

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Kansas Jayhawks

Coach Bill Self

Christian Braun

Mitch Lightfoot

Postgame Press Conference



Kansas - 87, West Virginia - 63

MODERATOR: Okay we are ready to begin with the Kansas Jayhawks, joined by Coach Bill Self, the two student-athletes are Christian Braun and Mitch Lightfoot. Coach?

COACH SELF: I actually thought we played pretty well. I thought, you know, I think we were all disappointed -- not saying good or bad, but you hate that Bob wasn't on the bench.

I know it was disappointing for them, but nobody wants that. We caught a big break there. It's not a break that we wanted. I thought other than about the first five or six minutes of the second half I thought we were pretty solid. I thought we played pretty well.

Q. For both of you. What did you guys make of the way you guys got out and ran in transition today?

CHRISTIAN BRAUN: I think we did a really good job, I think we did a better job of rebounding, early on we were really good at it and I know Juan did a really good job of passing the ball. We did a good job in transition. That's when we play our best, is normally when we're getting out and running it.

MITCH LIGHTFOOT: I'll say yeah. When we rebound well, is easier for us to get out in transition so us rebounding the ball enables us to really get out there and run.

Q. Mitch, situation with Dave going back and forth, Bill mentioned to us foot soreness and managing his minutes. How much do you now put that burden on yourself? Are you ready when you have step in for

him?

MITCH LIGHTFOOT: Yeah, it's next man up. Enabling him to take some time is a big thing. On days when we are going to be our best, when he's playing his best, so enabling him to be his best is my job.

Q. C.B., Ochai was really good to start both halves, by design with him do you think? Did you sense he wanted to kinda inject himself and some life into this game, especially in the second half?

CHRISTIAN BRAUN: He's kind of our leader, you know at the start of the game because he did a really good job at getting us off to a good start, especially hittin' shots today, you know he was gettin' at the rim, he had a really good left-handed lay-up to start the game off. He's just our leader and that's what he does is get us started especially on offense. He did a good job carrying us today.

Q. I gotta ask you about Dajuan's dunk too, it looked like a lot of smiles on the bench there, we know he can do that but why were you guys enjoying it so much?

CHRISTIAN BRAUN: It was all right. I didn't think it was his best. I've seen him dunk better than that in 8th grade. It was good, it was good for him to get one of those but it wasn't his best.

Q. Did it feel good to have a large lead from the beginning after a few close games if a row?

CHRISTIAN BRAUN: Yeah, it is really good to get a win like that. To start off fast and then we got off our feet for a little bit, get to focus on our next game, so you know it is good to get a win like that, we got everybody involved so that was good, got a lot confidence going into the next game.

MITCH LIGHTFOOT: Piggyback off of what he said, yeah, the confidence is big, we got everybody out there and I think the majority of the guys scored so that's good to have them see the ball go in. Ready to go to the next game and I think we're focused on that.

Q. Bill, you mentioned on Tuesday that you were looking for O trying to find a happy medium between relaxed and excited? Do you think he did a better job of that?

COACH SELF: Yeah I thought, well to C.B.'s point you know, Och got us off to a great start. I think he had 9 of our first 11, if I'm not mistaken. I thought he played really well. He didn't shoot the ball particularly well, because he's 1 for 6 from three but we will live with those all day.

I thought he was really good. I thought we were pretty balanced, though. Mitch then Bill. They were 1 for 20 at one stretch for most of the first ten minutes and six or seven misses at the rim, attacking the rim. What were you guys able to do to turn those shots on way?

MITCH LIGHTFOOT: I think we were able to affect some shots, making sure we were contesting them. Every was flying around, I think you saw C.B. get out there, he was contesting shots at the rim as well. I think that has something to do with taking away the confidence at the rim. But, yeah, we gotta secure some of those rebounds, couple of those shots came off second-chance opportunities so we gotta secure some of those defense rebounds.

