

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 13, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

## Texas Longhorns

### Kai Jones

#### Postgame Press Conference

Texas - 91, Oklahoma State - 86

**Q. Kai, congratulations, man.**

KAI JONES: Thank you.

**Q. I know that everybody considers you like a sixth starter. I know that. But still to be in the starting lineup and to have instant impact before the first media timeout, how much did that get you going?**

KAI JONES: It was huge for me because it was just a matter of me just knowing who I really was and going out and being ready. You know, I'm always ready when my number is called, and I'm glad Coach trusted me tonight to do that. So I was ready to go.

**Q. Kai, what was going through your mind as you guys broke the press break, Jericho gets the ball, two-on-one situation with you two bigs out there. He tosses it to you, dunk, you get the foul. Shaka is losing his mind on the sideline. What were you thinking as all that was going on?**

KAI JONES: Man, it felt like a dream in that moment, to be honest with you. It didn't even feel real. After I dunked it, it was a feeling of elation, just pure happiness. I'm so glad we were able to finish it off and win the game, but this feels like a dream, man, to be honest with you. It doesn't even feel real. But it is very real.

**Q. Kai, just describe the feelings and the emotions of being the first Texas team to win that thing.**

KAI JONES: We put a lot into this game, especially with a tough year like this, going through having to wear this every day, social distancing, sacrificing so much. I feel like I put my all into this game, and so did my teammates. We just sacrifice so much to get here, from just being disciplined with COVID, working hard every day, guys going in and getting extra reps, and guys staying level



headed when it's not going well for them and being encouraging of each other. It's just a huge blessing, man. I'm so proud of this team, and we've got much more to do.

March isn't over. I'm very proud of our guys. I can't wait to go play in an NCAA Tournament again.

**Q. I just want to get your thoughts on what it really means, not just to you, but what it means to also Coach Smart, especially what he's been through over the past two years and how this has all culminated into a very big success story for UT but also Coach Smart as well.**

KAI JONES: I'm very happy for Coach. He's a pure hearted guy, and he's somebody that puts his all into the game, in terms of focus and being locked in all the time. He's always ready to go. He's always thinking about basketball. This is a magical moment for him, and I want to make more Magic moments for him as well.

**Q. Kai, from the beginning of the season, winning that Maui Classic, you guys have played with a lot of belief in each other. Even when the COVID thing hit, you still played hard and held it together. What does it say about the leadership, not only with Matt, Andrew, and Courtney, but also your coach, Shaka Smart?**

KAI JONES: I think we just have a great group of coaches who are always emphasizing response and always emphasizing being better each and every day. They stay on us about that. They're great communicators, and they're really relationship guys, so you must give a lot of credit to the whole program. You have a lot of dedicated staff members.

It's been huge with him just staying on top of us, even when things aren't going our way, like you said, with the COVID breakdown. They were huge in terms of preaching being responsive to those things and being able to respond like champions, and I think that was the culmination of that tonight when we came out.

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