

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Baylor Bears

Coach Scott Drew

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma State 83, Baylor 74

SCOTT DREW: I thought first half we weren't as effective on either end of the court, and because of our poor execution on the offensive end, it led to a lot of transition for them. In a good game you've got two great teams, you can't give up 17-4 fast break points. I know predominantly those were in the first half. I thought second half we executed a lot better on the offensive and defensive end, and anxious to look at the film to see when we had that lead with seven minutes to go what we needed to do better to close that out.

I do know you've got to give Oklahoma State a lot of credit. They made a lot of big-time plays, and Cade really was clutch for them.

Q. What do you feel like it's going to take to maybe get back to where you guys were playing?

SCOTT DREW: Well, first thing I think people would tell you is you've got to practice, and we had Sunday practice before Iowa State, Monday practice, then we played, and basically from there on out, you only had one day of practice, and usually those are more game-day prep. This could really be a good thing for us having an opportunity to get some practice in in Indianapolis because obviously defensively I thought we did some things better, but that's an area that we have to get back to being elite.

Hopefully when we can get some practice time, we can do that because there's some defensive rotations and rules that we're breaking too much, and I know that's something normally when you practice you get better at.

Q. Is there some comfort knowing that you guys are probably going to be a No. 1 seed even after this loss?

SCOTT DREW: Well, I mean, that's the beauty of playing seven top-25 teams in a 10-team tournament. It's hard to win three games in three days against good competition. If

you do lose, it's not going to hurt you, and that's the good thing about that.

As far as getting ready for the NCAA Tournament, this was a great experience. So many of our guys had never played in the Big 12 tournament before, and they got a chance to play, see what it's like, get a feel for the arena, get a feel for just how everything is executed, and hopefully this comes to really help us come NCAA Tournament time.

Q. The guys talk a lot about just the defensive rotations especially with Cade. What was sort of the philosophy going into that game with him and how did things sort of break down?

SCOTT DREW: Well, Cade is one of those guys you can do everything well and he still gets a bucket. That's why he's projected the top pick in the draft. He had 25 points, and the ones that you contest and he makes tough plays, tough shots you can live with. The ones that you go against what you game planned -- and I thought when we won at home, he really took over for a stretch of that game, and I thought the adjustments we made made it tougher on him tonight. But again, at the end of the day hats off to him because when you put two on him, he does such a great job of finding his teammates, and hence you get Avery Anderson with 20, Keylan Boone with 10, Walker with 11. He's one of those guys that can hurt you multiple ways.

Q. You all went 6 of 28 from three. With how good of a three-point shooting team you are, do you feel like that's just too high of a burden to overcome against a team this good?

SCOTT DREW: Definitely it's hard to win when you shoot that from three. That's one of the toughest things about playing multi-game tournaments. When you're playing each day, three games, three days, the legs do go bad, and that's why your offensive execution has to be at such a higher level, so your shot quality allows you to shoot a better percentage when you are fatigued.

Oklahoma State in the first half really had us taking some shots that were tough shots if you're fresh, definitely not shots you want to take on day two or day three of a



tournament.

Q. With what you all asked Davion, Jared and MaCio to do on both ends, is this about the cap for how many minutes you want them to play, or might they see more minutes in the NCAA Tournament?

SCOTT DREW: Well, that's something we'll go back and we'll watch film. A strength of our team all year long has been our bench, so you want to use the bench. At the same time, in a single-elimination tournament, you've got to decide how many minutes you want your guys out there. Obviously Jared, foul trouble dictated that first-half situation. But that's one thing because we have a lot of two-way guys, they play on both ends of the court.

Q. You've kind of been through the COVID gauntlet. I wonder what passed through your mind when you saw Virginia, Duke and Kansas have to drop out?

SCOTT DREW: My heart goes out to them because I know how the players feel about that and how tough it is on them. I know the concerns that the coaching staff has with just the safety and when and if the team will be back and how you go through it, especially this time of year when you work so hard to get to it. I know it's tough.

Q. MaCio said this was almost good to lose like this before the tournament just to get everybody locked in. Do you agree with that? Does it just give you guys at least a blow before the tournament?