Q. Bill, did you notice tired legs from West Virginia at the start?

COACH SELF: I don't know if it was at the start but I don't know how you can't be a little fatigued as hard as they played last night. It a hard flip. If it's an evening game -- and they do it for a reason. I'm not saying it's not right, but it is this way in every league. You win at night and you flip and play in the afternoon, so that's hard for everybody. I don't know if their legs were tired but not often are Taz Sherman and Sean McNeil going to go 0 for 12 in a half. So I think we guarded them decent, but a little bit of that could have been fatigue as well.

Q. Christian you talked last week about you and Dave having banter about who is the better free throw shooter, and you got six in a row off the technicals. How did Jalen get in there?

CHRISTIAN BRAUN: Lately I haven't been shooting them as well, so we thought we would give another guy a chance. And I thought it was fair, because I shot 'em at St. John's, but Dave and Jalen have been great at the free throw. I think Dave actually missed one today. It been a while since he's missed one so they're doing a good job at the line.

Q. And for you flying around, I think that's a career

high for you for rebounds. Is that a product of the game or a mind-set for you heading into the postseason about what you want to bring?

CHRISTIAN BRAUN: That's always a key against them for us is to rebound. They're a really good rebounding team. I got some early, so kinda saw some lanes open up for me to get some rebounds, but everybody did a good job of blocking out and some of them dropped in my hands, so we did a better job of rebounding today.

Q. Coach, what do you think you have your second half defense?

COACH SELF: It wasn't as good as the first half. I think sometimes with our team and it shouldn't be this way but sometimes the natural tendency is to play to the score as opposed to -- no matter how many times we set a score 0-0, let's win one possession at a time. I think we lost some intensity on that end in the second half, so I don't think it was very good.

Q. Bill, you had Joe and Remy in together today. Did you get what you wanted out of those two?

COACH SELF: I thought Joe played pretty well. Remy's second half, he wasn't as engaged. You know, he had a couple of bad turnovers, didn't get back once when we shot the ball and everything. He looked healthy, though, even though I didn't think he was as good the second half but, yeah, I thought they did fine together. I thought they did fine.

Q. Bill, do you recall ever having six straight free throws like that?

COACH SELF: No, I don't, and I didn't like it. The only thing that was positive about it, and it wasn't from a game standpoint was Jalen Wilson's family likes me a lot more today than maybe some other days, and Christian's or David's would have liked me more if I would have picked them to shoot them but I can't remember being pardon of anything like that.

Q. You have a nice relationship with Bob. Did you seek him out afterwards?

COACH SELF: I haven't talked to him. I haven't talked to him. I'm sure we'll talk about it at some point in time but right now is probably not the time.

Q. Christian, you had 14 rebounds today. How were you able to finish off possessions the way you were today?

CHRISTIAN BRAUN: I think the guys did a good job, like I said they did a good job of blocking out. A lot of them dropped in my hands, and I got a couple of them off of free throws, but that's stuff we need to do and that's something that we are going to need to do against TCU, because they're a good offensive rebounding team. But a lot of them fell into my hands and the guys did a good job of keeping them away from the ball.

Q. Bill, what do you think of Christian's rebounding and Dave's performance? I know you said you wanted to rest him.

COACH SELF: I didn't think Dave got off to a good start. I didn't play him the first half much and then starting the second half he wasn't moving very well. He missed each for an uncontested backdoor layup, so I took him out and sat him for a long time. The bottom line is this: That's about the amount he should have played knowing that we got a big one tomorrow, too. If the game would have been different, he would have played more, but I thought Mitch played well and I would rather have Dave fresh tomorrow. What was the other question?

Q. (Away from mic.)

COACH SELF: C.B. is a terrific rebounding guard, but he was especially good tonight.

Q. Coach, I know you were busy getting ready for the game, but Bruce Weber resigned at Kansas State today, and I don't know if you saw any of his comments last night, late. I don't know if you had any thought on what he thought about the state of college basketball right now.

COACH SELF: I heard him, and I think this time of year everybody feels a little bit of stress, pressure, certainly can be emotional. I know that I go through those phases as well. I have enjoyed competing against his teams and I thought he did a good job in Manhattan and I wish him well whatever he does.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. We wish you well for tomorrow.

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