

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

## Baylor Bears

### Mark Vital

#### Postgame Press Conference

Oklahoma State 83, Baylor 74

**Q. What do you feel like happened the last couple minutes? Y'all made a good comeback to take the lead and then all of a sudden they just kind of took over.**

MARK VITAL: Man, honestly, it was a game changer. Cade Cunningham got hot. He's proven that he's Player of the Year. He did his -- he showed why he's Player of the Year. I feel that we should have kept Davion on him. That was it.

**Q. What do you feel like you guys maybe got to do the next step, the NCAA Tournament, to maybe start turning things around a little bit?**

MARK VITAL: Get better at rotations. We need to get better on our rotations on defense, offense, subbing, everything.

**Q. They finished with a 17-to-4 edge in fast break points. There were some times where they were just beating you all back. How frustrating was that knowing how good a defensive team you are?**

MARK VITAL: It was very frustrating. We're always crashing hard, and some way, somehow they was getting out. We don't know if a guy was leaking out. I don't know what was going on, but they weren't leaking out, they did a good job. They repped it practice; they must have been repping it all year. It was very frustrating. That's an area we've got to improve in.

**Q. What do you guys need to do to make sure that this loss doesn't carry over into the NCAA Tournament? How do you get your minds right and refocus heading into next week?**

MARK VITAL: I'll be honest with you, I don't want to say it like this, but we needed that loss in a way. I mean, everybody says that, but we do because we came here



with the mindset that we was already champions of the Big 12 and we had to change our mindset until we get back hungry.

Going into the tournament, now that we've been thrown, you know what I'm saying, we've got to go up with new energy. We've got a chip on our shoulder. We've got to come back from a loss. We've got to finish games, also. We've got to learn how to finish games.

**Q. What was the mood in the locker room afterwards? Are you already kind of taking on that mindset?**

MARK VITAL: My thinking is, what I tell guys is I understand you're supposed to have a time and place where you be like, yeah, next game, but I'd much rather my guys go ahead and feel that loss. I want them to feel it because I've been through it before; I lost in the tournament, so I know how it feels. I want my guys to feel that loss and have that edge going into the next game.

Right now in our locker room everybody is just thinking about what they could have done, a lot of frustration, everything. That's what we need. We need that, and then we'll watch film and do everything and by the time the tournament starts we'll be in good spirits and we'll be ready to go.

**Q. Beyond rotations, is there something else you feel like defensively you all are missing compared to where you were before the pause?**

MARK VITAL: Effort. Just effort, man. And a lot of scouting. We need to get back to our scouting and getting our switches and everything right because right now we're not switching on the right screens, we're not -- personnel is not correct. We've got to just back to it honestly.

**Q. How confident are you that you'll be able to get that stuff done in the next week going into the tournament?**

MARK VITAL: We're the Baylor Bears. We're going to get that right. Don't take this loss and make it think that we're just some team. We're still one of the best teams in the country at the end of the day, and we just took a lick, and



we got knocked down and now we've got to get back up. Muhammad Ali did it a lot.

**Q. You guys finished as a team with 19 offensive rebounds. I think you yourself had eight. What was the key to hitting the offensive glass and being so productive there?**

MARK VITAL: Well, I think credit to Oklahoma State. They're a great team on the offensive and defensive rebounding, and then their coach loves me so much and I love their coach, and he always tells me that it's a defensive battle and rebounding battle, and I just took it on and he called me Young Robin, and hopefully I proved to him I'm still Robin even with the loss and I still got his respect and I play hard and with effort, so that's what I try to do.

**Q. With about 2:25 left to go, you guys had a bucket advantage and Oklahoma State was able to get a couple back-to-back and-ones that Cade was able to get the dish-off to you. Do you guys feel like you were just collapsing on him because he was so hot you had to do that?**

MARK VITAL: No, it wasn't even that. I just felt that they did a good job with rotations. Like we've played them what, three times now, two times? They know our rotations, we know their rotations. They know what spot to get to to make us rotate, and they were doing a great job doing that. I have to give props to them, man. That coach is a great coach and he capitalized on it. He knew our rotations were not the same coming from the break, and he capitalized on it.

**Q. As a guy that really this is your team, I know there's a lot of other guys who have a lot of games, but this is your program in a lot of ways. How much is on your shoulders now as you mentioned to get these guys refocused, not lose confidence and understand what's in front of them now?**

MARK VITAL: Like I said, man, I'll take -- I'll take always all the blame, always, because a couple of those rebounds if I would have stayed in the game longer and not caught myself out, I feel like we could have got a bigger lead, and I just go back and go through plays and plays. Like I did an up-and-under and I missed the lay-up, and I just go through that, and I had one in my hand, a tip-out rebound, and I had one with Avery Anderson -- yeah, Avery drove right and he got to his spot and got an and-one foul and I let him go middle. There's a lot of stuff that's on my shoulders that's going to eat at me just like a lot of guys, but I put the blame on me because I'm the captain of this team, and then going into the tournament and everything,

I'm going to have to shift that energy because right now I need my guys to feel this loss, and they're taking it well right now. Your mama always tells you you've got to get up. When you fall down, you've got to get up.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