SCOTT DREW: Well, I think there's never a good time to lose, but it's better to lose now than in the NCAA Tournament, so I agree with that.

And we will have an extra day of rest and we'll have an extra day to look at what we need to do. Sometimes when -- it's like your hand, when you put it on a stove and it burns you for a while, you don't put your hand back on that hot stove. When you get a loss, it makes you realize, hey, I don't like that feeling, I don't want this again.

Q. This is one of the few games all year where you've had to play -- it's been close coming all the way to the finish. How would you evaluate your execution down the stretch and what's maybe an area that you feel like y'all can improve in those late-game situations?

SCOTT DREW: Well, I thought, first of all, for us to get 19 offensive rebounds, that shows you that we had great effort and we played hard. We want to get to the free-throw line more than 13 times. We want to get a lot better shot quality from three, and as far as assists, second half we looked a lot more like ourselves. With our two wins at

Oklahoma State, I can't recall what the first game was, but the second game I know we had a great assist night.

When we get 15 to 20 assists we're a much better team than when we're down at nine, 10 and 11. Now, the turnovers was down, down to 12 from 21, so we made progress.

Q. You talked about Cunningham being such a tough guard, but the fact that he gets others involved, like that find to Walker on that three-point play to put them up four, is that what makes him so difficult to try and scout, because he can find other people like that?

SCOTT DREW: Well, the scout isn't hard, it's the stopping him. You know what he wants to do, and at 6'8" you can trap him in a ball screen, but it doesn't affect him. You can put two on him and stay long, but it doesn't affect him. You can not help and it doesn't affect him. Really it's just the lesser of all the evils. You try to mix it up so that he doesn't get comfortable, doesn't get in a rhythm, and again, when he's making tough twos, you can live with it. What you don't want is you don't want him getting seven for eight from the free-throw line, you don't want the four threes, and obviously we didn't do a good enough job on those.

Q. Anything you're seeing as far as Jared here in these last two games where maybe he's a little fatigued? I know that three-pointer he took late, looked like he didn't have his legs with him on that three that he typically ordinarily would make late in games, that sort of thing. What are you seeing from him?

SCOTT DREW: That's where your shooting comes and goes. It's really good shot selection. If you take a good shot, then we're great with it. It's when we take tough shots, those are the ones that if you don't hit you're like, dang, that's the first pass to a transition on the other end. And that's a fine line when you're a great player because when you're a great player you think you can make tough shots and you can. It's just a matter of the percentage that you can make them. 35 percent is not good enough to win at this. 20 percent is not -- you know what I mean? You've got to get higher percentages, and 21 percent from three is not getting it done.

Q. Very few teams that win the regular season also go on to double up. I don't know the stats, but it doesn't happen all the time very often. How do you still from that point make sure this team doesn't lose their edge and also their confidence?

SCOTT DREW: The blessing with this group is they work too hard to really lose confidence. As far as the edge,

that's where practice helps, and we'll get practice days now. But the confidence comes from their hard work and how much time they put in it. I don't worry about that with this group.

Q. Oklahoma State is ranked 12th in the nation. It's also your third time playing the Cowboys. What about tonight gave you optimism for moving forward that you can make a deep run in the tournament, just considering how tough your guys played and how good Oklahoma State is?

SCOTT DREW: Well, I think that's what makes March Madness so exciting is it's a 40-minute game, and in a 40-minute game -- in the NBA the best team is winning. Four out of seven, your percentages, normally the best team is winning, but in a 40-minute game anyone can win on any given night, and playing a tournament like this where you get a loss, it just reinforces and brings that home, that every possession does matter. When you don't go 1-0 on a possession, at the end of the day they come back to get you.

Q. What are your team plans now? Are you going back to Waco or are you going straight to Indianapolis?

SCOTT DREW: We'll go straight to Indianapolis, so we'll stay here and watch film, recover, see how we can become a better team and get to Indy and hopefully get some practice in and get ready for why we worked so hard all year long. We're blessed to have an NCAA Tournament this year, where last year was a different feeling when we left here.

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