

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

## West Virginia Mountaineers

### Taz Sherman

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma State, 72 - West Virginia 69

**Q. Walk me through the final possession. Did you think your shot was going to get off? When did you see that, uh-oh, this may get blocked?**

TAZ SHERMAN: I didn't think it was going to get blocked, and I'm not going to get too much into officiating and stuff, but he did a good job of keeping me in front, forced me to take a tough shot.

So that type of shot stuff I been working on on a daily basis, step-back threes, off-the-dribble threes. He made me get into a real tough, tough shot. So he did a good job staying in front.

Made me take a tough shot. Sometimes I make those, sometimes I don't. This time he was fortunate enough to get a piece of ball I guess and I missed it.

**Q. Kind of going off that, the entire second half I thought Oklahoma State's defense kind of made a difference in the sense that it looked like you guys were working a little bit harder to get shots in the second half than in the first. Can you just talk about what they were doing defensively for the entire second half and did it make a difference at all?**

TAZ SHERMAN: I thought they were doing the same thing in the first half as the second half. It was just we are -- including me -- just careless with the ball at times, not having two hands on the ball when making a pass just in case they jump the passing lane and you got to bring the ball back.

The only thing that really did anything different from the first to second half, it was more on us and what we didn't do to prevent the turnovers.

**Q. Speak of your defense. I know Hugs wasn't very happy on Saturday. You came out on the short end**

**today. Seemed like defensive effort was much, much better.**

TAZ SHERMAN: Yeah, we're just working on putting ball pressure on the ball balance handler and getting rotations and stopping easy drives. Even though they had a couple today, they didn't have as many as they did last game, which I think they had like 50 some points in the paint, something around that.

I feel like today we did a better job of shutting off the easy driving lanes, switching up defenses. But most importantly we had better ball pressure on the ball and was getting the better rotations, able to jump passing lanes to get on a fast-break, easy points.

**Q. What was the message when they went up 10 in the second? I think right after that Sean hit a tough shot and you hit three threes to take the lead right back.**

TAZ SHERMAN: Just normal conversation. You know, we been there before, down double digits. You know, we been there before. Just nothing different was said. We know what we have to fix and it was easily fixable. It was getting good shots, and we actually started making a couple shots in the second half compared to the first half. We just got to our spots better on offense I think. We ran better offense. We attacked their zone defense better by finding the middle to open shooters and hitting the high, low out of their zone and our zone offense, and I just think we just did a better job offensively.

**Q. What changed there in the second half? You guys were up 8 and then obviously they made their run. What changed to give them that edge there?**

TAZ SHERMAN: I really don't know. I think it's just turnovers, live ball turnovers. Given they had like six, maybe 8 points, fast-break points just in a row, just easy live ball turnovers converted into fast-break points. That started that run for them.

They was doing a good job of reading our passes sometimes and they just got out on the break just how we did sometimes at the end of first half. They did the same

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thing in the middle of the second half.

**Q. Taz, you guys got a long wait until Sunday night. Do you think about the seedings and other games this week, or just not going to think about all that?**

TAZ SHERMAN: No, I'm going to let the coaches and everybody else like focus on that. I'm just going to focus on the basketball part, what can we fix and what we need to do better. I plan on talking to everybody, trying to recoup, when we get back to Morgantown and have a general conversation about what we need to fix and what we need to do to win a national championship, because that's why we're all here. We're not here to not win a National Championship.

I feel like we can. Everybody in that locker room thinks we can. We just got to fix the things that needs fixing. We got to continue to improve on the things that we do best.

**Q. I know it's always easy to look at that last possession and all this and that and put the game on that, but someone asked about your three point shooting earlier. After you hit the last one, 1:15 left, they gave you guys the lead and then they were able to come right back down. I think they maybe scored on a transition drive to take the lead right back. Was that maybe even a bigger moment in the game more so than what happened on the last possession?**

TAZ SHERMAN: Yeah, I think so. I think in transition when Emmitt got that steal on the fast-break, I had an open shot kind of, but I kind of counted how many defenders was in front of me and I didn't know where the last one was. I didn't want to take a shot and end up having a shot blocked, so just run the ball out.

We actually had couple good looks out of it, too. Deuce had an open three, Emmitt had a put-back. I'm not going to talk about officiating, nothing like that. Yeah, the drive that Avery had that them take the lead was big time.

We didn't have any help there and I feel like that was -- we was doing good of helping on the drives pretty much majority of the game.

And, yeah, that was a big time play. Just didn't go our way.

**Q. As your first post-season experience, though you've been here two years, at West Virginia everybody talks about the emotions of it. Was there an intensity level to this game that is different than regular season or not?**

TAZ SHERMAN: Of course. It's just because you know

you're playing for a title, a championship. It's almost like when you start conference. You want to win the regular season conference title, be first in the conference, win the Big 12, the Big 12 Championship, National Championship. Every.

time in those situations it's high intensity. Every team is going to come out with a high motor, especially with no fans. We had fans, but especially not with a sold-out crowd. You got to created your own energy. I thought we did a good job of creating our on energy but at some times our energy got low and they started making a run, then we started making a run and our energy would go back up.

It's just a game of runs and who can keep their energy the longest.

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