selection committee and different things like that to where we'll meet next week. That's the most I can tell you with that.

**Q. You have touched on it a little bit, but what was your message to the guys afterwards?**

STEVE PROHM: Well, first off to seniors, whatever they need going forward, you know, I got them. Whether that's to help them with agents or get jobs overseas or professional basketball or business world, whether it's now or in the future, I got you. I'll do whatever I can to help you, no questions asked.

I also just talked to Solomon. Obviously he's been with me five years, one of my first recruits here, or one of our first recruits here. He's seen everything here. He's seen the good, bad, and the ugly. But he's done a lot of really good,

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positive things not only on the floor but off the floor in the community.

A lot things he's done in the community behind the scenes that probably haven't even got publicized. He does it on his own. Phenomenal kid. Very proud of him.

Then I talked to J Cole and just thanked him to where -- disappointed to because he never got a chance to really see what it's like out there in the T Mobile Arena and what an amazing fan base. He just wasn't able to see that.

That's something we obviously sell in recruiting, but he such an advocate. He was a great leader for us during the social issues that talked about, whether it was in person or via Zoom when it all started.

I thought he had a phenomenal year and finished really, really well. He's going to do great things.

And then obviously I just touched on Nate Schuster about being an everyday guy and Eric Steyer, you know, living out his dream of an Ames, Iowa, kid. I'll never forget that shot in Maui when his dad was out there.

And to the other guys, just I talked to them about -- there is a lot of stories about programs that struggle and then you look at a year or two later and they're back where they need to be. I've been in a lot of different leagues and I've seen it happen over and over.

So I talked to them about the things that need to change, things we needed to better, and that we got to address that and get better going forward. Most of all I just thanked them for -- we left here in March last year this time, they went home on spring break, and we didn't see them again until basically August of last year, of this past late July-August.

A lot of times when your teams struggle and go through what we had and nobody on this -- I've never obviously been through anything like this in my life and nobody in that locker room has either. But you could splinter, stop going class, you could get in trouble, make poor decisions. I think our guys have done a great job staying the course and showing up every day. We didn't get the results and that sucks and that's on me. That's not on them. That's on me.

I just thanked them for doing the right thing and being great ambassadors and being good, good student athletes.

**Q. When you see the wins and losses, I was hoping you could give us a little insight what this season was like for your players from a mental health burden**

**standpoint with the constant testing, isolation, what this season was like for them?**

STEVE PROHM: You know, I can't speak for them so I'll talk from what -- when you view it. Obviously it had to be extremely tough. There is a lot of sacrifices you have to make. You get home from a road trip at 2:00 in the morning and have a 7:00 a.m. COVID test and then you go to class and then you go to practice.

You know, I think all of our guys -- obviously we had our one bout with COVID during the season right around that K-State/Kansas week. Outside of that, our kids did a phenomenal job. Hats off to our athletic trainers, Vick and his personnel, Doc Shulman and his personnel, obviously Mark Coberly. Those guys did a phenomenal job of making sure -- Michael Meyers -- making sure our guys did the right things and were up-to-date on everything we needed to do.

So I'm sure it was a mental strain on those guys in a lot of different ways, socially, emotionally, even academically. But like I said, I think these guys did an unbelievable job handling it, and that's why it's unfortunate the way the season went.

You know...

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